

The phenomenon of city as a symbol of a modern way of life

Countries



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The phenomenon of city as a symbol of a modern way of life is as complex as the structure of modern societies. In fact, city can be seen as a miniature version of a smaller society within a larger one, as most people living in cities tend to strongly identify themselves with them. And if we take into account the fact that in the Western world the percentage of city dwellers in contrast to people living in the countryside is continuing to grow due to the process of urbanisation (Hayward, 2004, pp. 17-18), the phenomenon of city as a of dominant life style of humans deserves the most attentive examination.

In particular, the urgent topic in the study of the ways in which city functions is the problem of its inner structure and dynamics in light of the often voiced concerns that the contemporary city is becoming more fractured and polarised than ever. The disturbing degree of this polarisation can be appreciated with the help of the so-called ' dual city theory', which, among other things, aims to show how the changes in economy, such as the removal of most of manufacturing jobs from the urban areas coupled with the state`s minimal involvement into the social sphere, lead to significant changes in the social structure of modern cities “ in which the richer get richer, the poorer more poor and the middle classes are shrinking” (Holt-Jensen, 2002, p. 3).

Still, even without this socio-economic aspect of the city life, there is a plenty of reasons why the contemporary city may become fractured. One of them is the presence of ethnic sub-groups in many cities that occupy distinct areas and in this way in essence form isolated cultural islands. This peculiarity of many modern cities is reinforced by the more traditional but very important <https://assignbuster.com/the-phenomenon-of-city-as-a-symbol-of-a-modern-way-of-life/>

division between their functional parts, such as historical districts, usually attractive for tourists, downtown, industrial areas, and bedroom communities. This internal structure also inevitably shapes the economic and social structure of cities, as being historically perpetuated this type of division forms corresponding social patterns, represented by correspondence of a certain city district to a certain social class of people inhabiting it. As a sad example of such a firm correspondence may serve districts with the increased criminal activity, which cannot be exterminated by any legal enforcements.

As the result of the working of the mentioned factors, it is indeed possible to say that the contemporary city in many respects resembles a fractured and polarized environment, in which it is possible for people to feel themselves lonely even in the crowd (Clarke, 2003, pp. 192-195).

By the way, speaking about specific problems stemming from the high density of population in most modern cities, such as ubiquitous traffic jams or the issue of environmental pollution, it is worth to mention that it is perhaps one of the unifying factors for all the city communities as such challenges require a coherent and unanimous action. Also, in relation to the positive roles that cities play in the modern world, it should be said that in their frames a lot of opportunities exist for the cultural exchange and development, so that cities can be seen as miniature melting pots of languages and cultures.

As we can see, the view that the contemporary city is becoming more fractured and polarised is indeed not devoid of the truth. However, it seems safe to claim that this is happening not so much due to the peculiarities of <https://assignbuster.com/the-phenomenon-of-city-as-a-symbol-of-a-modern-way-of-life/>

the life in cities as such, but rather due to the natural processes of social interaction. Thus, city is an environment in which all the forms of social change are just manifested and amplified in a very clear form.

Sources

Clarke, D., B. (2003). *Consumer Society and the Postmodern City*. Routledge

Hayward, K. (2004). *City Limits: Crime, Consumer Culture and the Urban Experience*.