

Modern Cities

Modern Cities:

Ten Variations

By

William Solesbury

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PREFACE

Unlike many people I have little interest in nature. I find humans more engaging than flora and fauna. For their culture, their industriousness, their social organisation, their capacity to change and develop. And to me cities, with huge numbers of diverse people crammed together, are the apotheosis of this humanity.

Though I had a childhood ambition to be an architect, then trained and worked as a town planner for some years, it was never just the artefacts of cities that interested me. Rather the life lived there. I called my earlier book *World Cities*, *City Worlds*¹ (underlining now added) to express this. So, visiting cities I'll go to galleries, palaces, cathedrals and so on, but mostly I just like to walk, ride the bus or train, eat and drink in local joints—and observe the life of the place.

I always travel independently, avoiding group tours which impose someone else's view of what is interesting to see or do. Though I will take a day tour. Recently in both Moscow and Tashkent I signed up for a day tour to find I was the only person on it, which was great for personal conversations with an informed local. So I learned something, for example, in Moscow about defending street traders cleared from their pitches by police and in Tashkent about the hassle faced by a young Uzbeki seeking a UK visa to visit his married sister living in Swindon. In the previous book there is a lot of this personal experience, though not always explicitly acknowledged as such—it took a friendly reader of my draft to point this out.

This enthusiasm for cities has taken me across all the continents over the years. In the Introduction to the first edition of my earlier book I listed my city visits—beyond familiar Europe—which up to then ran alphabetically from Bangkok and Beijing through twenty two others to Vancouver and Washington. Since then I've added Addis Ababa, Buenos Aires, Guangdong, Havana, Jerusalem, Memphis, Mexico City, Moscow, Nashville, Ramallah, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Tashkent, Tel Aviv and Trieste to that list. Many of these put in an appearance later in this book.

Before arrival in a new city I do my research. Not just the guide books—Bradt, Rough Guide or Lonely Planet for preference—but also history, fiction, film and cuisine. Before a recent visit to Palermo I re-watched Visconti's magnificent film of Lampedusa's novel *The Leopard*, browsed a book on Sicilian Food, watched *The Godfather Part 3* (fans will know why),

read Barry Unsworth's novel *The Ruby in her Belly* about an Arab courtier under Norman rule, mugged up on the World War Two liberation of Sicily by US forces and their conscious restoration of Mafia power. Also a few episodes of the Italian TV series *Inspector Montalbano*. From my research I will devise a rough itinerary. But I usually add on one or two extra days stay to allow for the unexpected.

In all this I am trying to get below the surface of a place, grasp its essence, its *genius loci*. This preparation hopefully gives me clues on where to go in the city, especially off the tourist beaten track, what to look out for, and how to interpret what I observe. I hope that these insights are apparent in what I write. A colleague praised my writing as 'erudite but readable' and that has become my aim.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MODERNISATION OF CITIES

*'The future is already here—it's just not evenly distributed.'*¹

—William Gibson

We believe that we live in modern times: fast-paced, innovative, cosmopolitan, sophisticated. We regard ourselves as modern people: informed, engaged, articulate, rational, tolerant, self-aware. We readily embrace modern customs: exercise, active 24/7, holidays, foreign food. Our lives are assisted by many new tools: for communication with each other, for daily tasks like cooking and cleaning, for stimulating our senses through sight, sound and touch. We can travel further and faster than our forebears—time and space have shrunk. But we also know that all is not well with these modern times. There are great inequalities between rich and poor, both within the nations of the world and between them. Some people—usually minorities—are treated unfairly, even cruelly, by others, commonly majorities. In the 20th century there were two major wars between nations in which millions died, often killed by new forms of weaponry like chemical attacks, machine guns, tanks and aerial bombing; bloody civil wars have also scarred all continents. Epidemics and diseases have taken their toll: cholera, influenza, AIDs, Ebola. And our planet itself has come under threat from its degradation through air and water pollution, soil erosion, climate change and rising sea levels. Our modern times have been both good and bad. Modern cities have not escaped this ambivalence. On the one hand, they are the sites of glorious human achievements, the product of creativity in technology and social organisation, places where many people can live fulfilling lives. On the other hand, they—and often the same city—can be sordid, unhealthy, ugly and dangerous places, the sites of human misery and poverty. Modern cities can be either or both Heaven or Hell.

This modernity is the outcome of a number of thoroughgoing changes in the world over the last two centuries. One historian of the period argues that

“contemporary changes were so rapid, and interacted with each other so profoundly, that this period could reasonably be described as ‘the birth of

the modern world.'...The merging of all these trends does point to a step change in human social organisation. The scope and scale of change broadened dramatically. Modernity, then, was not only a process, but also a period which began at the end of the eighteenth century and has continued up to the present day."²

Over this period we have seen the emergence of a social, economic and political world that would have been unrecognisable to our 18th century predecessors. The modern city is part of that new world. In pre-modern times most people lived in the countryside. Cities were few and far between: some were the seats of rulers, either secular or ecclesiastical, with castles, palaces, temples as their focus; others were centres for land or maritime trade. All were small. With modernisation the industrial city emerged, focused on making and exporting new goods and services. They were larger and more extensive than cities hitherto, with large populations to feed and support. Now they are to be found in every continent.

