

***Socio-Economic Polarization of Post-Industrialized Cities:
The Challenge to Planning***

By

Darren W. Lezubski

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

Department of City Planning
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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*This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Walter and Camelia,
and to the memory of Dr. Kent Gerecke (1937 - 1992)*

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Abstract

Given social stratification exists in Western industrialized nations, one of the implications of an "post-industrial" era is that some segments of the population stand poised to gain while others suffer. This is expected to result in an accentuation of the extremes socially and economically. In other words, a *polarization* of the population between those who prosper and those lagging further behind. Through analysis of existing literature this thesis strives to examine the question of polarization, determine its characteristics and consider what polarization means for the theory and practice of urban planning.

Examining the effects of social and economic polarization is a precondition for exploring contemporary urban dynamics in post-industrial society. Polarization is a more apt term today than in any other time in history due to a culmination of demographic shifts, changing political realities and a fundamental change in the nature of the economy. As the fundamental nature of the economy changes, so to does the form and function of cities. Emerging evidence suggests that the conventional wisdom regarding urban strategies to regenerate cities for the post-industrial era are in themselves problem creating. Growth industries tend to employ professionals and those with special skills while industries which historically employed the less educated, semi-skilled and unskilled decline. Therefore, "successful" adaptation to a post-industrial economy creates an environment where the potential for social and economic polarization is intensified.

For planners, polarization engenders the need to re-examine problems identified and ascertain whether possible remedies exist. The thesis concludes that planning is one of the few professions which is in a position to raise the question of whether we are ignoring alternative options to the myriad of social and economic woes facing cities at the present. If planners do otherwise the urban landscape will adapt to the polarization of earnings and begin to reflect greater segregation and inequality in the future.

1 The Polarization Question: an introduction

1.0 Introduction

"Timing is everything" an old adage declares. The same rings true for academic inquiries since grasping an idea, trend or phenomenon at the correct time is indispensable to sparking serious debate. After a rather confusing and turbulent 1980s when political attitudes polarized between neo-conservative Right and social welfare Left; corporate takeovers and mergers made greed and consumption admired commodities; and the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless illustrated the severity of poverty across the globe, the issue of socio-economic polarization is ripe for examination. Pervasive throughout the past decade has been the sense we are playing out a zero-sum game with only winners and losers as divisions between the "haves" and "have nots" sharpen. As a result, there is a sense of imminent conflict in the 1990s as a number of fundamental issues converge head on.

Pessimism however need not be the message of the day. One of the undervalued results of living in such a fascinating era is that *everything* comes into question. The coming decade will force humankind to show its mettle in the face of a dramatic period of social, economic, political and environmental unrest. In this regard we will likely see the continued emergence of numerous works stressing the need to re-examine directions (economic, social and political) undertaken over the past few decades. Debate will be seen on many fronts: global as social, economic and environmental relations between countries are examined; national as similar relations are scrutinized within individual countries; and local as more individuals and neighbourhoods re-examine issues of land use, housing options and segregation as well as turn an eye to empowerment and community economic development.

1.1 Thesis inquiry, methodology and organization

Almost twelve hundred years ago Byzantine emperor Heraclitus said "nothing endures but change". Today it has become trite to boastfully proclaim your academic brilliance by acknowledging that we live in an age of fundamental change. It is time to go beyond mere recognition of the fact, we must begin to ask what change means and what some of the implications may be. Given that social stratification in western industrialized countries exists, one of the most fundamental implications some observers have noted is that different segments of the population stand poised to gain while others suffer as humankind proceeds into an incredible new "post-industrial" era (Bell, 1973; Toffler, 1990). As the momentum of this change gathers force this movement in diametrically opposite directions by different segments of the population is expected to increase in magnitude resulting in an accentuation of the extremes socially and economically, that is, a *polarization* of the population between those who prosper and those lagging further behind. Theoretically the potential for this has always existed but a post-industrial economy, coupled with changing political attitudes and cultural values increases its likelihood. This suggests that at a time when all humankind should be realizing the fruits of the tremendous advances made possible by global communication, fantastic medical breakthroughs and increased economic productivity we will instead encounter progress accompanied by poverty. Why? Like blood cursing through our veins this question emanates throughout the thesis. However there is no answer for this enigmatic question. Instead, the primary aim of this thesis is to explore issues, raise questions and look to the potential results, manifestations and implications of the societal, economic, political and cultural changes now upon us. The explicit purpose of the thesis is to examine the phenomenon of polarization; determine its characteristics and consider what polarization means for the theory and practice of urban planning.

The thesis research embodies secondary analysis of existing literature. The methodology is primarily inductive since the argument runs from the particular to the general. There are vestiges of an deductive approach when planning theory and action are considered. Nevertheless, the real importance in any research endeavor is asking the right questions. Many of us are caught up in the impression that knowledge is the result of science. Bruce Chadwick, Howard Bahr and Stan Albrecht argue knowledge is also the result of experience and not the consequences of the rigorous application of the scientific method (Chadwick, Bahr & Albrecht, 1984: 4). Therefore, for Chadwick et al. it is the posing of apt questions, even if they are based upon assumption or perception, that distinguish good from poor research (Chadwick, et al., 1984: 28). This is vitally important for the social sciences where research can be far more complicated than "cut and dry" inquiries found in the natural sciences.¹ For the social sciences this typically involves a greater onus on justifying why a research project is required.

Over the last decade a variety of issues have come to prominence which have fueled interest in polarization. Some observe polarization in housing tenure as a distinct social gradient emerges between owners and renters. Others feel there is a growing polarization in income distribution and occupational types. Still others have recognized a spatial element of polarization, particularly when the issue of central cities and suburbs are examined. Very recently talk of an "information" polarization has emerged. All of these indicate the eclectic nature of the polarization question. One of the goals of this thesis has been to bring these elements together to illustrate that the polarization question is in fact all of these, they interact with each other and reinforce one another to foster a larger phenomena.

¹ Consider this from an urban planning perspective. Cities by their very nature are beyond experimentation, control and verification. It is from the abstract that we glean comprehension of the city. Specific components of knowledge fuel better overall understanding but they explain little on their own. For planners this means the complexity of current issues require the integration of knowledge from a variety of fields in order to understand many of the problems facing urban centres. This requires planners have the skill and ability to critically analyze and synthesize information in order to make the complex choices contemporary urban society constantly demands.

The introductory portion of the thesis concentrates on establishing the context and logic behind the polarization question, while the rest addresses the question of polarization with an eye on its ramifications for cities, urban planning and the quality of urban life. Chapter one serves to set the mood describing in general terms trends which have exacerbated conditions of inequality. Chapter two attempts to give the reader a grounding in how others have used the term polarization. It is here where many of the ideas which will be dealt with in greater detail elsewhere are first examined. Chapter three identifies the reasoning behind assumptions that polarization will be on the rise in years ahead. Whether the explanation which I offer for polarization is correct or not must be left for the future to determine. Chapter four discusses how cities are changing to accommodate the new post-industrial economy and how urban planning can either exacerbate or mitigate conditions of segregation and marginality. This chapter gives an account of how alternative visions of planning may significantly ameliorate the negative conditions fostered by a polarized social, economic and spatial structure. Chapter five concludes by summarizing the notion of polarization.

1.2 Origins of the Polarization Question

The beginning of the polarization question reaches back further than merely the last decade. For Western democracies the post World War Two era has represented a crescendo of diverse and complicated trends and movements which left some in awe, some in misery, but most baffled. For planners, the post war era was characterized by decades of tremendous change in the form and function of cities in western society, particularly in North America. Faced with pent up consumer demand and limited residential construction due to the depression and war years North America embraced mass consumerism and suburbia as post war prosperity emerged in the 1950s. The decade of the 1960s was marked by the rediscovery of poverty and awakening recognition our cities were in a sorry

state. To varying degrees in Britain, Canada and the United States arguments for a social welfare system began to gain favour. In America more so than Canada, the 60s were also characterized by urban renewal schemes, racism and civil strife. In Canada, urban renewal barely got off the ground but elsewhere slum quarters were torn down and future slums built.

