Chapter 17

Informational Cities: Beyond Dualism and Toward Reconstruction[1]

Bob Catterall

. . . the Informational City is also the Dual City . . . It opposes the cosmopolitanism of the elites, living on a daily connection to the whole world (functionally, socially, culturally), to the tribalism of local communities, retrenched in their spaces that they try to control as their last stand against the macro-forces that shape their lives out of their reach . . .[2]

Cyberspace is not a *single* integrated and ubiquitous entity revolving around the Internet. It is a place fractured into *multiple spheres of influence*, each with autonomous priorities of its own. Sometimes these spheres will cooperate, sometimes they will compete, but always they will guard their vital cores.[3]

Information is a slippery concept. In ordinary usage it takes, as does knowledge, an exclusively singular form – information not informations. At one level of analysis, the singular form seems essential. If there is no common basis to all the practices that can be classified as informational, how can we grasp either the phenomenon or the phenomena at all? But at another level of analysis, as we move towards the actual textures of cyberspace and of urban and regional life and its possibilities, we need a strong sense of the plurality of information and accordingly we need to be able to refer to informations as well as information (and knowledges as well as knowledge).[4] This emphasis on the plurality of information and knowledge, as well as their tensions and conflicts (spheres of influence . . . autonomous priorities . . . guarded vital cores – see David Brown above), is essential if we are to understand the dualistic imperatives at work in the Informational City as well as the tendencies and possibilities for reconstituted or regenerated cities and regions. We also need to consider the forces that shape the elaboration or, alternatively, the restriction of informations into knowledges as well as determining informational opacity or, alternatively, transparency.[5]

Such considerations have implications for the nature of urban studies itself (or, perhaps, themselves). The analysis of the Informational City is also predominantly dualistic in nature, polarized between social science (including political economy)

and cultural (including postmodern) approaches.[6] This analytic duality has a basis in the deep existential division between the socioeconomic and cultural spheres of our lives. But such analyses also reinforces that division. Much mainstream urban analysis is, despite its empirical procedure, also to a significant degree an expression of "the cosmopolitanism of the elites" and does little justice to the struggles of "local communities, retrenched in their spaces that they try to control . . . against the macro-forces that shape their lives . . . " (Castells, above). I have in mind both the political program and the empirical basis of such work.

As to political programs, consider the assertion by Scott Campbell and Susan Fainstein that the central question of planning theory is: "*What role can planning play in developing the city and region within the constraints of a capitalist political economy and a democratic political system?*"[7] The acceptance of these constraints, I shall show, results in a certain myopia towards what is happening and pushes more liberatory possibilities off the agenda. As to the empirical basis of such work, there is a failure to represent the actual texture of marginalized voices, and their informations, and to link them to the kinds of analysis of the economy and culture that would supplement and challenge mainstream accounts of what is happening and allow for a more liberatory agenda. The political and "scientific" programs of the mainstream approaches reinforce each other.

This chapter sketches out an alternative agenda, one that requires as agents a broad notion of urbanists, one that includes community activists and journalists as well as architects, planners, and academics. The sketch is presented in six stages. First, there is a brief discussion of urban dualisms. Second, there is an examination of the notion of a "cultural economy," particularly in the work of Peter Hall, which despite its intentions serves "the cosmopolitanism of the elites." Such an economy, a capitalist political economy, though awash with "information," is informationally opaque – it guards its secrets. Third, there is an outline, drawing on some of the speculative and political work of Alain Lipietz, of a more informationally transparent and more socially and ecologically responsible economy. The fourth and fifth stages involve the consideration of two specific sites and processes: the nature of "communication exchanges" such as railway stations and their possible regeneration beyond the imperatives of the Dual City, and, drawing further on the work of Manuel Castells, the significance of the idea of a citizens' movement. In both cases, I have drawn additionally on my own journalistic work. Finally, there are some interim conclusions.

Urban Dualisms

To claim with Castells that the Informational City is also the Dual City is not to deny that there are intermediate strata or a range of social strata, segments or fragments.[8] Nor is it to deny that there is room for social action.[9] If the notions of polarization or dualism are, on occasion, associated with crude either/or implications, their avoidance or rejection can lead instead to a form of bland and disengaged analysis that does no justice to our intellectual and social dilemmas. For the more positivistically inclined, there may be an unsettling metaphysical quality to the range of dualisms – that also include the space of flows and the space of places – and their manner of deployment in Castells' work. But this

quality represents an attempt to express actual tendencies, the dynamics, of these processes.