In 1800 there were fewer than 50 cities in the world with more than 100,000 people. Among them were Beijing, London, Cairo, Vienna and Moscow. By 1900 there were more than 200 cities of this size. And by then there were 10 or more cities of one million plus, ten times bigger, including, in addition to those above, New York, Istanbul, Tokyo and Calcutta. Another hundred years on, by 2000, the one million city had become commonplace with more than 500 in the world, including many of which if you live outside their countries you have probably not heard, like Medan, Surabaya, Makassar, Palembang and Batam, all in Indonesia.³ Now there are over 30 cities in the world with populations of more than 10 million.⁴ The consequence of this modern growth of cities is the oft-quoted statistic that more than half of the world's population now lives in cities, and that proportion continues to rise. Moreover there are now two and a half times more of these city dwellers in the global South than in the global North.⁵

The creation of the modern city has been shaped by many kinds of change: another historian calls them 'transformations.'⁶ New technologies come most readily to mind, all rooted in scientific advances: the mechanisation of manufacture, new modes of transport and communication, new energy sources like steam, then gas, petroleum and electricity, new forms of construction with steel, concrete and glass. Economies changed in their structures, with goods and services replacing farming and fishing in importance, and in their economic processes, in particular, with the rise of capitalism. Economic specialisation across the world fostered the growth of trade, with consequent so-called globalisation, which has enriched some countries and cities but impoverished others. And these technological and economic changes have stimulated population migration on a far greater

scale than hitherto, such that today one in thirty people live outside their country of birth. Socially modernisation subverted traditional class structures in many societies, turning peasants into workers, and fostering the emergence of a 'middle class' of entrepreneurs, professionals and managers. Politics too has changed: a world of empires, was transformed, slowly and often painfully, into a world of nation states, many claiming to be governed—more or less—democratically. And most governments have sought increasingly to actively shape national economic and social development through fiscal, regulatory and investment policies. Culturally, internationalism has triumphed: for example, in the universality of a few world languages, English pre-eminently; in common forms of clothing with business suits for the elite, jeans and T shirts for the young; in world audiences for entertainment like movies, football, pop music; and in the widespread availability of many national cuisines. Beliefs have also changed: modernisation has seen some consolidation of the major world religions of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, alongside a growth of secularism. As a result of all these transformations, in the early 21st century there are only a few places in the world—in remote jungles or on remote islands—that still escape modernity. Certainly no cities in the world do.

For urbanisation has been an important aspect of this modernisation. It was both consequence and cause. The technological, economic, political, social and cultural transformations of the 19th and 20th centuries shaped today's world's cities: the activities within them, how they develop and function, their class structures, what they look like, their politics. But cities also provided the favoured setting for these transformations in bringing people together in greater numbers with shared knowledges and interests, in fostering radically new ways of production and communication, in creating large markets for labour and capital. So that, for the first time, city life became socially, economically and culturally dominant in the world.

This growth and modernisation of the world's cities, to become major centres of production, trading and consumption, has created many common characteristics among them. We can observe this most readily in their look. For millennia such cities as existed had consisted of buildings jumbled together with the occasional grand set piece for a church or park or palace. Now there is a greater degree of order in most, if not all, parts of the city. Paved streets criss-cross them, street lights provide illumination, beneath are pipes for water supply and sewage, above hang power and phone lines. Vans, lorries, cars, bikes and buses provide mechanical transport around the city, though residents still walk a lot. New building types have emerged, such as the skyscraper, the residential suburb, the office park and the shanty

town. Also ports, railway stations, city halls, hotels, department stores, shopping centres and airports. Boulevards and freeways supplement local streets and alleys and many cities now have tracked trams or metros. All in all, modern cities around the world have spread wider, risen higher and burrowed deeper. And they are subject to constant renewal of their buildings and infrastructure.

All this accommodates a dazzling array of human activity. Here large factories and small workshops produce goods; professionals of many kinds provide services; schools and colleges inculcate and expand knowledge; wholesalers, retailers and traders supply businesses and households; transport and communications connect the parts of the city and the city to the wider world. And the city's people—both residents and visitors—consume everything on offer: food, housing, clothing, healthcare, entertainment. All this is achieved by a rich mixture of large and small enterprises, operating formally or informally. The modern city is indeed a vast marketplace. Cities are also very productive places, frequently the economic powerhouses of their nations. They are also places rich in opportunities: for the entrepreneur setting up business, for the grown children embarking on life beyond their parental home, for the new immigrant wanting income and shelter, for the visitor seeking stimulus. With effort and time, in the city they will usually find what they need.

The modern city's populations engaged in these activities are commonly diverse. Cities have been the destinations of choice for many migrants in the last two centuries, both from within countries and from abroad. Moreover city economies demand very varied skills. So people of many different kinds come together in the world's cities. Increasingly there is widespread tolerance of such differences and sometimes a recognition that such diversity strengthens city communities, though occasional inter-group violence is not unknown. And within cities there is commonly a polarisation between haves and have-nots.

This human activity has combined in different ways to produced many different kinds of modern city. Some contemporary thought on cities takes the modern city of the global North as paradigmatic, noting where cities elsewhere in the world confirm or not to that now or expect them to do so in the future—Shanghai as the new New York or Mumbai now as Manchester was in the 19th century. My approach here is different. Taking my cue from the observation by William Gibson, the sci-fi writer, at the head of this chapter, I identify and characterise ten varieties of modern city, and exemplify them with brief profiles of 5, 6 or 7 cases of each—about 60 profiles in all. These categories are distinguished principally by their function, though also sometimes by common histories or politics. And I

argue that we find these kinds of city right across today's world. Some of them—like national capitals, destinations for pilgrims, city states or cosmopolitan cities—are not entirely new kinds of city since they existed in pre-modern time, but their modern forms exhibit novel characteristics. Others—like megacities of 10 million plus populations, boom towns, satellite cities, cities created by émigrés or refugees, cities under communist rule, and exploding cities of super rapid growth—are unique to modern times.