The reverberations of the cultural revolution which shook the 1960s waned in intensity but continued to quietly influence the 1970s. Coupled with changes in our value system were changes in the economy as serious declines of employment in goods producing sectors such as manufacturing began to emerge in the wake of de-industrialization. Due to a proportionally greater number of disadvantaged, public housing projects became worse centres of crime, violence and poverty than the slums they replaced. Continuing urban sprawl led to a decentralization of population and employment opportunities as lower taxes, modern facilities and land for expansion proved too attractive for manufacturing and industrial activities to ignore. As the decentralization process matured even administrative activities left central city locations for suburban sites. From a planning perspective outer lying locations proved difficult to service efficiently by public transit, thus making private vehicles the most effective means of going to and from work. This effectively cut off employment opportunities for segments of society who either do not own a car or were public transit dependent. Some of the force behind this decentralization of employment withered in the face of rising energy costs, but this pattern of urban development persisted, fueled by sheer momentum and further central city decline.

The 1980s are best characterized as confusing. The decade witnessed the fall of the Berlin wall, break-up of the Soviet Union, and further globalization of the economy; all fostered tremendous change in the world social and economic order. Closer to home de-industrialization continued as capital sought regions or countries with attractive business climates while cities stagger under the weight of "remaking" themselves. The continuing

transformation from an industrial to service driven economy has had tremendous social, economic and spatial consequences for the restructuring of urban space. Facing the daunting prospect of an new international division of labour coupled with their own internal fiscal difficulties, cities throughout western society have embraced notions akin to "boosterism" as they clamor to retain existing industries and jobs while striving to attract new investment.

For some cities during the past decade a glimmer of hope appeared on the horizon as a trickle of population moved back to the city in what is generally described as gentrification or "white painting". Upon closer examination however, gentrification has been co-existent with increasing inner-city poverty, homelessness and abandonment (Sternlieb & Hughes, 1983; Baldassare, 1983; Williams & Smith, 1986; Marcuse, 1986; Harvey, 1987, 1988; Reid, 1985, 1988). As a result of this and other measures we are inundated with diametrically opposed images of fabulous wealth and tremendous poverty as conspicuous consumption and proposals for "world class" shopping malls, airports or conventions centres are increasingly juxtaposed with homelessness, food banks and an urban underclass. It is little wonder that talk of dual cities is popular of late.

Emerging from all of this is a looming threat the momentum of the 1980s will inevitably lead to a paralyzing collapse of our social, economic, political and cultural institutions and a resultant socio-economic polarization between segments in society. Concepts such as this are not new of course, Benjamin Disraeli described Britain as "two nations" in his 1845 novel Sybil. Disraeli described a time when there was no social interaction or sympathy between different segments of society, the rich and poor were as ignorant of each others habits, thoughts and feelings as if they lived on different planets. The only commonality across the immense gulf was their allegiance to the crown (Disraeli, 1954: 73). Disraeli's work was precipitated by the realization that in the early years of the Industrial Revolution the rewards of increased production were distributed very unequally. John Kenneth Galbraith would suggest that if the poor were becoming less poor as a result

of the industrial revolution, the change was slight compared with the growing contrast between the rich and poor (Galbraith, 1958: 29).

Led by Herbert Spencer, defenders of the status quo argued the stark contrast of opulence and poverty fostered by the new industrial era could be explained by a form of Social Darwinism. The poor were inherently inferior, they were shiftless and unambitious and thus brought poverty upon themselves (Galbraith, 1958: 53). Social philosophies such as the "Protestant work ethic" and American influenced "Frontier ethic" established faith in competition and admiration of *individual* advancement. The idea that a man (not women) who rolled up his shirt sleeves and performed an honest days work was entitled to the rewards of his labour was the foundation upon which Western market strategies and social philosophies were structured. The contention is that individual progress parlays into overall improvement in the general well being, this is opposed to the idea that collective progress leads to the advancement of individuals. Essentially, this means economic growth is regarded as a superior substitute to redistribution. This subtle difference means those who do not benefit by economic growth or are adversely affected by growth are conceded their share of progress grudgingly and vicariously, like dogs receiving scraps which fall from their masters table.

Karl Marx argued that because of the private ownership of the modes of production in capitalist economies the gulf between rich and poor was due to the confiscation of surplus value which labour created but which the owners of the mode of production retained. Marx further suggested that with the advent of the industrial era the mechanisms were in place which would foster the development of a two class society made up of the bourgeois and all others who laboured for a wage (the proletariat). Most of us are aware such prediction has not come to pass (Jordan, 1971).

In his classic 1885 work Progress and Poverty Henry George argued the fruits of progress created by material advancement were snapped up by landowners leaving little for

working men and hence furthering the gap between rich and poor. George was reacting to the disappointing realization that contrary to conventional wisdom material progress resulted in a paradoxical rise in poverty. Invention after invention neither lessened the burden of those who most need respite nor brought plenty to the poor (George, 1975: 5).

He writes:

[t]he new forces [material progress], elevating in their nature though they be, do not act upon the social fabric from underneath, as was for a long time hoped and believed, but strike it at a point intermediate between top and bottom. It is as though an immense wedge were being forced, not underneath society, but through society. Those who are below are crushed down. (George, 1975: 9)

Progress was seen not as a measure in reducing poverty but actually *producing* it because improvements were taken up by those already affluent. This made the struggle for existence more intense and actually widened the gap between haves and have-nots. George concluded that as long as the increasing wealth which modern progress creates goes to build up great fortunes there will forever be the enigma of poverty with progress (George, 1975: 10).

Perhaps the existence of progress and poverty is, as any Social Darwinist would exclaim, inevitable. Were this true there would still be little reason to speed up the process. Like the faith we have in the existence of a God whom we know can never be proven to exist, we must have faith in ourselves to recognize the enormous potential we have to diminish the enigma of progress and polarization. Looking upon the present, the paradox of poverty and wealth remains but its severity has diminished (at least in perception) over the past hundred years. Despite all the unrest, insecurity and suffering, the free market economy (capitalism) has managed to be a source of progress. It has given rise to a standard of living characterized by steady and regular increases in the number, variety and quality of material goods enjoyed by the bulk of society (Heilbroner & Thurow, 1987: 21).

Coupled with measures to restrict harmful employment practices and ensure work place safety have been progressive taxation and social policies which have moved western society toward a more equal distribution of national income. The commonality between rich and poor was no longer to the crown as described by Disraeli but rather to the urban manufacturing dynamo, to borrow George Sternlieb and James Hughes term (Sternlieb & Hughes, 1983: 455). Recently, however, it has become apparent that that commonality is beginning to weaken as manufacturing becomes less of an essential component of wealth production in western economies. While the exact year is of little other than historical consequence, it is conceded that since the mid 1970s there has been a tremendous change in the social and economic order. Many of the old values of hard work and thrift have proven less productive as fewer middle class jobs are available. While some prosper many more find themselves impoverished.

Historically a hall mark of how well a civilization has evolved, not only economically but morally and ethically, is illustrated by commitments to assist the disadvantaged and oppressed. Perhaps this explains why trends toward increasing inequality over the past few decades are so disturbing. The commitment to a balance of economic and social well-being has began to run askew. Professor Frank Levy of the University of Maryland noted many people in America felt something wrong during the 1980s but lacked the language to describe it. People talked of a dual society and increasing polarization as if census statistics would show the income distribution splitting apart but such dramatic changes did not materialize. Levy suggests the real changes which fueled these feelings are difficult to actually measure (cited in Phillips, 1990: 18). That sense or feeling of something gone amiss helps in part to explain why the issue of polarization is so difficult to grasp.