In his account of the Dual City Castells includes occupational polarization, the one-sided location of immigrant labor within that duality, the polarization of age differentials, a surge of social tensions and the emergence of defensive space, and, finally, "the fundamental urban dualism of our time . . . [which] opposes the cosmopolitanism of the elites . . . to the tribalism of local communities . . ." Castells has also expressed a hope for the integration of the duality in urban sociology between "structuralist" and "subjectivist" approaches.[10]

Informational Opacity and the ''Cultural Economy''

> Rich, affluent, cultivated nations and cities can sell their virtue, beauty, philosophy, their art and their theater to the rest of the world. From a manufacturing economy we pass to an information economy, and from an information economy to a cultural economy. During the 1980s and 1990s, cities across Europe – Montpellier, Nîmes, Grenoble, Rennes, Hamburg, Cologne, Glasgow, Birmingham, Barcelona, and Bologna – have become more and more preoccupied by the notion that cultural industries (a term no longer thought anomalous or offensive) may provide the basis for economic regeneration, filling the gap left by vanished factories and warehouses, and creating a new urban image that would make them more attractive to mobile capital and mobile professional workers.[11]

It might be argued that it is cultural policy that provides the missing link between social-scientific and cultural analyses.[12] Cultural policy is now an increasingly respected concern both in academic research and in governmental (local and national) and business circles. This has, however, been a contradictory development. Its proponents have demonstrated that "culture" can be, on the one hand, a very significant generator of income and image but, on the other, this emphasis has led to policies that in effect restrict the concept and practice of the arts so that they fit into a narrow and ideological conception of economic development. The allied World City perspective takes the social and cultural needs of international finance and business as identifying the necessary path of social progress. But if world cities also contain major divisions of interest, particularly between social elites who are, in a sense, world-city insiders and other citizens who are outsiders with respect to world-city activities, how can such a deeply divided city be reunited? Dedicated *flâneurs* fanning out into the surrounding suburbs? Or perhaps planners?

Planners, as Peter Hall and others see it, could have a major role to play in regenerating the city in a less divisive way. Hall highlights four emerging questions:[13] new sources of economic growth, subsequently conceptualized as the "cultural economy"; sustainable development; private–public partnerships; and polarization and the urban underclass. Planning, Hall argues, could and should have a role in dealing with these questions; but "it will need to learn to adjust to a subtly different socioeconomic system; it may well need to become yet more entrepreneurial . . ." (p. 186).

Hall's exposition of his agenda is a little thin and piecemeal. Can the "newer, softer informational sectors – culture, the arts, entertainment, education" (p. 183) by themselves lead, as he seems to suggest, to the necessary social and economic

growth? Or are new directions in cultural policy required? Is sustainability essentially little more than balanced ITH (industry, transport, and housing)? Does private–public partnership include the third (voluntary, community) sector and, if so, on what terms? Is dispersal the way to *solve* the problems of polarization and the underclass or is it merely a way of shifting it and them around?

The emphasis on entrepreneurialism could be crucial, but it depends on the form that it takes. If it is merely a matter of "adjusting" to a socioeconomic system already set in place by the restructuring of the 1980s and after, then the divisions will deepen. But is there an alternative entrepreneurialism? What is missing in this text of Hall's, and in his subsequent and more extended account in *Cities in Civilization* (1998), is a sense of the sheer contradictoriness of current changes. In the passage quoted above there is, apart from its uncritical celebration of the "virtue" of rich nations and cities, the oxymoronic yoking in "cultural economy" of analytic opposites which can be united only through a far-reaching process of social reconstruction. The possibility that what might be required is the shift to a radically, rather than marginally, different socioeconomic system is not entertained.

There is a contradiction between highlighting the income-generating effect of "culture" in a context of selective "redevelopment" and placing the cultural dimension at the heart of a reconstitutive urban and social policy. An important attempt to find a way out of this contradiction into an approach to cultural policy that can meet deep-seated but marginalized social and economic needs has been made by Franco Bianchini.[14] He states:

> The 1980s saw a flourishing of studies on the economic importance of the cultural sector in different cities, and of the direct and indirect economic impacts of cultural activities and policies on employment and wealth creation. This tradition of studies was undoubtedly important to raise the profile of cultural policies and to advocate for increased public and private sector of investment in culture. In the 1990s, however, new methodologies and indicators will be needed to measure the impact of cultural policies and activities in terms of quality of life, social cohesion and community development.[15]

And, it should be added (taking us beyond Bianchini's analysis), new methodologies, *practices*, and indicators will be needed to sustain cultural initiatives as they impact on the economic domain. The "cultural economy," to revert to Peter Hall's term, is not a relationship of equals. The cultural economy would be one in which culture is commodified. It is not, then, just a question of trying to *balance* economic against social and cultural factors; it is a matter of trying to *integrate* them.[16] What is involved is the refusal to accept the dominant arrangement of social reality in which the category of "the economic" is opaque, impenetrable to noninitiates, and dominant, whereas the category of the social and cultural, which includes the human capacity of people as well as their dreams, occupies a separate dimension which influences but is not allowed to shape, the outcomes delivered by the economic sphere.