This is not intended as a comprehensive taxonomy of the world's modern cities. Not all can be fitted neatly into these ten categories—every reader will think of exceptions. Equally, my chosen exemplars are often cities that have multiple characteristics and so could fit in two or more categories. New York and London, profiled here as Cosmopolises, are also Megacities. Dubai and other Gulf cities are City States but also Resorts. Brasilia and Tehran are not just Capitals but also have the characteristics of Exploding Cities. And the astonishing Shenzhen in China, grown from a fishing village in 1980 to a 10 million plus city today, can be seen as all of Megacity, Boom Town and Exploding City. What I offer is a range of perspectives on these modern cities of the world.

Chapter 2 introduces *Resettlements*. The term is uncommon, but I use it to describe those cities that migrants with shared faith or ethnicity have created for themselves. They may be new cities or adaptations of existing cities. The migration may have been forced or voluntary, escaping persecution or just seeking a better life. The migrants have travelled and then resettled together, sharing the company and solidarity of their fellows, in a new place of their own making. This city may be expressive for them of a utopian ideal. My exemplary profiles are Salt Lake City for the Mormons, Tel Aviv for Jewish people, Freetown and Monrovia in West Africa for emancipated North American slaves. Also included, but with very different histories of migration, are the many refugee camps of the modern world like Gaza City and Dadaab: resettlements that—given their size and permanence—are effectively modern day cities. In all cases, contention and violence have often accompanied resettlement.

With *New Capitals* in Chapter 3 politics is the agency of city building. Historically, rulers have long built or rebuilt their capitals: better locations or better buildings was the supposed rationale but autocratic rulers' personal glory was also often part of the story. In the modern age Turkey's Ankara in the 1920s and Brasilia in the 1950s set the trend; Tehran in Iran planned a major makeover in the 1960s. More recently, post-imperial leaders have built Yamoussoukro and Oyala in Africa, Astana and Naypidaw in Asia as capitals of their newly independent nations. All have been playgrounds for ambitious architects and constructors, often foreign. Political opponents see

them as ruinously expensive follies. And ironically their planned or built new capital has often prefigured rulers' falls from power.

To create the *Cosmopolises* of Chapter 4 there have been large migrations, in some cases over long periods of time, to populate them. But, in contrast to the homogeneity of the Resettlements, it is the heterogeneity of residents, drawn from many parts of the world, that characterises cosmopolises: a variety of nationalities, languages, ethnicities, faiths, customs and values. The cosmopolis is then a microcosm of the world within a city. Today's cosmopolitan cities are mostly in the richer countries of the global North. My exemplars here are New York, Amsterdam, Toronto, Geneva and London, with Buenos Aires as the exception in the global South. Their individual histories differ in what has brought diverse peoples to them. They differ too in their social mix and in the related degree of social segregation. At their worst cosmopolises can be places of tension between communities; at their best they express a capacity to live together creatively and harmoniously.

Resorts in Chapter 5 are modern cities where people go in search of sensual, spiritual or emotional satisfaction: in my chosen profiles, as pilgrims to Mecca, as gamblers to Las Vegas, as tourists or retirees to Cancun in Mexico, Gold Coast in Australia and the Spanish Costa del Sol. Modern, international air transport has created mass markets for such escapism, particularly among richer westerners. Here their wishes are met by a service economy of hotels, restaurants, casinos, tours, theme parks and so on. All this is highly commercialised, run by international corporations, employing locals only seasonally and on low wages, so that much of the economic benefit may flow out of the local economy. Resorts are often in relatively poor countries and their governments may be complicit in these unequal arrangements. The outcome sometimes seems a kind of neo-colonialism.

In Chapter 6 are *Megacities* that, in the present day, are each home to more than 10 million people. Today there are over thirty of them, mostly in the global South. My exemplars are Boston-Washington in North America, Tokyo/Yokohama, Bangkok and Shanghai in Asia, Kinshasa in Africa, Mexico City in Latin America, and Rhine-Ruhr in Europe. They are a truly modern phenomenon, novel not just in population size and geographical spread, but in their polycentric forms, their diverse economies and complex transport systems. They thrive as places of opportunity. But life there can be tough: poverty, poor housing, unemployment and underemployment, congestion, crime, pollution are common. But they continue to flourish.

The *City States* in Chapter 7 are an oddity, as modern states that are really no more than a single city. There are not many of them in the world:

I profile Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Gibraltar, Monaco, Dubai and other Persian Gulf cities. They have very singular modern histories, many as survivors of the former British Empire. They have all found a role in a newly globalised world, chiefly in financial services, in gambling, in upmarket tourism and as low tax havens. Their residents are among the world's richest people, but they require a poor servant class to support their lifestyles. Their governments, often autocratic, play a dominant role in sustaining their economies.

Satellite Cities in Chapter 8 are total new builds outside but close to an existing city, often with a high quality transport connection. They are consciously planned to attract households and businesses away from the older, congested city. Satellite cities were created initially in Western Europe in the early 20th century, then later the concept was exported to other parts of the world. The exemplars are Letchworth and Milton Keynes in Britain, Marne la Vallée in France, Cairo's many new towns, the Israel settlements in the West Bank, Songdo in South Korea, and Masdar in the United Arab Emirates. They have all been the sites for urban experimentation in their economies, architecture, transport or social relations. Most have been realised, not always successfully, through partnerships between public authorities and private capital. But they differ politically as products of social democracy or neo-liberalism.

Chapter 9 introduces *Boom Towns*: cities—not just towns—that in recent times have expanded economically with new businesses which are the product of bright minds and/or cheap labour and always ready capital, often from both private and public sources. State development policies are often part of the story. The exemplary cases here are Silicon Valley in California, Bangalore in India, the various technopolises in Japan, Qiaotou and Shenzhen in China, and Dhakar in Bangladesh. All differ in the products they produce but share an energy that fuels their enterprises, though not without downsides in their human and environmental consequences.