Let us consider the question of poverty for example. During the 1980s the rise in unemployment, homelessness and food banks strongly influenced the perception that

poverty was on the rise. Yet statistically, increases in poverty rates have not been overtly dramatic. Part of the explanation lies in how poverty is defined. Generally poverty applies to those families or individuals whose incomes are considered inadequate to meet basic needs for food, clothing and shelter. More specifically there are two ways of defining and measuring poverty. First is *absolute deprivation*, which measures the lack of basic necessities. This definition of poverty is used most often in the United States. Analysts simply determine an annual income below which an individual or family would be deprived of the fundamental necessities of life. David Ross and Richard Shillington state "the obvious consequences of the absolute approach, if it is rigorously applied, is the utter absence of choice of how one lives - the shape of one's life is determined entirely by the requirements of a fixed and rock-bottom physical existence" (Ross & Shillington, 1989: 3). *Relative deprivation* is the second definition of poverty. This is a more realistic definition, suggesting there are those who are excluded from continually expanding comforts, opportunities and self-respect accorded to the majority. Under this definition poverty is measured, not in terms of how incomes compare with the poverty line, but rather in terms of how income compares with the rest of society. This approach is founded upon the belief that a definition of poverty should take into account social as well as physical well-being (Ross & Shillington, 1989: 4). Galbraith described this measure of poverty when he wrote:

[p]eople are poverty stricken when their income, even if adequate for survival, falls markedly behind that of the community. Then they cannot have what the larger community regards as the minimum necessary for decency; and they cannot wholly escape, therefore, the judgements of the larger community that they are indecent (Galbraith, 1958: 251).

The relative deprivation approach assumes that poverty cannot be eliminated as long as significant economic inequalities persist. Expectations rise as the overall standard of

living improves. Hence, the poor become more aware of the gap between themselves and the rest of society. Even if things are getting slightly better at the bottom, they are getting much better for others, especially the wealthiest. Growth in absolute deprivation and increasing wealth assures growth in the second form of poverty, relative deprivation. Growth in the perception of relative deprivation may not, however, be substantiated by statistical growth in absolute deprivation. In this regard polarization seems to be based upon relative deprivation since it has an abstract quality rather than statistical basis.

Polarization as embodied in this thesis is developed within the context of seemingly daily news reports of increasing unemployment, growing welfare rolls, homelessness, family breakdowns, senseless violence in our city streets and a declining and embarrassing educational system on one hand, and the utterly incomprehensible multi million dollar annual salaries for chief executive officers and professional athletes coupled with a general trend toward conspicuous consumption. Given these diverse situations it is only when they are taken together that we see any shape or form of the polarization question beginning to materialize. What this means is that people may intuitively feel hard times all around them but the complex nature of the polarization question makes it difficult to easily comprehend single elements of the process in isolation. Seemingly innocent decisions and policies of governments, choices of businessmen and interests of citizens combine to produce intricate and complicated movements, countermovements and chain reactions that seem to be moving in all directions in once but are actually influencing, exacerbating and accelerating the necessary conditions for polarization to emerge. As a result, the polarization question is more than simply the gap between rich and poor widening, it represents a fundamental distinction in the range and quality of opportunities throughout the entire population into segments of haves and have-nots.

Not wishing to belittle what has just been said above regarding the difficulty in identifying a specific cause, this thesis *suggests* polarization has its strongest ties to the

current restructuring of advanced industrial economies. Economic changes alone are not enough to substantiate the polarization thesis but there are numerous social and cultural forces currently unfolding which add some texture to the polarization question and further strengthen suggestions polarization will emerge. Coupled with this is that the sentiments of many who prosper doubt the legitimacy of the social safety net, what Marvin Olasky describes as "compassion fatigue" among the better off (Olasky, 1990: 11). Olasky feels the frustration with the social welfare system may foster a neo-Social Darwinist dismissal of the poor, hence threatening to worsen the already precarious position of those most vulnerable (Olasky, 1990: 12). As David Eversley comments: "social polarization is not just a pretty sociological toy. It is also...a real threat to the future of poor populations" (Eversley, 1990: 17). But Eversley's fear is within the framework of a short-term perspective. In the long term such a situation represents a treat to society as a whole.

Economic polarization is seen as the root from which other forms of polarization grow. This is not meant to imply that the rise of lone parent families, ghettoization of minorities or socio-tenurial characteristics of polarization are not important, they are; this merely suggests that a greater understanding of the rise and cause of different forms of polarization must initiate from some starting point. This implies divergent forms of polarization germinating from a root cause and branching off to form other problems. The sense is that social polarization will, for example, rarely develop a level of magnitude which is problem creating without deep societal and cultural changes that foster such conditions. Deep societal and cultural changes are inclined to have their cause rooted in fundamental economic changes. Moreover, in the absence of socially polarized conditions, polarization based on race, class or gender is unlikely to emerge.

These assertions require explanation. Since western society is driven primarily by a materialistic orientation, a main question here is one of social mobility. If social mobility slows or comes to a complete standstill for certain segments of the population, then the fragmentation associated with social and economic polarization begins to emerge. Clearly

this raises the question of how one achieves social mobility. Generally social mobility has been assumed to come from economic progress, individual commitment and drive. For example, "old" or "case" poverty as described by Galbraith neatly fits this traditional notion. Old or case poverty was a general condition of life for the entire society, or at least a huge majority excluding the elite. When the economy advanced a good many people gained higher standards of living. The first steps toward what Galbraith termed "new" or "insular" poverty emerged when millions of people proved immune to progress. Meaning failure was not seen as due to personal or individual traits but as a social product (Galbraith, 1958: 253; see also Harrington, 1969: 7-9).

Echoing similar sentiments, professor John Dunlop of Harvard University suggested that in the 1930s capitalist countries experienced mass unemployment but that the post world war two years began to see a form of *class unemployment*. Dunlop notes it was now possible to have an increase in the number of employed, increase in production, expansion of consumption and at the same time see localized depressions. This led him to suggest certain "...groups will be singled out by the working of the economy to suffer, while all others will experience prosperity" (cited in Harrington, 1969: 30). As society and the economy become more technologically advanced those trapped in the new poverty continually find themselves at a new disadvantage (Harrington, 1969: 12). One corollary from this is that social mobility and levels of interaction between different segments of society decline (see Porter, 1965; Hunter, 1986; Forcese, 1986). Presently this has fostered the fear that many children will not automatically experience higher standards of living or better jobs than what their parents experience.

Furthermore, observing contemporary situations one is struck by how well the hereditary urban underclass serves as an example of class unemployment since generation upon generation of underclass families never enter the work force. Timothy McNutty, in The American Millstone (1986), feels the underclass are a sign something has gone dead

wrong in advanced capitalist societies. In America it illustrates that something happened within the last 20 years that not only proved the failure of the Great Society but also changed the fundamental characteristics of urban centres, especially inner cities (McNulty, 1986: 8). Politically the emergence of an underclass in British inner-cities exemplifies the debate which has arisen between those who favor the social welfare system and those who feel welfare is the reason segments of the population such as the underclass exist.

William Ryan put forward the idea that by blaming the victim for his or her misfortune higher classes can perpetuate their own social advantages (cited in Spates & Macionis, 1987: 364). In the case of the underclass Ryan's concept of "blaming the victim" is lost under an increasingly complex set of circumstances too detailed and radical for most to comprehend. What people see and understand is that again and again, members of the underclass aspire for nothing more than to get on the "dole" as soon as they are legally able. "For the underclass welfare is not a temporary thing, it is as common as air..." (McNulty, 1986: 7). In the United States this has added fuel to the conservative conviction that welfare is the root cause of current economic difficulties, in turn giving rise to a new wave of neo-conservative attitudes.