Informational Transparancy and the Reconstructed Socioeconomy

Sometimes, a utopian vision is needed to shake the institutions from shortsightedness and stasis and to enable people to think the unthinkable . . .[17]

> Re-recording the work [Schoenberg's Piano Concerto] . . . thirty-six years after my first attempt felt like an act of re-generation, as though I were contributing some continuity and progress to a world which, relapsing into nationalism, fascism and madness, appears to have lost interest in both.[18]

> For salamanders, regeneration after injury, such as the loss of a limb, involves regrowth of structure and restoration of function with the constant possibility of twinning or other odd topographical productions at the site of the former injury. The regrown limb can be monstrous, duplicated, potent. We have all been injured, profoundly. We require regeneration not rebirth, and the possibilities for our reconstitution include the utopian dream of the hope for a monstrous world without gender.[19]

A valuable attempt to make the local economic order, particularly the possibilities for citizens locked within it, transparent rather than opaque, and an arena for hopeful action rather than frustrated acquiescence, is made by Alain Lipietz in his *Towards a New Economic Order.*[20] Lipietz sees the need to rethink "economics" in terms of the environment and ecology. Lipietz reminds us of the etymologies of the words "economy" and "ecology." "Economy" is the study of the laws (norms) of the household sphere (*oikos*); "ecology" is the study of the meaning or rationality (*logos*) of the household sphere. Political ecology, which he advocates, emphasizes that that sphere is the whole of the city (*polis*). Whereas the horizon of economics barely extends beyond the human activities of production and distribution, that of political ecology extends to "human beings and nature as a single whole." Political ecology emphasizes that "human beings are nature, that nature is being irresistibly altered and humanized, sometimes for the better, but for the worse if one ceases to be aware of it" (p. 40). What is at stake is not nature pure and simple. "The environment defended by political ecology is mostly artificial: hedgerows, cultivated fruits, attractive residential areas, built-up areas to be protected from noise and fumes. In other words, political ecology is mainly urban ecology" (p. 49).

What Lipietz puts forward is an alternative to Neo-Fordism – in essence, a three-way rather than a two-way (state–market) compromise, in which the third partner, "the community," or the third sector, is given a central role. It may seem that this is just the same notion of "partnership" that has been taken up of late as conventional wisdom (if not as conventional practice). But what is involved is a new approach to how we define both the boundaries and interactions between the three sectors and the basis and nature of their dialog and interactions.

A crucial development in this direction would be the creation of a new sector of activity, a socially useful third sector or "welfare community." Workers in this sector, or rather the "intermediate agencies for socially useful schemes" that would pay them, would continue to receive from the state money equivalent to unemployment benefits. Their work would take up some areas of need that are met by unsatisfactory provision or not met at all at present. These are: (1) those now provided at a high cost by certain sectors of the welfare state: for example, basic medical care or care for convalescents; (2) those now provided by women, for nothing and without their having a say in the matter; (3) those which are provided infrequently or not at

all because they are too expensive (improvement of the environment, particularly in deprived areas, and cultural provision).

Lipietz's outline of the nature of this sector – of possibilities, problems, areas of negotiation – arise not only out of his academic work but also from political work in Seine-Saint Denis, "a run-down and crisis-ridden area just outside Paris" (p. 192). He is, then, more than aware of the problems of introducing and developing this third sector. But he is also aware that, once underway, it "would eliminate many of the problems of the Fordist welfare state. Active taxpayers would know what they are paying for: socially useful services. Workers in the third sector would have a useful job which would give them a more positive sense of identity, more social and self-esteem than moonlighting or part-time jobs in fast-food or shoe-polishing" (p. 325). Such a sector would play a major part in the move towards ecological responsibility on the basis of a new social ethic (one that would undermine "the dependency culture"):

> We can only move towards an ecological compromise in a society which perceives itself as a community and which refuses to abandon the marginalized. Fordism had at its disposal a powerful tool of solidarity – the welfare state, social security, various welfare benefits and allowances. These have been attacked, rightly, as bureaucratic. The alternative compromise must take on "individual" aspirations to be responsible for one's affairs, to see things through to their conclusion (p. 92).

The development of the third sector would begin with the opacity of the local economy and polity and seek to make their processes more transparent and open to genuine democratic control.

Lipietz's proposals for the third sector are at the heart of an account of an alternative social order that cannot be dismissed as merely localistic. Other policy-oriented concerns are with related changes in the organization of work, a model of consumption, and a significant role for increased free time, and on the development of a nonaggressive international economic order.

What a noncommodifying cultural economy would involve is – to use Castells' emphasis (above) – a *utopian* notion of regeneration. Such regeneration can be conceptualized along a continuum: at one pole, that "monstrous" reconstitution,[21] to which Haraway refers, and, at the other, that combination of continuity and progress to which Alfred Brendel refers. Reconstitutive regeneration, whether "monstrous" or not, is to be sharply distinguished from the established top-down model of state–capital collaboration, sometimes referred to as partnership or, indeed, as urban regeneration. That would be continuity for some but hardly progress. Whether the alternative is some bottom-up recipe, remains to be seen.

But, if reconstruction and regeneration are required, where, when, and how is this process to be set in motion? In seeking to answer this question, I draw on, in addition to the work of others, insights and "narrative knowledges" or informations derived from investigative visits in the early 1990s to King's Cross, London, and to Barcelona and Paris. Despite the immense significance for urban regeneration of the work of the King's Cross Railwaylands Community Group and of the Citizen Movement from which urban policy developed in Barcelona, they have not been understood. This is, as they say, no accident.