In the mid-late 20th century one third of the world's population lived under communist regimes. Chapter 10 considers whether this produced uniquely *Communist Cities*. Only in the Soviet Union after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution was this issue openly addressed with various ideas about creating 'the city of socialist man', exemplified here in Moscow and Magnitogorsk. The development of other profiled cities in the communist sphere, like Tashkent in Uzbekistan, Sztalinvaros in Hungary, Akademgorok in Russia and Bucharest in Romania offered opportunities for some originality in city building. Even so urbanisation became mostly just a by-product of industrialisation. And in terms of city design, the autocratic megalomania of rulers shaped cities under communism more

than its political ideology. Since communism's demise from 1990 onwards its cities have quickly conformed to capitalist norms.

Chapter 11 is titled *Exploding Cities*, a descriptor for the many cities in the nations of the global South that are growing at breakneck speed, from the immigration of people from their small towns and rural areas and the high birth rate of the city's youthful populations. The exemplars are Nairobi in Kenya, Ulaanbaator in Mongolia, Mumbai in India, Rio de Janeiro in Brasil, El Alto in Bolivia and Istanbul in Turkey. Their rapidity of growth overwhelms orderly processes of city development. So what characterises them is informality: low cost, self-managed, frequently ingenious ways of providing work and income, shelter and transport.

Finally, a qualification. There is another kind of city in the modern world not covered here: failed cities. Historically many cities have prospered, then declined. Modern times has seen this in the misfortune of some industrial cities which succeeded in the 19th and early 20th century stages of industrialisation, only to founder in the later 20th century. They may have exhausted natural resources, like minerals, on which they depended; their products may have become uncompetitive in outside markets; they may have lost favour as places to attract workers to live; or new transport routes may have passed them by. Above all, in whatever way they will have failed to respond successfully to the ever-changing modern world in which they found themselves. Other cities, with comparable disadvantages, may have successfully 'reinvented' themselves, but they did not.

Detroit in the United States is commonly seen as an extreme case. From 1900 onwards it was the home of US vehicle manufacture with Ford, Chrysler and General Motors—that's why it was called Motown. But by the 1980s these companies had lost their competitive edge to European and Asian producers. Today Detroit is just a ghost of its former self. Between 1950 and 2010 it lost over a million people, 60% of its population. For those remaining median family income is about half the national average, unemployment is 2.5 times the national average, its murder rate is ten times higher than New York, vast areas of the city are vacant or derelict. Politically-driven attempts to build the city out of its decline with new property and infrastructure have largely failed. It is human capital—educated, entrepreneurial and energetic people—that Detroit now lacks. It is not an example of a modern city for this book. But it serves as a warning—never to ossify or stand still—to those that are.

CHAPTER TWO

RESETTLEMENTS: FOR EXILES, ÉMIGRÉS AND REFUGEES

*SALT LAKE CITY, FREETOWN AND MONROVIA, TEL AVIV,
GAZA CITY, DADAAB AND OTHERS*

In *When I Lived in Modern Times*, Linda Grant's fictional account of a young English Jewish girl's migration to Israel in the post World War Two period, she captures the sense of being caught up in a mass movement of people:

“As I sailed the Mediterranean Sea, all over the world people were in mass transit. We were moving like tides across the continents and the seas, troopships full of men stamping their boots in impatience, hats flying into the air at the sight of land. The roads and railways were engorged with human, sweating, shivering, stinking, parched and pissing flesh travelling not for adventure or for pleasure or to take a rest cure or acquire a tan or out of boredom or to find romance or to cure a broken heart—but because they had a hunger for the good earth of home under their feet.”¹

The ‘good earth of home’ was where they were going to, not where they had come from. Her heroine's final destination in Israel was Tel Aviv.

Sometimes whole peoples have migrated. Taken together such people can become known as a diaspora.² The essence of a diaspora is not just that people are dispersed from an original homeland but also that they have a strong group consciousness, often supported by a collective memory—even a myth—about that homeland. As an expression of this they may maintain a common cultural heritage, exemplified in their new country by mother tongue newspapers, clubs and societies, ethnic food shops and restaurants, rituals and ceremonies, even political lobbies. Over time and across the world there have been many such diasporas. The well-known historical examples are those of the Jews from the centuries before Christ with the expulsion to Babylon and subsequently elsewhere; the Africans transported to the Americas by the slave trade of the 18th and 19th centuries; the Irish, of whom 25% left in the famine years between 1845 and 1851; the

Armenians, particularly after the massacres of 1915; and the Palestinians dispersed in the Middle East from the creation of Israel in 1946 and subsequent wars. But there are many others: Indians, Chinese, Lebanese, Turks, Bengalis, Italians, Caribbeans including Cubans, Mexicans, North Africans, Afghans, Russians, Vietnamese and Roma among them. What binds such migrating peoples may be their faith, their ethnicity, their politics or their nationality.

These people have migrated for a number of reasons. Many seek to escape oppression or starvation as with the Jews, the Armenians, the Irish and the Palestinians. Some have migrated for work, compulsorily with the African slaves, voluntarily with Turks, Italians, Mexicans and others. The pursuit of trade has motivated some, notably the Chinese, Indians and Lebanese. And there have been colonialists from the European imperial nations, and from Tsarist and Soviet Russia in central Asia. At the ends of the 20th century's many wars, people were often forcibly transferred between territories, as with the Greeks and Turks exchanged in the 1920s, the Germans expelled from Poland, Hungary, Romania and other East European nations at the end of World War Two and the Palestinians in 1947 and after.