Others see the emergence of an underclass as a result of the changing nature of the economy and its resultant lack of work available for those who are undereducated, unskilled or semi-skilled. William J. Wilson, professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago argues the current problems of lower-class blacks is partly a result of fundamental structural changes in the American economy, meaning that as some advance others are left behind in every conceivable respect (cited in Langworth & Worthington, 1986: 171). For example, black male workers suffered the most in the shift in employment away from manufacturing since it was in factories that they had been able to secure relatively high-wage jobs since the end of the second world war (Kolko, 1988: 310; see also Bluestone & Harrison, 1982: 54; M. Smith, 1979: 241).

Herbert Gans feels the notion of an underclass will turn out to be a signal that post-industrial society is prepared to accept some people who are more or less permanently jobless (Gans, 1990: 277). Gans hopes new forms of job creation can be devised but he fears it is

...conceivable that all the techniques of modern zoning will be applied in order to create and put in place physical barriers to supplement the political and economic boundaries that wall off the jobless caste from the rest of America. Unfortunately, such a solution is in many ways easier to implement in our political system than deliberate planning for jobs creation (Gans, 1990: 277).

Moreover, the issue of an urban underclass serves as an important model for what may be in store for many others with limited skills and minimal education in increasingly sophisticated work places. This fear is due in large part to the realization existing disadvantaged segments of the population are ill-prepared for future job markets and many current workers have skills which have outlived their usefulness. It is still unfair to talk of the poor in a collective sense since generally many enter and leave conditions of poverty, but for some, conditions of poverty are becoming more permanent than transitory (Ross & Shillington, 1989: 3). In this regard we are faced with an interesting dilemma, the more sophisticated the work place becomes the more likely there will be those incapable of adequately adjusting to new employment demands. This suggests any gains resulting from more competitive and effective industries and work place practices are wiped out by the albatross of social cost inflicted by progress.

At first glance this seems ironic considering the high unemployment rates in Western economies like Canada and the United States. But Western economies are staggering under the weight of structural rather than frictional unemployment, which means there is a mismatch in skills or geographical location between available jobs and the characteristics possessed by unemployed people (Lipsey, Purvis & Steiner, 1985: 713).

Quite simply, the doorway into the economic mainstream for many is being closed, particularly for the urban poor and unskilled because growth industries in the next economy will tend to employ professionals and those with special skills whereas declining industries historically provided employment for those less educated, semi-skilled and unskilled (Berry, 1985; McNutty, 1986; Gans, 1990).

1.3 Polarization and planning

The above serves to briefly illustrate why economic matters have been identified as the primary element behind the potential socio-economic polarization of western society, but why is the question of polarization important for the profession of urban planning? This thesis suggests that found within the concept of polarization are many of the most insidious ethical questions planners face. Having the social and economic fortunes of different segments of society moving in diametrically opposite directions is a recipe for conflict (Williams & Smith, 1986: 220). Conflict which is likely to be played out in cities where the needs, wants and demands of diverse groups are increasingly juxtaposed. Planners are not the sole professionals confronted with ethical dilemmas in light of poverty amongst affluence, this is a situation which should raise moral questions for everyone. However, in light of the changing role of cities in the global economy planners must be overtly conscious of such situations. To omit or ignore the potential problems fostered by increased poverty, ghettoization, commercialization and new residential patterns would be akin to foregoing the stated and implied aims of planning all together. If planners truly are the "conscious" of the city they should make a special effort to consider the needs of those most vulnerable. Moreso perhaps if one truly considered the influence public policy has on exacerbating or reducing societal and economic extremes. The less emphasis planners place on considering the potential of polarized socio-economic and spatial disparities the more likelihood such circumstances will arise.

I would like to believe the polarization question is more than merely an exercise in crystal-ball gazing. Like many topics which not only ride the fringe of traditional planning issues but also interweave with a multitude of disciplines such as economics, geography, sociology, political science and philosophy it behooves me to establish the validity of the relationship between polarization and city planning at the outset. In order to begin it is necessary to ask a simple yet pivotal question: why plan? Let us begin by identifying some simple parameters to this question since as Ernest Alexander suggests if one fails to do so the query becomes moot. At its most general level "planning" can be said to take place all the time and hence can be viewed as a basic human activity or instinct which occurs at every level of society (Alexander, 1981: 137). John Friedmann recognized planning as such a common activity he felt we should instead ask "who does not plan?" (Friedmann, 1966: 1).

If planning is all pervasive it becomes necessary to distinguish between different types of planning. Alexander argues that while planning is done by individuals it is necessary to distinguish planning for personal reasons from planning in the societal sense (Alexander, 1981: 137). By acknowledging this distinction the idea of planning can be characterized by varying levels of conceptualization which in part reduces some of the arbitrary elements surrounding the term. While not dismissing the fact a person who awakens in the morning and places water to boil for tea is indeed planning, we recognize city planning (as one element of planning with a societal sense) as a conceptually different *type* of planning. Reduced to its simplest understanding the level of uncertainty and amount of externalities created by personal planning actions are minimal, whereas societal planning is not only likely to be done by more than one person but is also likely to have high levels of uncertainty and affect a great number of individuals. Given that planning in a societal sense, whether national economic planning, regional planning or city planning carries a degree of uncertainty about possible outcomes or externalities, as the level of

uncertainty rises so to does the relative need for planning.

Returning to our initial question of "why plan?", a typical response is that in the absence of planning, cities would continue to develop and change but change could bring results not generally considered desirable. One corollary from this is a general consensus which implies an integral part of planning strategies consist at least in part, in identifying problems or trends which are potentially undesirable. The aim of planning therefore is to influence future development in desirable and acceptable directions (Hodge, 1986; Forester, 1989; Benveniste, 1989; Friedmann, 1987). In order to do so planners attempt to forestall problems from emerging or resolve existing problems by re-examining them so that new actions or strategies are undertaken. Hence, the implication that planning is future oriented is not meant to suggest planners are fortune tellers, but merely to identify the practice of planning as a *conscious* effort in preparing to deal with the uncertainties of the future.

The idea of casting an eye toward the future brings us full circle to where this chapter began. Recent signs indicate a number of elements are transpiring which could yield undesirable circumstances in years ahead. The polarization question arises by projecting these trends to their potential conclusion; a polarized social structure. However, in order to continue on our journey we must now take a step backward to grasp an historical understanding of polarization. To this we now turn.

2 Polarization Concepts: an overview

2.0 Introduction

Given the amorphous and ambivalent nature of the word "polarization" its proper use should be identified straight away. This chapter sets out to achieve this task by illustrating the numerous manners in which the term has been utilized and to identify the context it is used in this work. The logic for doing so becomes clear when you consider that wide, diverse use of the term polarization is unlikely to achieve the objectives set out for this thesis. To say that I see polarization everywhere undermines my argument.

Like other scientific terms that find their way into the vocabulary of social sciences polarization has been subject to a variety of uses. A common denominator implied in most arguments of polarization is the existence of two diametrically opposed extremes. Some uses imply a rigorous duality while others simply note the existence and possible accentuation of extremes. Frequently authors use the term as a buzzword trying to vividly bring forward the severity of an issue in question.

In the study of optics, physicists define polarization as the condition of having two waves of light, the properties of one being of opposite or contrasting nature to the properties of the other. It is no coincidence a number of words and expressions employed to describe social phenomena are derived from the language of physics. Bruce Krushelnicki suggests the origins of this can be traced to the era of social positivism when an analogy was drawn between the functioning of society and machines (Krushelnicki, 1982: 31; see also Capra, 1982).