Sites and Processes: (1) Communication Exchanges

The new architectural monuments of our epoch are likely to be built as ''communication exchanges'' (airports, train stations, intermodal transfer areas, telecommunication infrastructures, harbours, and computerized trading centres.[22]

For many years, and even now, generations of black folks who migrated north to escape life in the south, returned down here in search of spiritual nourishment, healing, that was fundamentally connected to reaffirming one's connection to nature, to a contemplative life, where one could take time, sit on the porch, walk, fish and catch lightning bugs.[23]

One starting point would be at one of the "communication exchanges" in our cities. In the case of railway stations, these are often long-delayed "redevelopment" sites. One step in the reconstitution of such areas would have to begin with a revaluation of what is there. Is it correct to perceive sites like the King's Cross Railwaylands in London, as the developers do, as derelict and degraded property which unquestionably needs "renewal"? Or do such locations in fact play an essential part in the inner-city economy by providing cheap premises for activities ranging from theater scenery storage to cheap hostels, on which the inner-city economy and society depend?[24] Such areas may already have their own social order. The King's Cross Railwaylands Community Group and its associates have researched, documented and conceptualized what they call the "organizational landscape" as a social order.[25]

These continuities need to be maintained, but how can such sites be part of a profound and progressive regeneration? Should they be seen as opaque informational nodes or as relatively transparent "communication exchanges"? Luca Bertolini, in a paper on the redevelopment of railway stations and their surroundings,[26] sets out an account that can be said to begin to answer these questions and to "link the contemporary cultural studies invocations of spatiality with political economies of the production of space . . ."[27]

Bertolini first introduces us to Guido Martinotti's characterization of world cities.[28] Martinotti has explored the significance of the fact that, in addition to the residents, there are three other sets of people that now go to make up the population of a city: the commuters, the "city users" (tourists), and the "metropolitan businessmen" (managers of the global city economy). Bertolini then points out that all these subsets of the city's population "literally meet in the compressed space of railway stations. In and around them metropolitan incongruity gets to a maximum, while redevelopment tends to exacerbate the tensions."

Four walks at King's Cross would illuminate the contrast between established realities and the regenerative potential present there, and the informations and knowledges available. First, for rival informations, one needs a walk around the site informed by the plan for the usual development for cosmopolites (courtesy of the distinguished architect/master planner Norman Foster and the developers), and the Railwaylands Community Group's rival view of what that would have meant (see illustration).