They are *émigrés* rather than just emigrants—my Oxford dictionary gives the etymology of the word as French, the past participle of *émigrer* meaning 'emigrate', first used in the late 18th century to denote a person escaping the French Revolution. Some may be better called 'refugees'—again the etymology is French, from *réfugié* meaning gone in search of refuge. The two words—*émigré* and *refugee*—express the duality in the experience of such people: their origins and their destinations. Both are exiles, who have departed their traditional homeland and are in search of somewhere new—a hostland—to resettle. Once arrived, the migrants often settle among their fellows with whom they share nationality, ethnicity, faith or place of origin. So immigrant neighbourhoods are found in many modern cities, sometimes giving them a cosmopolitan character.³ But there are also cases where the immigrants have created not just a neighbourhood in an existing city but a totally new city of their own: what I call a resettlement. To achieve this they have to be a group of people with a shared sense of mission and with resoluteness of purpose. Is it possible to place them in the utopian tradition of city building, creating places that are "an expression of desire."⁴ But, unlike the imaginary writers of the past, they are building their utopia for real. Salt Lake City in Utah, founded by Mormons in 1847, is a premier example.

Salt Lake City

In 1823 Joseph Smith, while living in upstate New York, had a vision that directed him to a buried book containing the religious history of an ancient people. He published what he described as a translation, called the Book of Mormon, and founded what became the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Its adherents migrated west into Ohio, Missouri—where a city of Zion or the New Jerusalem was planned—and Illinois. But conflicts with other settlers resulted in frequent displacements and in 1844 Smith was murdered by a mob. In 1847 Brigham Young, Smith’s successor as leader, took a wagon train of a thousand Mormon pioneers westward beyond the then boundaries of the United States. Upon reaching the Salt Lake Valley, Young is recorded as saying to his followers ‘This is the right place’, claiming to have seen it in a vision prior to their arrival. Within four days he designated the building site for the Salt Lake Temple. The new city grew rapidly with the immigration of Mormon church members from both within the US and overseas, mostly from Britain and Scandinavia, often recruited and assisted by Church missionaries.



Salt Lake City: the Temple

Other kinds of immigrant were quickly drawn to Salt Lake City. Gold was found nearby and attracted miners, traders and their followers. The first transcontinental railroad passed nearby from 1869 and the first transcontinental highway from 1913—the city became nicknamed ‘The

Crossroads of the West. Chinese, who originally worked laying the railroad, arrived. As did European ethnic groups, like elsewhere in the American West. Also East Coast missionaries from other faiths—Episcopalians, Lutherans, Catholics and Greek Orthodox—who established their own places of worships. Latterly Hispanics have settled. The city grew from a population of 6000 in 1850 to 50,000 in 1900, 180,000 in 1950 and 190,000 in 2010; that of the wider metropolitan area is now 2 million. Today Salt Lake City, like many other North American cities, has a service economy: government, trade, transportation, utilities, business and professional services are the main employment. It has also become a tourist destination, not just for visiting Mormons but also for winter sports in the nearby Wasatch Mountains.

Less than half of Salt Lake City's population are now members of the Mormon Church. The Mormons have seemingly been unwilling or unable to exclude non-Mormons from the city they had founded; indeed faith has lapsed in some of the founding families. Utah state action put an end in 1868 to the theocratic rule that Brigham Young had initially established, then later in 1878 it outlawed polygamous marriages and there were appropriations of some church assets. From the 1920s zoning ordinances replaced Church control of the city's growth. Nevertheless Mormon influence remains evident in Salt Lake City. Its original layout was based on a template for the city of Zion that Joseph Smith devised. The Mormon Temple still stands, dominating the central Temple Square with many other Mormon buildings nearby, and serves as the point of origin for the city's street grid with north-south and east-west axes and addresses as coordinates, like latitude and longitude. The Church still has a major property portfolio and is an active agent of redevelopment. Scandinavian shops and eateries persist. And the Mormon Tabernacle Choir broadcasts nationwide a weekly radio programme from Salt Lake City, as it has done since 1929. They also sang at President Trump's 2017 inauguration.

To describe the Africans brought to the Americas in the 18th century as émigrés or even emigrants seems hardly right. There was nothing voluntary in the migration and its motivations. They were seized, then exported and sold into slavery in the United States, the Caribbean and South America. They settled—or rather were settled by their new owners—largely on plantations growing cash crops like sugar, cotton, tobacco and oranges. And their slavery confined them there. During the American War of Independence from 1775-83 some escaped this confinement and responded to a promise of freedom if they switched allegiance to the British.⁵ At the war's end, with the defeat of the British, their loyalist supporters—both

Blacks and Whites—were settled in Nova Scotia, Canada. But the Blacks became discontented about their conditions there and many sought an alternative hostland back in Africa.

Freetown and Monrovia

In 1792 1300 black passengers sailed on fifteen ships from Halifax, Nova Scotia to West Africa, under the aegis of the Sierra Leone Company and given free passage by the British government and settled in what was named Freetown. It was built on the American grid pattern with wide streets and wider avenues. Other immigrants arrived, many of them newly liberated slaves from the West Indies (known as Maroons) and West Africans freed from slave trading ships intercepted by the Royal Navy (who became known as Recaptives). In a similar history, in the 1820s a private organisation, the American Colonisation Society, promoted the settlement of 300 freed slaves on territory east of Sierra Leone. Their settlement was called Monrovia, after James Monroe, fifth President of the USA and a prominent supporter.