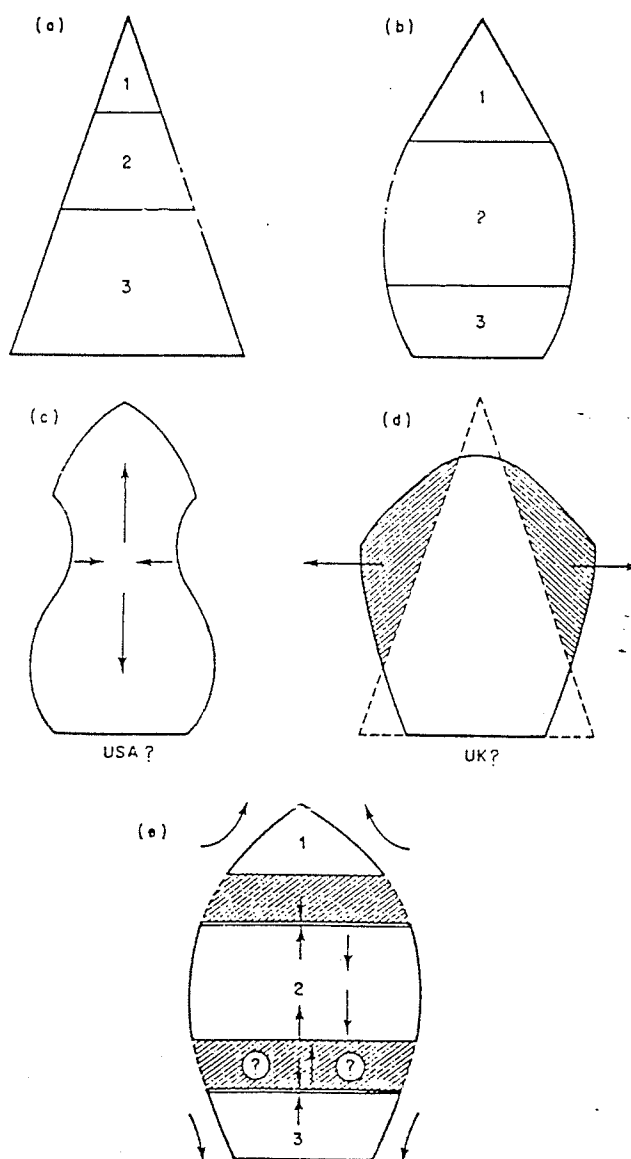
One of the problems resulting from the cross linguistic pollination of terms from natural to social sciences is confusion as to the actual meaning of concepts or ideas. In her work on social polarization in London in the mid 1960s Margaret Harris briefly touched upon the rough transition between the pure and social sciences for a concept such as

polarization. The main point Harris wished to make was that in the social sciences polarization had little intrinsic meaning or value; because of this she felt it necessary to distinguish clearly between the different connotations of such terms as "social polarization", "economic polarization", "bi-polarity" and "uni-polarity" (Harris, 1973). She describes bi-polarity as growing disparities at both extremes in any variable being examined whereas uni-polarity refers to growth in only one extreme or one direction. This desire to distinguish and separate the different elements is perhaps itself derived from an influence of Cartesian-Newtonian mechanistic views. Harris also distinguished between a situation at one point in time (a state), and a change that may occur over time (a process). The term "polarity" refers to a moment in time whereas "polarization" refers to a process over a length of time (Harris, 1973: 158). While this may seem trivial it is important this distinction be recognized if the concepts and ideas presented here are to be fully understood. For the most part socio-economic polarization is seen as a potential long-term scenario and thus is generally characterized throughout the thesis in terms of a process.

Recently British sociologist Raymond Pahl has shown the difficulty, if not impossibility, of clearly separating any distinction between "social" polarization and "economic" polarization. Having done extensive work on the question of polarization and social structure Pahl has found that in the United Kingdom the social structure based on household income is changing from a pyramid to that of an onion shape. The middle is "fattening out" as a comfortable middle mass emerges based on home ownership, multiple incomes and increased informal work (see figure one: a, b, and d). This illustrates the traditional notion of a middle class society but incorporates current coping mechanisms families have undertaken to retain middle level social status and purchasing power. A second image based again primarily upon British observations is that the new social structure, the "onion", is visualized as having its top and bottom sliced off and moving away from the middle (figure e). Suggesting that while the majority cope some are tremendously well off and others experience downward pressures. The third image,

perceived primarily from American data regarding income distribution, shows the social structure changing into the form of an "hour glass" or "dumbbell" with a declining middle and growing top and bottom (figure c). Meaning more rich, more poor and a shrinking middle class. This image is less concerned with actual numbers of people but more concerned with the amount of wealth each category receives (Pahl, 1988: 258-260; see also Bradbury, 1986; Phillips, 1990).

Figure One: Images of polarization



Source: Pahl, 1988: 259

The primary question arising from this was whether polarization is emerging due to an increasing distance between top and bottom levels of the social hierarchy or whether polarization is becoming more prominent as a result of the shrinking middle? (Pahl, 1988: 260). The answer appears to be both. That is, the issue is one and the same and cannot be easily separated. Based upon Pahl's finding, and with all due respect to Harris, this thesis disputes her heed that the connotations of social or economic polarization must be clearly separated; to do so is an unruly and fruitless task.

A further point of clarification regarding the image polarization conjures up is in order. Images have tremendous power and polarization, the implication society is splitting in two, puts forward a strong picture. As a result, a problem many have with the concept is that it is understood too literally (Glass, 1973; Lawrence, 1990). Care must be taken to consider polarization in an abstract fashion. To attest extremes at either end of the social stratum are intensifying does not imply a literal shrinking or dissipation of the middle-class. Just as claiming Canada is embracing an information economy does not mean traditional forms of employment in manufacturing and factories will vanish, merely that the number of people involved in these sectors will be proportionately smaller. It must be remembered that polarization has a figurative rather than strictly literal meaning. In order to further our understanding it is interesting to illustrate the evolution of the polarization concept from its early use to the present. This is done here by separating the literature into two sections; early and contemporary works.

2.1 Polarization then and now: early uses of the term

Decades before the social polarization debate emerged regional planners used the term polarization to describe the concentration of economic activity within and between regions (Klaassen, 1972; Morgan, 1972; Beaujeu-Garnier & Chabot, 1967; Darwent, 1969; Kuklinski, 1981; Savoie, 1986). French Scholar Jacques Boudeville's influence on

the French School of Regional Studies was largely inspired by a 1955 article on growth poles by Francois Perroux. Perroux was led to the concept of development as essentially polarized in the sense that forces inherent in the development process worked toward clustering economic activities and creating disparities between industries and geographical areas. He felt growth was not spread uniformly among sectors of an economy but instead tended to concentrate in certain sectors, and indeed, in particular growth industries. These industries tend to form "clusters", and eventually dominate other industries with which they were connected. When these clusters generate spread effects into other industries they are termed "propulsive industries". Perroux felt a development pole was a cluster of propulsive industries. He did not, however, specify geographical polarization referring instead to economic space (Darwent, 1969: 6; Kulinski, 1981). Donald J. Savoie comments that we now invariably refer to growth centres rather than growth poles which provides a more spatial framework than that given by Perroux's original works (Savoie, 1986).

Boudeville, adopting the growth pole concept as an explanation for regional inequalities, expanded Perroux's theoretical concepts to assist him in his analysis of regional and industrial problems. Boudeville argued in favor of polarization around certain growth centres on the justification polarization was most likely to apply to cities and with the passage of time, increasingly large cities. Growth centres were seen as potential building blocks for regional and national development strategies. Thus, early regional planning theorist felt that if a region was underdeveloped it must be lacking in a "growth pole".

Growth centres or "polarization" was not the panacea to regional economic disparities it was perceived to be however. Instead of creating and then spreading out greater economic benefits to rural and outer lying periphery areas polarization tended to drain those areas by attracting all activity inward towards the growth pole. John Friedmann, who as director of the Ford Foundation in Chile was an early advocate of polarized development, felt the strategy could lead to a better integration of a countries

national economy. He suggests polarized development meant progressive equilibrium was a possibility, however, so too was continued concentration. Clyde Weaver and Tom Gunton claim Friedmann seemed to hint this latter scenario was the most likely with the periphery continuing to be exploited by the core (Weaver & Gunton, 1986: 204). Exploitation by domineering centres was typical. Jose Luis Coraggio argued polarized development in Latin America did not result in positive improvements for all citizens but instead produced greater dependency (Coraggio, 1975).