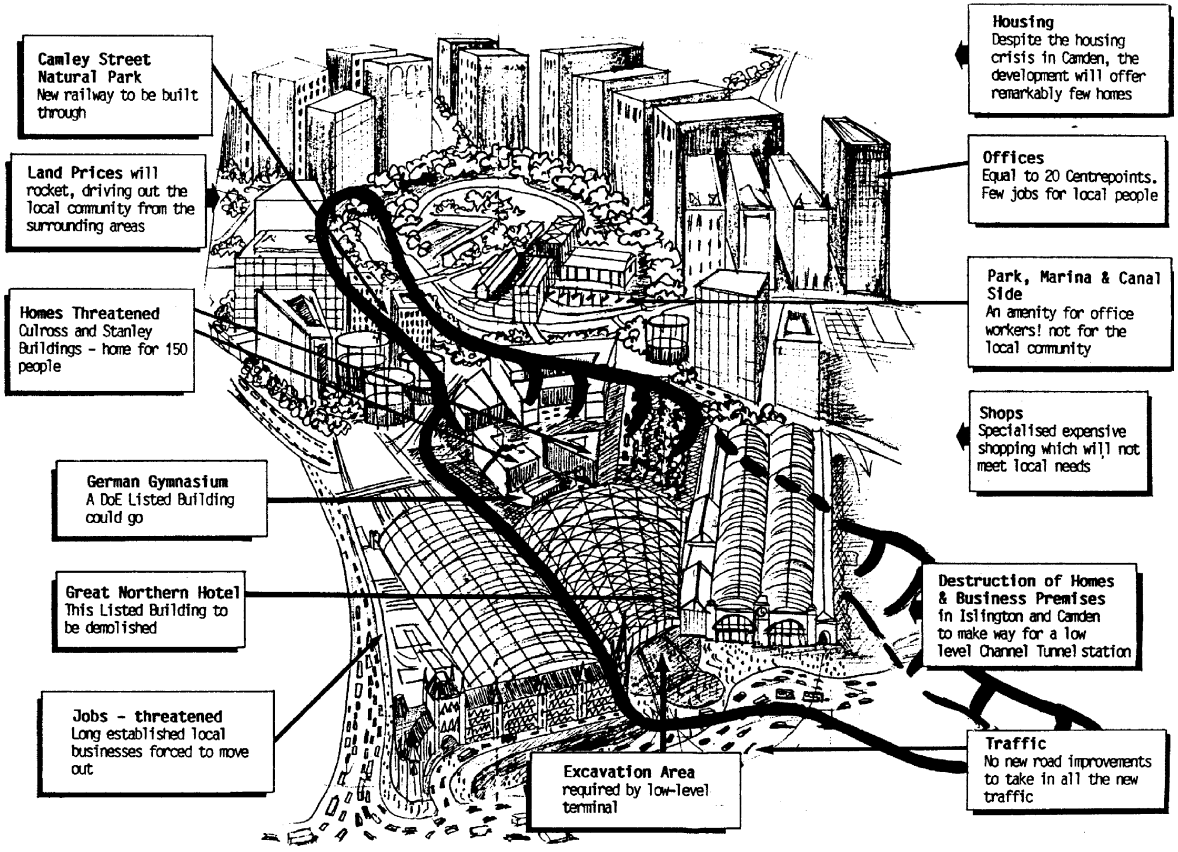

Figure 17.1 The cosmopolite development model? An interpretation by the King's Cross Railwaylands Community Group of the London Regeneration Consortium's and British Rail proposal for King's Cross.
Source: Michael Parkers, "Planning Prospects, Planning Education," in *Regenerating Cities*, 3 and 4, p. 23.

Second, a commuter's walk, with its somewhat limited knowledge of the area. As Phil Jeffries, former chair of the Railwaylands Community Group, put it: "They see the gas holders, the concrete batching plants, the buddleia growing out of walls that desperately need re-pointing, the run-down and decayed buildings. As they head for the tube, they see the litter, the people hanging around the station and experience the traffic and noise."[29]

Phil Jeffries offers a third walk, alternative information, to visitors: "I take them just round the corner of the public thoroughfares, just behind the old industrial buildings. I show them where the communities are. I show them some of the facilities the residents have created for themselves."

One of these facilities is the Camley Street Natural Park. This two-acre site was a derelict coalyard. The Camden Wildlife Group found it had been claimed by a remarkable array of wild plants. The Greater London Council bought it in 1981, and, helped by the Wildlife Trust, volunteers put in thousands of hours. This is the fourth category of walk, one that has to be imagined, the frequent purposeful explorations and working visits that have resulted in the creation of a nature park with a large pond, marsh, meadow, areas of young woodland and a well-equipped nature center. This is a breakthrough towards the third sector as envisaged by Alain Lipietz and an example of profound and transformative knowledge/information. "For those who were involved," comments Phil Jeffries, "and those who value it, the commitment is not simply to Camley Street but to the emotional and physical energy, the moral recreation, that went into it." In such locations it is possible to feel that "spiritual nourishment, healing," to which bell hooks refers, that involves "reaffirming one's connection to nature, to a contemplative life," a place where we can walk as citizens rather than *flâneurs*.

In discussing what is at issue at King's Cross between two rival approaches to development, Bertolini comments:

> The high-profit activities proposed . . . may also, at least sometimes, be an authentic contribution to the area's revitalization. However, the liveliness and long-term social and economic viability of the urban place the station identifies also rest on the plurality of its dimensions, on the variety of uses and people it is able to contain. The problem could be defined as one of a "coexistence of differences" if not, as it may be argued with a bit of idealism, of "integrating diversity" (p. 134).

What he considers is the process by which this might be achieved, offering a brief but important account of an approach to planning that seeks to build on contradictions, ambiguities, and conflicts.[30]

Nevertheless, as Michael Edwards has argued, "community-generated alternative plans are no panacea"; but "they can be a benign virus, putting the passion and the social critique, even some of the strategic thinking, back into urban planning."[31] What else is required?

Sites and Processes: (2) Citizen Movements

. . . if innovative social projects, represented and implemented by renewed local governments, are able to master the formidable forces unleashed by the revolution

in information technologies, then a new sociospatial structure could emerge made up of a network of local communes, controlling and shaping a network of productive flows. Maybe then our historic time and our social space would converge towards the reintegration of knowledge and meaning into a new Informational City.[32]

Manuel Castells sees such a social project in the Madrid and Barcelona citizen movement of the 1970s and 1980s. It was "the most innovative, powerful and productive movement in terms of its effects, certainly in Europe, and probably in the world."[33] He suggests that three essential lessons can be drawn from the movement (particularly in Barcelona). This strategy relates the knowledge and role of professionals to the wider informational processes of the media and politics through:

[1] ... a symbiotic interaction between people who needed professional experience, to really succeed in their movement and to know exactly what to target, and professionals who needed political support to implement their projects that were not simply an accommodation to the real estate interests or the logic of bureaucracy (p. 142).
[2] ... a very close alliance with the media. The media played a substantial role in making movements that maybe were only a minority in a particular neighbourhood, strike a chord in the society at large ... (p. 142).
[3] ... a very complex relationship to politics ... the idea is to broaden the participation beyond the usual partnership with business into a broader participation of society, but not eliminating at all the business input (pp. 142, 143).

Castells suggests that the usual approach to participation, codetermination, tends to constant negotiations and sometimes to blockage. His alternative is to build contradictory participation from different sectors around a collective urban project that includes humanistic values as well as economic ones. These humanistic values are essentially concerned with ethics (see below), particularly about what is just. It is the task of opinion leaders and local government to sustain and/or develop a collective urban project on this basis.