Over time in both cities the original settlers—known as Creoles in Freetown and Americo-Liberians in Monrovia—became minorities in increasingly diverse societies, Muslim as well as Christian. But they maintained an elite status, working in trade, administration or professions and living rather separate lives. Indeed they

“knew only one type of relationship: master-slave. Their first move upon arrival in this new land, therefore, was to recreate precisely that social structure, only now they, the slaves of yesterday, are the masters, and it is the indigenous communities whom they set out to conquer and rule...unable to set themselves apart from the locals by skin color or physical type, [they] try to underline their difference and superiority in some other way. In the frightfully hot and humid climate, men walk about in morning coats and spencers, sport derbies and white gloves. Ladies usually stay at home, or if they do go out into the street ... they do so in crinolines, heavy wigs, and hats decorated with artificial flowers. The houses...are faithful reproductions of the manors and palaces built by white plantation owners in the American South...They are ardent Baptists and Methodists. They build their simple churches in the new land, and spend all their free time within, singing pious hymns and listening to topical sermons.”⁶



Freetown: Resettlers' architecture

In 1807 Freetown was released from government by the Sierra Leone Company's appointees and became a British Crown Colony. One consequence was the creation of Hilltown, a 'Whites only' suburb for colonial administrators, reached by a 'Whites only' railway. In 1847 Monrovia parted company with the American Colonisation Society and became the capital of the new Republic of Liberia, the first independent republic in Africa. Sierra Leone only acquired post-colonial independence in 1961. Missionaries were active in both cities and schools, churches and hospitals were built. European and Levantine traders settled. Public health was long a problem with yellow fever, cholera and malaria prevalent; more recently the Ebola epidemic. The social and political dominance of the original immigrants in Freetown and Monrovia lasted for many decades. But in the late 20th century both Sierra Leone and Liberia succumbed to authoritarian rulers, military coups and subsequent civil wars. Freetown and Monrovia were decimated: their economies shrank, their streets were

unsafe and swathes of the city became derelict, food supply was precarious, abductions into rival militias, even of children, were common. In the 1990s outside military and political intervention, from the United Nations, Nigeria and Great Britain, finally restored some order. Today Freetown is a city of a million people, the capital and business centre of Sierra Leone, characterised by 'a unique arrangement of communities, ethnicities, faiths and languages'⁷. Monrovia likewise now has just over one million people.

This historical resettlement of black people in these new African cities was completely outnumbered by their 20th century internal migration from the USA's rural South, where the successors of 18th century slavery still largely lived, to its northern and western cities, expanding greatly the small black communities already established there. Recruitment of young men to booming industrial work to meet demands arising in World War One was the initial trigger, but—as with many migrations—the momentum then established continued afterwards. Altogether over 5 million people migrated between 1925 and 1975, after which numbers diminished. US historians have called it the Great Migration, exceeding by far in numbers the Gold Rush of the 1850s or the Dust Bowl migration to California of the 1930s⁸. They moved in three streams: from the coastal states of Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas and Virginia up the eastern seaboard to Washington, Philadelphia, New York and Boston; from Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas and Tennessee travelling the Mississippi valley to Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee and Pittsburgh; and from Louisiana and Texas to the West Coast. Most travelled by train, obliged to move—at a stage of their journey—from segregated carriages to integrated carriages to comply initially with southern and then with northern state laws. Through this migration “a peasantry became a proletariat.”⁹

But life could be tough in their new host cities. Martin Luther King remarked in 1966 “Chicago has not turned out to be the New Jerusalem.”¹⁰ It was very cold in winter, home might be in a tenement, jobs might be insecure, income slight, children often went off the rails. Racial prejudice restricted access to jobs, housing, finance and services and led to occasional riots. The host cities became progressively more and more segregated as white families—themselves often former immigrants from Europe—abandoned their neighbourhoods and their schools and black people moved in. In many cities the lives of Blacks and Whites rarely intersected outside work. In the 1980 census the top ten most segregated US cities were Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Newark, Gary, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Baltimore and St Louis: all of them receiving stations of the Great Migration. Isabel Wilkerson writes of this migration:

“Its imprint is everywhere in urban life. The configuration of the cities as we know them, the social geography of black and white neighborhoods, the spread of housing projects as well as the rise of a well-scrubbed black middle-class, along with the alternating waves of white flight and suburbanization—all of these grew, directly or indirectly, from the response of everyone touched by the Great Migration. So, too, rose the language and music of urban America that sprang from the blues that came with the migrants and dominates our airwaves to this day. So, too, came the people who might not have existed, or become who they did, had there been no Great Migration. People as diverse as James Baldwin and Michelle Obama, Miles Davis and Toni Morrison, Spike Lee and Denzil Washington, and anonymous teachers, store clerks, steelworkers, and physicians, were all products of the Great Migration. They were all children whose life chances were altered because a parent or grandparent had made the hard decision to leave.”¹¹

By 1980 the population of many of these cities of the North and West was one third or more black. Slowly, more and more of the labour market opened up to them. Civil rights were strengthened. In time many cities elected black Mayors, all from immigrant families: first in Cleveland in 1967, then Los Angeles in 1973, Detroit in 1974, Chicago in 1983, Philadelphia in 1984 and New York in 1990.

In other US cities latino Mayors have since followed in their footsteps. For in the late 20th century Hispanics from Latin America have been the new émigrés who have changed the character of many US cities, especially in the South and West. Mexicans have been crossing the Rio Grande into the Texas border city of El Paso for many decades and today El Paso and neighbouring Juarez in Mexico are effectively one trans-border, binational, bilingual city of over 2.7 million people—presumably Trump's proposed wall will divide it. Cubans have also long migrated to Miami, usually when they found themselves on the losing side of that country's many revolutions and regime changes. Those who came following Fidel Castro's assumption of power in 1959, when supporters of the overthrown dictator Batista and others who did not fancy Castro's politics fled in large numbers, were aided and supported by the US government as political refugees. Miami is often termed 'the Capital of Latin America' and indeed its business services, its port and airport and its media industries are tied closely to those markets. Both El Paso/Juarez and Miami now have Spanish-speaking majorities.