Larry Bourne's work on urban systems and polarization provides a departure from the regional planning context and a bridge toward latter discussions of social polarization. An urban system implies that cities in any given country form an integrated set of interlocking subsystems which have economic, spatial and demographic linkages. Generally urban systems analysis concerns itself with understanding distinctions *between* cities, but Bourne argues it also provides insight into the overall pattern of urbanization and its resultant consequences. Conceding the specific nature of trends and patterns of urbanization vary between countries he suggests there are five basic consequences of urbanization. Briefly those consequences are: agglomeration, decentralization, disequilibrium, externalities, and polarization. Agglomeration is the concentration of economic and social resources in a few large urban centres. Decentralization is more localized in its extent and refers to the movement of people, jobs and activities from urban centres to the outskirts. This produces problems such as urban sprawl, deterioration of the core and social imbalance (Bourne, 1975: 49-50). The third and fourth consequences, disequilibrium and externalities, apply to both local (within city) and regional (between cities). Disequilibrium is essentially economic, social and spatial inequality which arises due to barriers in employment opportunities and bias in the distribution of public goods. Externalities are either negative or positive external spin-off effects from actions undertaken (Bourne, 1975: 53-54).

Polarized conditions are viewed as the fifth consequence of urbanization. In making this argument Bourne provides two key ingredients in the polarization question. First, he seems to suggest the increasing segregation, both hierarchically and spatially of income, jobs, living standards, services and economic power observed in European and North American cities in the mid 1970s is probably inevitable and thus dismissible unless there is political or social pressure to deal with the issue. The idea is that polarization only becomes a problem when its existence becomes persistent, socially inhibiting and politically sensitive (Bourne, 1975: 53). Second, he notes that while polarization appears on the surface to be a simple geographic pattern it is instead a complex socio-economic and political process operating within a spatial framework. It is both a consequence and a sub-process consisting of extreme conditions of both agglomeration and decentralization working together (Bourne, 1975: 50). What this means is that on a regional scale polarization is most evident between metropolitan centres while at a local level polarization is between central cities and suburban areas. But this is not merely a spatial phenomenon, to consider it as so misses its true importance.

2.1.1 Social Polarization in America

References to polarization similar to Bourne's characterization and quite distinct from its form in regional planning began to appear regularly in literature in the early 1970s. Due to race riots and heightened tension in American inner cities during the 1960s controversy began to emerge which centred on whether the gap between rich and poor was beginning to widen, a form of "social" polarization. In the late 1960s Michael Harrington created an uproar with his book The Other America (1969). Harrington argued that while America was coming off one of the most prosperous decades in the countries history, close to one in five Americans were living in poverty (Harrington, 1969: 12). Contrary to conventional wisdom income distribution had not become more equal, meaning that while many experienced affluence, movement in the opposite direction was simultaneously

occurring. The paradox of poverty amongst plenty made it obvious annual increases in the Gross National Product was not by itself going to solve social problems.

Observing the changes American cities had undergone since the end of the Second World War, Gans feared that as an ever larger proportion of upper, middle and working class whites shifted to the suburbs central cities would house an ever larger proportion of white and nonwhite poor resulting in an increasing class and racial polarization of city and suburb (Gans, 1970: 45). At the same time Anthony Downs feared predominately black central cities with high proportions of low-income residents ringed by predominately white suburbs with much wealthier residents could split society along both racial and spatial lines (Downs, 1970: 367; see also P. Jacobs, 1967; Miller, 1970). Richard Titmuss articulated similar concerns in the United Kingdom (see Mishra, 1986: 3).

2.1.2 Social Polarization in Britain

The social polarization debate in Britain was crystallized in the 1969 Greater London Development Plan. The GLDP feared London could face similar situations to those experienced in the United States as the flight to the suburbs by the middle and working classes and a concentration of poor and ethnic minorities in the inner city created a polarized social and spatial structure (Robson, 1975: 11-12). This concentration and segregation was exacerbated by changes in the distribution and nature of employment opportunities, better paid workers moved to suburban areas while those in the lowest-paid service jobs and those on assistance remain in the centre (Robson, 1975: 49).

Historically, British cities like London and surrounding communities provided the opportunity for income and social mixing but trends emerging in the 1970s indicated London rarely provided the chance for different kinds of people to live and interact with each other. In the book Planning for London (1971) Jane Morton and Peter Hall noted in separate articles that many professionals choose to live in London rather than face the prospect of a lengthy commute to suburban residential areas. Recognizing the constraints

on mobility for lower income families and that middle-class households were driven out further distances to find homes they can afford Hall wrote "the inner-ring of London ... is an area of contrasts. In it live many of the richest people in London, and many of the poorest" (Hall, 1971: 138). As central cities squeezed out the middle class and became home only to the very rich and the very poor problems arose as the interests, needs and wants of these diametrically opposed groups clash. Judy Hillman feared the long-term result of this would be increased social decay and ghettoization of *certain* geographical areas (Hillman, 1971: 14). Similar concerns were echoed by Harris who felt polarization was a major concern if there is any truth to the hypothesis that the concentration of socially disadvantaged groups is tied to the occurrence of social problems such as unemployment, young single parents, drugs and crime (Harris, 1975: 163).

A British planning study, The Strategic Plan for the South East (1970, 1971) examined social polarization in the context of urban as well as regional planning. The South East plan, a remarkably visionary document, saw the potential of accentuated social and spatial polarization as a real threat due to a combination of factors. First, like the GLDP the SPSE felt social and spatial polarization of those who reside in inner London was a likely consequence as the "middle-mass" left due to high costs and declining living conditions (SPSE, 1970: 26, 1971: 15). A second reason cited the change in the nature of employment opportunities available in cities as middle-income jobs were disappearing. Professional and managerial occupations characterized by extensive education qualifications and high salaries increased rapidly since the 1950s, as did the demand for semi-skilled and unskilled workers to maintain and service the city. As a background report for the GLDP noted:

If London is to have more hotels and restaurants, more places of entertainment, and a greater range of personal services of all kinds; with more shops, we shall have an increasing demand for workers who now receive the lowest 25 per cent of personal incomes in the metropolitan area (Greater London Council, 1969: 24).

The SPSE asked a very simple but important question: "who should planning benefit most?" (SPSE, 1971: 3). One of the objectives of the plan was to create an environment for people of all kinds. In order to do so their main goal was to improve the living conditions and community facilities for those living in or near the city centre. Their main concern was not for the wealthy who could choose where they wish to live, nor the middle class and skilled or semi-skilled employees who could afford to commute, but rather the majority of comparatively low-paid, unskilled service workers who had little choice but to live in inner-London.

2.1.3 Consequences of polarization

Essentially throughout all this the implication was that polarization is undesirable because it represented a detachment from the existence of an ideal state of social heterogeneity or "social balance". In practical terms problems of homogeneity generally relate to homogeneity at lower levels of the social strata. This is not to deny that homogeneity of "too many" rich in a particular area may also present problems, but that problems concentrated in the former rather than the latter are more tangible and offensive.

In his book Essays on Housing Policy (1979), J. B. Cullingworth argues there are two types of polarization: positive and negative. Positive polarization is based upon the premise that those of similar economic position like to live near each other, inevitably leading to a degree of homogeneity. Negative polarization on the other hand *traps* people in areas of cumulative disadvantage, an inherently negative homogenization. The debate over homogeneity versus heterogeneity is primarily based upon the presumption that there is a scale of homogeneity which is problem creating or as Cullingworth describes, a "threshold" at which point homogeneity holds back social improvements (Cullingworth, 1979: 163).