Table 1 is a provisional attempt based largely on interviews with a number of the urbanists/architects involved, to set out some major elements of a city-wide approach to urban regeneration. While its instances are from Barcelona and Paris, it was also designed to illustrate what was missing in London.[34] Whereas Paris and Barcelona could be said to have achieved high scores on all points – though with a largely elitist and bureaucratic bias in the case of Paris and a populist one in the case of Barcelona – London had low scores on all points. Paris and Barcelona, though, nevertheless stopped short – far short in the case of Paris – of the regenerative strategy proposed here. But the table begins to point towards a further dimension of the notion of a liberatory informational culture, one of pragmatic elaboration and focus.

A major need for the realization of this dimension of culture is for agencies that will contribute to the nurture, development, and linkages between pockets of innovation such as King's Cross, and to public awareness of them. This is not just a matter of political leadership (aspect 4) but also of intellectual speculation and

Table 17.1 Aspects of comprehensive approaches to urban change

Aspect	Barcelona	Paris
1. Comprehensive vision of the city in relation to its past and future	Olympic focus; return to the waterfront; "strategy of greenery"; "retracing its steps" (retaining qualities from past) as a Mediterranean and European city	1989 focus; and on national monuments (Grands Travaux); recovery of waterfront and green strategy (La Boucle de la Seine)
2. Role of popular experience, interest and action	Parks as confidence builders in anti- and post-Franco movement; subsequent loss of popular impetus	Monuments (Grands Travaux) etc. as sources of interest; suburbs, riots and Suburbs 89; but no popular impetus
3. Role of architects, planners, art, design, intellectual speculation, and research	Initially, a new popular role for planner/architects; art and a theory of urban design plus research	Architects as a new international elite
4. Political leadership, will and sophistication	Pujol and Maragal; an anti-Franco and pro-Catalan project	Chirac and Mitterand; Suburbs 89
5. Approach to public/private collaboration and partnership	Populist	Elitist and bureaucratic
6. Interaction of all aspects; moral/cultural dimension	"The city council got a certain moral power" (Bosquets)	"Ethical commitment" from above (Biasini); culture and urbanism

Source: Bob Catterall, personal research note 1991, revised 1995

action-research (3), and an explicit ethical or moral/cultural commitment (6) that connects and energizes all aspects.

The work that the table to some extent summarizes and interprets gave considerable emphasis to the role of architect-planners in urban redevelopment, but a more general category, as already indicated, is one of urbanists, broadly conceived (so as to include community activists, journalists, and artists as well as architects, planners, and academics). The challenge of such movements is that they take us beyond the predominantly commodified city and towards use-values. Castells has described the process in similar terms in relation to the Citizens Movement in Madrid under Franco:

> . . . another dimension had been introduced into the debate: the city as a use-value. If the historic city was to be preserved, if people's effort to urbanise vacant land was to be rewarded, if suburban expansion should be discontinued until all the children could be educated, if feasts were more important than traffic, and if citizens' participation had to become a crucial element in the planning process, then it followed that economic profit and bureaucratic power could not be the ultimate goals. Now there were new priorities . . .[35]

Some Interim Conclusions

Perhaps, in this next age of capitalism, an original thinker will arise somewhere in the world with a new theory that reconciles the market's imperative with unfilled human needs, without having to destroy the marketplace to do so. This would be an intellectual achievement for the ages – reordering economic rhythms that have governed for five or six centuries and offering capitalist enterprise a way out of its own destructive pathologies.[36]

I return to Castells' account of the Informational City as a Dual City and the duality and lack of integration in urban sociology. In the fractured, and often guarded, realms of Informational Cities, what is the alternative to tensions between social science and cultural analysis and related oscillations at the level of theory? Steven Seidman, presenting *The Postmodern Turn*, urges "a shift from sociological theory as a foundational practice to narrative knowledges which unite moral advocacy and social analysis".[37] But do we have to choose between "subjective" informational narratives and sociological theory and "scientific" procedure?

I have sketched in – with particular reference to King's Cross in London and, to Barcelona[38] – an approach to informational narratives which unites moral advocacy and social analysis. Though it gives sustained attention to bottom-up processes,[39] emphasis has also been given to the role in the overall process of a wide range of "urbanists" (including architects, planners, academics, artists, journalists, community activists). In the two cases considered – King's Cross and Barcelona – a key tool of enquiry has been the interview, conducted in these instances without proper social science rigor, without, for example, an objective approach to sampling or to a standardized procedure, but with sustained attention to the narratives deployed, their situation, and their informational and conceptual implications.

Such a project is seen as focused on urban regeneration/reconstitution involving, to use Castells' words, "the reintegration of knowledge and meaning into a new Informational City."[40] It has been suggested that applied political economy/ecology or the Marxian tradition cannot be simply put aside and that there is a crucial place for cultural analysis. But the focus is a practical one. There is a way out of the polarizations that surge through and around us in the Dualist City.

The dualistic and fragmented Informational City can be reconstructed. It is likely that there will be crucial opportunities early in the twenty-first century.[41] But there are no one-sided and exclusionary deliverances, whether from above or below. There are no short cuts. The process of reconstruction will not so much require original thinkers as urbanists in active dialog with social movements in which they seek to relate social analysis to narrative informations and knowledges.