Like the African-Americans returning to West Africa in the early 19th century, Jewish immigrants to Israel later that century and continuing since were embarked on a return journey, seeking a hostland in what had, millennia before, been their homeland. This migration was spearheaded by the Zionist movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, seeking in

Palestine, in the words of its slogan, ‘a land without a people for a people without a land’—the first half of the slogan is contested by Palestinians. Jewish immigrants found Turkish and Arab landowners willing to sell to them. For some their aspirations were to create co-operative agricultural settlements, the kibbutzes. But there was another ambition among some Zionists to create a uniquely European city in Palestine—“out of a yearning to construct Odessa and Moscow and Warsaw, and once inside them to try to forget the perpetual blue skies and the yellow, implacable sun.”¹²

Tel Aviv

This was to become Tel Aviv on the Mediterranean coast. A number of Jewish settlements had been created in the late 19th century around the ancient city of Jaffa which had long been home to a mix of Arab, Jewish and Christian communities. But the foundation myth for modern Tel Aviv dates to 1909 when a group of Jews acquired the title to some sandy dunes a mile north of Jaffa, and divided the land into sixty-six plots, which were assigned by lot—a sign of their idealism, since a lottery ensured that no one could bid for a better position and rich and poor would have to live side by side. It was named Tel Aviv: in Hebrew ‘tel’ is a man-made mound, symbolising the ancient, and ‘aviv’ means Spring, symbolising renewal. It grew rapidly. By the mid 1920s Jewish immigration had boosted the new city to over 30,000 people, in the 1930s to 150,000 and by 1948, at the time of the UN’s creation of the state of Israel, it had 244,000 people, a third of the new state’s Jewish population. All through the city’s history, the non-governmental Jewish Agency has supported the resettlement of Jews. Today Tel Aviv is a city of 400,000, second only to Jerusalem in size. It is the country’s pre-eminent business, finance, high tech industry, research and development centre; most foreign embassies are also here. It has all the trappings of a modern, 21st century city: high rise flats and offices, theatres and galleries, an international airport, a planned light rail system, world cuisine, night life, beaches, hotels, football teams, and annually a marathon and a Gay Pride festival. Its population remains young and growing. Some Israelis refer to Tel Aviv disparagingly as ‘The Bubble’, implying a disconnection from national life.



Tel Aviv: cafe life

The city has had a turbulent history. Initially it was under the Ottomans, then after World War One under the British mandate, then from 1948 in Israel. Through the decades there has been violence—riots, terrorism, abductions, assassinations, guerrilla warfare—between the Jews and the British and between the Arabs and the Jews. But the émigré Jews have always come out on top. Today Tel Aviv’s population is 90% Jewish. They, or their forebears, have come from all parts of the Jewish diaspora. In 1921 Tel Aviv gained autonomous administrative status, emancipated from Jaffa, with its own law court, police service and fire station; in 1934 it became a municipality. In the 1930s too a new port was built, so future immigrants could reach the city direct. Initially what the immigrants built was retro in style. Then, with an influx of European refugees, Tel Aviv imported the internationalist architectural style of 3-4 storey apartment blocks and villas in what became known as the White City, now a UNESCO World Heritage site for its fine collection of over 5000 Modernist buildings. But there were also slums, where Arabs and poor Jews lived and today there are also shanty towns for newer, non-Jewish immigrants. Ironically Jaffa, from which its Arab population was largely expelled in 1948, is now the ‘cultural quarter’ of Tel Aviv with restaurants, galleries and boutiques.

Less than 100 kilometres down the East Mediterranean coast from Tel Aviv are the very different émigré cities of the Gaza Strip, an area 40 kilometres long and between 6 and 12 kilometres wide, bordered by Israel and Egypt. This enclave originated in 1949 at the end of the Arab-Jewish hostilities that followed the creation of the state of Israel. Palestinian refugees, displaced from Israel, joined the existing Gaza population, increasing it from 80,000 to 240,000. Since then Gaza has been ruled successively by an All-Palestine government, then the Egyptian army, then

the Israelis, then a new Palestinian Authority and since 2007 by Hamas, a political party in opposition to the Palestinian Authority. The population in the Strip has swelled, from further immigration and a high natural birth rate, to 1.7 million today.

Gaza

Gaza is a mix of old towns, modern suburbs and refugee camps, often merging uncomfortably with each other. Gaza City, with about 500,000 inhabitants, is the largest city in the entire Palestinian territories. It has a long history, inhabited since at least the 15th century BC, long an important stop on the Cairo-Damascus trade route. dominated by different peoples and ruled by successive empires. The modern municipality of Gaza City was established in 1893. There is an Old City, historically with Muslim and Christian quarters, with seven gates and surviving mosques, churches, bazaars and hammams. Around this core are modern suburbs, built in the 20th century, including some built since 1949. There were some Israeli settlements but their populations were withdrawn in 2005. The upscale Gaza Mall opened in 2010. There are four universities. Along the 20 miles of public beach are new seafront hotels, many with international sounding names: Grand Palace, Adam, Cliff, Marna House.



Gaza refugee camp

But this apparent normality is deceptive. Those hotels, for example, have their own generators to protect themselves from the daily power cuts, their guests are mostly from UN agencies, NGOs and foreign media living on expense accounts, their favourite restaurant the Roots Club, where—as Dervla Murphy in her book on Gaza tartly remarks—“one meal costs more than a Shatti couple’s monthly food supply.”¹³ Shatti is a nearby camp of 80,000 poor people in an area originally allotted to 23,000 Palestinian refugees in 1949. Here, Murphy reports—

“People shelter below and behind jagged lengths of corrugated iron, shreds of carpet, ragged curtain fragments, sheets of cardboard nailed to half-burnt door panels, battered plastic trays inscribed ‘Adam Hotel.’ In most such shanty-towns sections of motor vehicles are conspicuous but in blockaded Gaza every ounce of metal must be recycled. Spatially this camp forms an integral part of Gaza City but it has its own distinctive aura—and not only because of sewage problems. Incongruous CCTV cameras are mounted high on gable walls at several alleyway junctions, seeming to mock the destitution all around.”¹⁴