Given the utopian traditions which have influenced planning theory, planners have

generally attempted to prevent highly unbalanced communities.² Tied-in perhaps with the historical recognition of planning as a means of social control British planners felt planning had a role to play in mitigating negative social and spatial conditions. For example, the policy of new and expanded towns designed to contain the growth of London and surrounding communities gave the government greater control over future urban development but it also provided a means of preventing highly segregated spatial and residential areas (Morton, 1971; Hall, 1971, 1990a). The goal of social balance was predicated on the notion that "...the good functioning of government and society demands that we should prevent extreme polarisation [sic]" (Greater London Council, 1969: 37). The problem with this strategy, however, was that low skilled, menial paid workers and the elderly have, for a variety of reasons, tended to stay in their substandard housing conditions rather than move to new towns (Robson, 1975: 11-12; Hall, 1990a: 51).

Nevertheless, planners recognize the alchemy of social, economic and spatial elements, leaving few questioning the importance of social balance. It is argued that a socially balanced community benefits from the skills professional workers such as teachers, doctors, social workers and lawyers contribute to the community in which they themselves also live. Furthermore, there is a sense those with higher incomes are likely to improve their own property and thus encourage others to do the same (Harris, 1973: 160-161). If we recall Cullingworth's discussion of positive and negative polarization he suggested a solution to the problem of social polarization is generally seen as some form of imposed social heterogeneity (Cullingworth, 1979: 163). However, some of the traditional means by which to achieve social mix, such as moving higher income groups into lower income areas, have been questioned. Harris comments

² A desire of utopian communities was to achieve social mixture (Eversley, 1973a: 68; Benevolo, 1967; Friedmann, 1987). Whether inspired by divine right or a paternalistic view that the rich know what is good for the poor, there has always been a sense that interaction between classes fosters good social relationships. Where the opposite is true and conditions of social isolation prevail class antagonisms would likely fester.

...the process of creating social balance through the movement into a predominantly one-class area of people of another class may not halt at the point where balance is achieved; it raises a moral difficulty in that the effect of the process appears to be mainly to the material advantage of the newcomers and to the disadvantage of the original residents of the area (Harris, 1973: 164).³

The SPSE feared that in central city locations the absence of a particular social group (a middle class) could result in a limited range and quality of services and facilities such as supermarkets, educational services or job opportunities available, hence adversely affecting the less privileged (SPSE, 1970: 26, 1971: 17). The logic is that unbalanced communities are likely to have a shortage of people willing to lead, question and pressure authorities to provide and improve community facilities. Furthermore, it was assumed middle class citizens would likely demand facilities for themselves which would also benefit lower classes, while facilities demanded by and provided for the upper classes are not generally those that benefit the poor.

As the decade of the 1970s drew to a close relatively little information on social polarization found its way into planning literature. A study in 1977 by the Department of Environment on housing policy in Britain found little conclusive evidence of social polarization, suggesting that if polarization was occurring it must be happening locally not nationally, if it were happening at all (cited in Cullingworth, 1979: 157; see also Hamnett, 1984a: 392). By the late 1970s interest in social polarization seem to wane and references to polarization in regional planning all but disappeared.

³ The contemporary issue of gentrification tends to bare out these concerns. The upgrading of neighbourhoods through gentrification has countless spin-offs (often as many bad as good) but ideally the arrival of new residents in existing neighbourhoods does not have to have negative impacts on residents already there. In reality, however, the problem is not that new people are moving in but that established residents and businesses are pushed out. As a result gentrification can translate into a severe reduction of housing at the bottom end of the market meaning residents of modest means may be forced to leave. This compounds existing problems because those displaced by gentrification do not disappear, they merely take their poverty with them to other fragile neighbourhoods (Gratz, 1989: 65; see also Reid, 1985, 1988; Ley, 1986/87). Gentrification is the classic case of good intentions gone bad.

2.2 Polarization and recent literature

During the mid to late 1980s various uses of the term polarization or situations exhibiting polarized conditions became more frequent as different countries experienced similar circumstances at roughly the same time. While there continues to be frequent overlap between how various authors use the term, a common theme throughout recent literature suggests the rise of polarization is a result of economic, social and political change. There is still a strong emphasis on neighbourhoods and spatial concerns first identified during the 1970s but there is increased emphasis on polarization as a symptom of a much larger movement, especially in regards to changes in the economy (Sternlieb & Hughes, 1983; Berry, 1985; Marcuse, 1986, 1989; Hall, 1986; Pahl, 1984, 1988; Pahl & Wallace, 1985; Harvey, 1987, 1988; Lampard, 1986; Williams & Smith, 1986; N. Smith, 1986; Hulchanski, 1988b; Hamnett, 1983, 1984b, 1987, 1990; Tobio, 1989; Kuttner, 1986; Sutcliffe, 1986; Kasarda & Friednichts, 1986).

Brian Berry (1985), Peter Marcuse (1986; 1989), and Peter Williams and Neil Smith (1986) use the term polarization in perhaps the most comprehensive contemporary manner regarding its social, economic and spatial consequences. Berry argues the root cause of increasing polarization in urban America lies in the structural transformation of the economy (Berry, 1986: 20). He suggests an information driven "high-tech" economy will tend to exacerbate the plight of the urban poor and unskilled resulting in a socio-economic polarization of the population as the doorway into the economic mainstream is closed for many (Berry, 1985: 30).

Marcuse argues the increasing polarization of job opportunities is reflected in the increasing polarization of neighbourhoods. Referring to New York City he writes "[b]oth abandonment and gentrification are directly linked to changes in the economy of the city, which have dramatically increased the economic polarization of the population" (Marcuse, 1986: 154). He suggests these trends must be reduced if the negative externalities in

housing and neighbourhood conditions that flow from such situations are to be eliminated (Marcuse, 1986: 174). In a more recent work he writes

polarization is indeed increasing in almost all western private market societies, in most of the third world, and perhaps in some socialist societies as well. There are indeed regional variations in prosperity, and they are increasing in most countries. There are major differences in the types of work being performed, and 'formal' and 'informal' capture a significant set of those differences. And 'city of light' and 'city of darkness' are vivid portrays of the differences in living conditions among different groups, sometimes literally as well as figuratively true. Elucidating these differences constitutes a critical task today for those concerned with goals such as democracy, equity and justice (Marcuse, 1989: 698).

Metaphors such as "two cities", "city of light and city of darkness", and "two-class society" all share a reference to a growing sense that society is divided into two parts, one doing well, one doing poorly (Marcuse, 1989: 697). By themselves, however, such metaphors do not explain why there is an increasing tendency towards polarization among many dimensions in society. This left Marcuse fearing that due to the lack of a precise meaning there are disadvantages to using metaphors or terms such as polarization since they may focus attention on specific issues and ignore deeper causes (Marcuse, 1989: 700).

Williams and Smith argue polarization is generally accepted across the whole political spectrum to be taking place and they put the blame for increasing polarization on social restructuring. They suggest polarization has probably been sharpest in America where economic fluctuations have been greater, workers are less organized and the welfare system provides only meager coverage (Williams & Smith, 1986: 218). But the reason images of polarization have emerged is that in virtually all advanced industrialized countries cities are in the midst of "restructuring" to accommodate post-industrial economies. One of the consequences of the resultant economic recoveries is that it is selective in who benefits, making cities concentrations of haves and have-nots. The city of New York again serves

as an example when they write "[t]his apparent geographical polarization of the city [New York] is not simply an isolated 'spatial process' but rather the spatial result of a deeper social restructuring" (Williams & Smith, 1986: 217).