NOTES

1. This chapter draws on, refines, and extends a paper, "There must be some way out of here – polarized cities and polarized urban studies?" contributed to the 1995 BSA (British Sociological Association) Conference on Contested Cities.

2. Manuel Castells, "European cities, the informational society and the global economy," *New Left Review*, 204 (1994), pp. 29–30.
3. David Brown, *Cybertrends: Chaos, Power and Accountability in the Information Age*, Penguin, 1997, p. 190 (his emphasis).
4. Frank Webster criticizes Castells' use of the notion of information in *The Information Age* and discusses the rival claims of "theoretical knowledge" and "action knowledge" (Giddens) in "Manuel Castells' analysis of the information age," *City 7*, pp. 105–21, and "Is this the information age: towards a critique of Manuel Castells," *City 8*, pp. 70–84.
5. I make use here of Basil Bernstein's powerful distinction between elaborated and restricted speech codes (see his *Class, Codes and Control*, 1–3, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971–3). I am grateful to him for many hours of discussion of this and related topics.
6. Susan Fainstein has provided a particularly useful analysis of political economy and post-structuralist approaches in her chapter, "Justice, politics and the creation of urban space," in *The Urbanization of Injustice*, ed. Andy Merrifield and Erik Swyngedouw, Lawrence and Wishart, 1995.
7. Introduction to *Readings in Planning Theory*, ed. Scott Campbell and Susain Fainstein, Blackwell Publishers, 1996, p. 1 and again on p. 11 (their emphasis).
8. Critics of the notion of the polarized or dual city include Manuel Castells and John Mollenkopf, *Dual City: Restructuring New York*, Russell Sage Foundation, 1991; Susan Fainstein, Ian Gordon, and Michael Harloe (eds.), *Divided Cities: New York and London in the Contemporary World*, Blackwell Publishers, 1992 (see the first and last chapters); Chris Hamnet, "Socio-economic change in London: professionalization not polarization," 1994, a paper contributed to the ESRC London seminars; and Peter Marcuse, "Not chaos, but walls: postmodernism and the partitioned city," in Sophie Watson and Katherine Gibson, *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*, Blackwell Publishers, 1995.
9. Castells and Mollenkopf, for example, argue: "Occupational polarization and income inequality become translated into widespread urban dualism . . . only when public policy mirrors the naked logic of the market." (*Dual City*, 1991, p. 413).
10. Castells, 1994, p. 19.
11. Peter Hall, *Cities in Civilization: Culture, Innovation and Urban Order*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1998, p. 8.
12. I draw here, and later, on parts of my review-article "Urban studies: urban crisis" in *Regenerating Cities*, 6.
13. Peter Hall's concluding chapter to James Simmie (ed.), *Planning London*, University College Press, 1994. I draw here on my review article, "Science cities . . . cyber cities . . . citizen cities," in *Regenerating Cities*, 7.
14. Bianchini covered some of this ground in his contributions to issues 1–2 and 3–4 of *Regenerating Cities*. See also Carol Kenna, "Partnership and Community Arts/A perspective from Greenwich," in *Regenerating Cities*, 1(2).
15. Franco Bianchini's concluding chapter to Bianchini and M. Parkinson (eds.), *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration: The West European Experience*, Manchester University Press, 1993.
16. This line of criticism also applies to Anthony Giddens on the Third Way (see his *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, Polity, 1998, pp. 99–100.) who also seeks "a balance beween the economic and non-economic . . ."
17. Manuel Castells, *The Informational City: Information, Technology, Economic Restructuring, and the Urban Regional Process*, 1989, Blackwell Publishers, p. 353.
18. Alfred Brendel, "On playing Schoenberg's Piano Concerto," *New York Review of Books*, February 16, 1995. This passage is repeated in Brendel's liner note to his 1995 CD, Philips 446 683–2.