70% of today’s Gaza population are refugees, 1.2 million in total, over half under 17 years old. 540,000 of them live in eight refugee camps. Here, and in the older towns and suburbs, life is tough. The Hamas regime is repressively conservative, against—not always effectively—cinemas and alcohol, girls wearing jeans or riding pillion on motorbikes. There is occasional fighting between it and political opponents. Electricity supply is intermittent. Transport of goods or people into and out of Gaza is restricted by the Israelis: the coast is patrolled by its navy, the airspace by its air force, the land borders are fenced and walled with just a few controlled gates. Since the Hamas takeover military hostility with Israel has increased and the Gazans have always been the losers: the outcome of the 2014 hostilities was over 2000 Palestinians killed, including 1500 civilians, and 400,000 homes destroyed or damaged; 70 Israelis died. Unsurprisingly the economy of Gaza is fragile, unemployment and poverty are high. The population is largely dependent on humanitarian assistance from UN agencies.

Gaza is only one of the world’s refugee settlements. In 2016 the UNHCR (the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) identified 65.6 million displaced people in the world—an all-time high.¹⁵ Not all are refugees, that is, people fleeing from one country to another; others are people displaced within the borders of one country—by civil war, natural disaster, starvation or poverty—or stateless persons. The UN agency originated as a response to the problem of millions of refugees

in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of World War Two. Initially accommodated in camps, they were quickly resettled in old homelands or new hostlands in Europe or overseas and the last camp closed in 1957. Others since then have not been so fortunate. The UNHCR has ruefully observed that

“while wars today seem to kill fewer people than past conflicts, greater numbers of civilians appear to be exposed and vulnerable to violence, especially where the state offers little protection for citizens... Many people are forced to flee their homes to destinations that are insecure, to urban areas, to countries where access to asylum is restricted, and to distant new destinations. Protracted conflicts also translate into seemingly permanent displacement, often in dire conditions and in dependency on aid.”¹⁶

The agency pursues three kinds of ‘durable solution’ (their jargon) for refugees: voluntary repatriation, migration to a third country, integration where the refugees have initially settled. This third solution applies to the majority of refugees, but host countries are frequently reluctant to consider large-scale settlement of refugee populations in existing towns and cities. So planned and managed refugee camps are constructed. They are particularly found in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. A typical camp has about 10,000 inhabitants. Some are much larger, permanent and longstanding, home to second or even third generations of the original immigrant families—effectively cities in all but name. They commonly have broadly equal numbers of males and females, either in families or as singles; but children are usually more than half of the residents. They have accommodation in tents or simple shelters, shared washing areas and latrines, a hospital or clinic, a food distribution centre, places of worship and, in some cases, schools and training centres, markets and shops; importantly they have security barriers, checkpoints and personnel to restrict movement in and out and to maintain order. Camps are administered by the host country’s government, UN agencies or international NGOs like the Red Cross. Sadly, there seems to be no end to new camps for such refugees: the latest is at Cox’s Bazaar in Bangladesh for the Rohingya people displaced from Myanmar.

The civil war in Syria since 2011 has forced 6 million refugees to flee across borders into Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Turkey. Here camps for them have been established. The largest is Zaatari in Jordan which opened in July 2012 and which, though designed for 60,000 residents, had within one year grown to 144,000 with an arrival rate of 1500-2000 refugees a day at its peak. With the opening of other camps in Jordan, the population of Zaatari has been reduced, but it remains Jordan’s fourth largest city. The UNHCR is responsible for the refugees but the camp is managed by the

Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organisation with financial and professional assistance from many other local, foreign and UN organisations which provide clothing, medical aid, water supply, sanitation, food, education and family support. The camp has a 'main street' (known as the Champs Elysées) where vegetables, housewares and clothing can be purchased, ATMs are available and coffee shops have opened. But all has not been peaceful: there have been demonstrations about inadequate accommodation and food supplies, reports of crime, including prostitution and drug-dealing, as well as political protests against the Syrian regime and its armed forces that had dispossessed the refugees.

Dadaab

Even longer established and larger is Dadaab in north Kenya. It was a sleepy border town that became settled in the early 1990s by Somalis fleeing the civil war, drought and famine in their country. They have continued to come, joined by waves of asylum-seeking Sudanese, Congolese, Ethiopians, Ugandans and Rwandans. Dadaab is now home to about 350,000 people, of whom 100,000 were borne there. As in Zaatari, the UNHCR has overall responsibility for the refugees but a number of local and international organisations run programmes and projects within Dadaab. Over its 20 and more years life, Dadaab has—admittedly in a rough and ready way—become 'urbanised'. It is now Kenya's third largest city, after Nairobi and Mombasa. It is in effect a collection of camps around the town of Dadaab.

"Most foreign visitors arrive here by plane. And it is from the air that the scale of the refugee complex is best appreciated. Spread over 30 square miles, the camps look like huge black and silver moons shot through with a web of red veins orbiting Dadaab town. The red is the grid of unpaved roads, the silver is the glint of tin roofs in the punishing sun and the black is the ubiquitous building material of the desert: the acacia thorn."¹⁷

Each camp is divided into blocks with alphanumeric names: A1, A2, A3 and so on. New arrivals may be allocated a tent which in time they will probably replace with a self-built shelter of plants, mud and tin. Three litres of water per person per day are distributed by water trucks; sewerage and waste collection are minimal. Most residents have a mobile phone. On the fringes of the camps are unofficial settlements of people whose status is less secure.

Supposedly refugees are not allowed to work; they live on handouts from the NGOs, chiefly food and occasionally clothes, blankets, stoves or plastic sheets. In practice an embryonic urban economy has developed. Some, arriving with capital or receiving transfers from relatives elsewhere, set up small trading businesses supplying goods and services, even showing