19. Donna Haraway, "A manifesto for cyborgs: science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s," in Linda Nicholson (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, 1990, p. 223.
20. Alain Lipietz, *Towards a New Economic Order: Postfordism, Ecology and Democracy*, Polity, 1992. See also David Gibbs, *The Green Local Economy: Integrating Economic and Environmental Development at the Local Level*, Centre for Local Economic Strategies, 1992, and the chapter "The economy, stupid! Industrial policy discourse and the body economic," in J. K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (as we know it): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy*, Blackwell, 1996, pp. 92–119
21. A good source for the sociological imagination can be found in Manga videos. See my "Science cities . . . cyber cities . . . citizen cities," n. 13 above, and "L. A. Blues, Japanimation, architecture and urban analysis," in *City* 1–2.
22. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Blackwell Publishers, 1996, p. 422.
23. bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery*, Southend Press, 1993, p. 180.
24. UCL, Bartlett School, "King's Cross Second Report," 1990 (quoted in Susan Fainstein, *The City Builders: Property, Politics, and Planning in London and New York*, Blackwell Publishers, 1994, p. 128; see her chapter on King's Cross (and Times Square) for background, pp. 124–129 but not for an understanding of the radical implications of the work of the King's Cross Railwaylands Community Group).
25. See Michael Safier, "Leading from the ground up: organizational landscape and community-led urban regeneration," in *Regenerating Cities*, 3, 4.
26. Luca Bertolini, "Knots in the net: on the redevelopment of railway stations and their surroundings," *City* 1–2, pp. 129–37.
27. Michael Keith, "Street sensibility? Negotiating the Political by Articulating the Spatial," Merrifield and Swyngedouw (eds.) op cit., p. 139.
28. See Guido Martinotti, "Urbs Hospitalis. Social morphology and governance in the new metropolis," paper presented to the American Sociological Association, August 5–9, 1994.
29. Extracts from an interview published in Bob Catterall, "All aboard for another docklands?" *New Statesman*, January 10, 1992.
30. Related discussions are by Paolo Fareri, "Consensus building: a research programme in urban policy," and Alessandro Balducci, "Planning *with* the community: the Vicenza Project," both in *Regenerating Cities*, 7; also Alessandro Balducci, "Environmental restoration in central Lombardy: the difficult search for effective planning instruments," *City* 3–4, pp. 49–57.
31. Michael Edwards, "The potentialities of community-generated alternatives to developers' schemes," Economic and Social Research Council London Seminars, n.d.
32. Castells, *The Informational City*, p. 353.
33. "Citizen movements, information and analysis: an interview with Manuel Castells," *City*, 7, p. 141.
34. This was prepared in 1991 on the basis of brief journalistic research forays in Barcelona and Paris undertaken for Mark Fisher and Richard Rogers, *The New London*, Penguin, 1992. Both were at the time proponents of the grands Travaux in Paris and predisposed towards the merits of the Norman Foster masterplan at King's Cross (for the latter point, see the editorial in *City*, 1992, 8, pp. 2–3). The significance of the Barcelona citizen movement has yet to reach them. Nevertheless, they have shown considerable interest in developments in Barcelona, and Pasqual Maragall, the former (urbanistic) mayor of Barcelona, contributes a foreword to the useful final report of the Urban Task Force chaired by Lord Rogers, *Towards an Urban Renaissance*, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Region (distributed by E. and F. N. Spon), 1999.

35. Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*, Arnold, 1983, p. 262. One of the results of the collapse of Marxist triumphalism in the social sciences has been a swing away from any of its insights, no matter how valuable. Those unfamiliar with the distinction between use-values and exchange-values in relation to commodities will find a useful starting point in the glossary to Ken Morrison, *Marx, Durkheim, Weber: Formations of Modern Social Thought*, Sage, 1995. See also Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*, Vintage, 1999.
36. William Greider, *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism*, Penguin, 1997, p. 468.
37. Steven Seidman (ed.), *The Postmodern Turn: New Perspectives on Social Theory*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 9–10. See also my reference to the need to draw "on "history from below" and on approaches that derive from documentary filmmaking, the 'roman vrai' and Latin American testimonial literature" in a review "City life – infotainment, identity and action," in *City*, 7, particularly p. 189 (where I stake a claim for the importance of Paul Berman's book, *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968*, Norton, 1996).
38. I have limited myself to European developments, in which I have had direct access to the participants and sites. For global and multicultural perspectives see, for example, Roger Burbach, "The (un)defining of postmodern Marxism: on smashing modernization and narrating new social and economic actors," in *Rethinking Marxism*, 10, 1 (1998), pp. 52–65.
39. One of the greatest weaknesses of Anthony Giddens' sociological project is its lack of attention to one crucial form of action knowledge, the deep and often relatively invisible struggles associated with a bottom-up and transformative social movement. Thus, it is hardly surprising that Giddens sees bottom-up development as a "new strategy" (Anthony Giddens and Christopher Pierson, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity* Polity, 1998, p. 157). However, he does suggest that it is "surely important and in line with real possibilities generated by the global system."
40. Manuel Castells, *The Informational City*, p. 353. For a valuable preliminary reading of Castells' more recent work, *The Information Age* (1996, 1997, 1998), and with Jordi Borja, *Local and Global: The Management of Cities in the Information Age*, 1997, see Sophie Watson, "New orders, disorders and creative chaos: the information age and the network society," *Policy and Politics*, 26, 2, pp. 227–32, and her close reading of vol. II of *The Power of Identity*, in Watson, "From social movements to the politics of identity," in *City*, 7, pp. 133–9. There is a further need to reread *The City and the Grassroots* (1983) and *The Informational City* (1989). I have offered some preliminary indications above as to what that might involve. Castells himself offers a reading in my interview with him, "Citizen movements, information and analysis," in *City*, 7, pp. 140–55.
41. Peter Hall sets out, in his *Cities in Civilization*, and elsewhere, the possible significance of a fifth major wave (the so-called Kondriatieff wave) of technological, economic and social innovation forecast to begin around 2007–11. Whatever one's doubts about the existence of, and/or predictability, of such waves, future opportunities for "a way out of the destructive pathologies" (Greider) of capitalism can only be taken if urban analysis addresses such tendencies and possibilities. It is one of the many strengths of Hall's work that he addresses such a possibility. However, his consistently negative evaluation of the potential of grass-roots movements and, as argued above, the underdeveloped nature of his concept of "cultural economy" results in a failure to address that possibility effectively.