Perhaps the most disturbing conclusion derived from the various literature is that no city is immune to polarized conditions. It appears it is in the largest urban centres where the greatest interest in polarization exists. Due primarily to the fact that it is in these cities where the process of economic restructuring, physical renewal, community decline, displacement and segregation are most visible. Polarization in New York city is probably more extreme than many other cities in advanced capitalist countries, but Marcuse and Williams and Smith agree the same general pattern is repeated elsewhere in the United States and other countries.⁴ Constanza Tobio's examination of economic and social restructuring in Madrid illustrates the changes felt in many countries as they advance towards post-industrial economies. Tobio comments;

⁴ The city of New York made a strong recovery from its economic woes of 1975 but it is a different city which is emerging in the 1990s. Services gained over commodity production and have mostly been centred in global rather than regional or national economic activities. As a result wealth increased for large corporations and real estate moguls rather than small businessmen. Due to millions of square feet of new commercial and office space constructed in Manhattan it became far superior and attractive to investment than other boroughs. The Real Estate Board of New York claims the new found success is due to the cities ability to adopt to the new service economy (Lampard, 1986: 84). On the downside improvements do not appear to have been shared. An 1984 Community Service Society of New York study indicated that due to the decline of jobs for the unskilled, increases in households headed by women, accelerated exodus of the middle-class, high unemployment among black and Hispanic teenagers, and Reagan administration cutbacks in social programs poverty had worsened in the city during the 1980s (cited in Lampard, 1986: 84). Within other regions during the 1980s boom-towns such as Houston, Atlanta, Dada County in Florida, Albuquerque and the Silicon Valley have all seen the concentration of prosperity and poverty result from rapid growth and development. Bluestone and Harrison write "as a consequence of the hyper-investment boom, the disparity between rich and poor is becoming increasingly evident throughout the Sunbelt, creating a dualism reminiscent of the pre-civil war South. In 1978 the richest 5 per cent of the Sunbelt population enjoyed a far larger share (16.4 per cent) of income than the top 5 per cent in any other region, and the bottom 20 per cent has less (4.8 per cent) than any where else. The wealthiest one fifth of the Southern population has nearly nine times the aggregate income of the poorest fifth" (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982: 87). After declining steadily since the end of the second world war Glasgow has revived its economy through a new reliance on services and tourism and is characterized as Britain's first "post-industrial" city (Hamilton, 1989: 43). However, in the process much of Glasgow's prosperity has been confined to the middle-class in the city centre, working class families on the periphery of the city have not benefitted. Hence there is a sense Glasgow is a dual city of rich and poor (Hamilton, 1989: 43).

as the economy begins to be divided into two different systems, the formal and informal economies, the social structure is also beginning to be divided into two different social systems. Social difference is increasing and there is a trend towards a dual society and dual space. In the Metropolitan Area of Madrid new privileged and homogeneous spaces are beginning to appear in the north and west, where most inhabitants are highly qualified professionals. At the same time the traditional residential area for workers in the south of the city shows a trend towards ghettoization, where progressively the informal economy, even the criminal economy, is becoming the normal way of earning a living for many inhabitants (Tobio, 1989: 326).

These changes are producing a dual process of social mobility with ascendancy in one case and descent in the other. The traditional sense of a middle class is no longer expanding and distance is increasing between those linked to growing economic sectors and those linked to declining sectors. Furthermore Tobio comments the spatial result is that residential areas tend to become increasingly homogeneous socially (Tobio, 1989: 331).

2.2.1 Social polarization in housing tenure

In recent years the issue of housing affordability has been singled out as a fundamental urban problem in western nations as it becomes clear that for many, housing is simply too expensive. Arising from this Jim Kemeny (1981), Michael Harloe (1985), and Chris Paris (1984) speak of a polarization between tenure, meaning there is an increasing segregation of those who become home owners and those finding alternative housing tenure. While there are obvious difficulties in over generalizing when comparing data between countries, both Kemeny and Harloe found an emerging trend in western nations which suggest the private rental housing sector is experiencing a loss of the more solvent middle and upper income tenants who previously helped sustain the sector. Harloe contends the private rental sector is becoming the domain of those less well off, especially the elderly and the young (Harloe, 1985: 298; Kemeny, 1981: 11). The decline of the private rental sector is due to more than merely anti-landlord policies such as rent control, Harloe argues there are deeper more complex forces at play (Harloe, 1985: 293). The root

cause is believed to be due to stagnant or even declining real incomes of those who rent coupled with rising costs faced by landlords (Harloe, 1985: 166). While the rate of return in housing those who prefer to rent rather than own is high enough to warrant investment in upper scale rental projects, low-income households simply cannot generate enough market demand or ensure large enough rates of returns to make investment in affordable rental housing viable. As a result many existing private rental units, especially those in desirable locations, face pressure to convert to other forms of tenure.

In his discussion of the private rental sector in Australia, Paris identifies similar situations as those described by Kemeny and Harloe. He indicates a growing polarization along the line between those who are well housed, usually home owners and those who are badly or costly housed, often renters with incomes in the form of pensions or social benefits (Paris, 1984: 1097). However, his use of the term polarization does not appear to be based solely upon tenure as some owners may be paying excessive amounts for their housing. In this regard Paris is silent, providing little detailed explanation of just what he means by the term polarization.

One of the major consequences of high housing costs is the difficulty people of modest means experience in entering the home ownership market, especially first time buyers. In this regard Chris Hamnett (1983, 1984a, 1987) ties together the issue of a declining private rental sector and increasing social gradient between tenure in his concept of "socio-tenurial polarization". Hamnett's work on polarization is based upon comparing 1961, 1971 and 1981 census data, socio-economic groups and household tenure in England and Wales. He argues that over the last 70 years the housing market in Britain underwent a transformation. Prior to 1914 and right up until the second world war the majority of the British residential structure was dominated by private renting. This began to change in the years between the wars as a ring of suburban owner-occupied homes and a scattering of local authority estates arose. The post second world war period again set off

considerable residential construction in outer lying areas. Since the mid 1960s the number of privately rented households has continuously and steadily declined to the point that by 1981 the rental sector represented only 13 per cent of the total housing stock (Hamnett, 1987: 547). More recent data indicates the level of private rental sector housing is now only 10 per cent of the total housing stock (Nicholson, 1989: 344). This confirms Hamnett's assertion that Britain has ceased to be a nation of private renters and has become a nation of home owners and council tenants (Hamnett, 1983: 161, 1984a: 389).

An important question posed by this radical change in the tenure structure is the extent to which it has led to a marked, and possibly intensifying level of polarization between owner occupied and council housing. Hamnett comments

the logic of this argument is very simple and revolves around the fact that whereas the privately rented tenure was, by virtue of its very size, socially heterogeneous, the owner-occupied and council sectors have tended to be oriented towards two quite distinct sections of the population, the criteria for access being, respectively, ability to pay and need (Hamnett, 1984a: 389).

The implications of this is that council housing is being "residualized" or "marginalized" suggesting council housing will be forced into the role of "housing of last resort" for the very poor akin to that of public housing in America (Eversley, 1990: 18-19; see also Roistacher, 1984; Forrest & Williams, 1984). This is derived from the intensification and concentration of the lowest socio-economic groups in council housing. Economically inactive (generally elderly) households in council housing increased tremendously over the last twenty years, from just under one million (969, 970) in 1961 to 3.4 million (3, 399, 700) in 1981. As a proportion of all households they rose threefold from 6.5 per cent to 19.2 per cent (Hamnett, 1984a: 396). Also, 36 per cent of new local authority tenants in England and Wales were formerly homeless, up from 16 per cent in 1981-82. Overall, local authorities in Britain accepted responsibility for 135,000 homeless

households and households threatened with being homeless in 1988, an increase of 4 per cent from 1987 (Social Trends 20, 1990: 130). Moreover, the Housing Act 1980 and its Scottish equivalent gave local authority tenants as well as other tenants of public lodging the right to buy their homes at a discount if they had lived there for three or more years. The 1984 Housing and Building Control Act reduced these tenure requirements to two years and increased the maximum discount available from 50 to 60 per cent. During the 1980s over one million local authority and new town units were sold in England and Wales (Social Trends 20, 1990: 129-130). This has meant those residents with the highest incomes and best council units have been purchased for private ownership leaving the worst units and poorest tenants in the remaining units (Hamnett, 1987; Eversley, 1990; Forrest & Williams, 1984: 1168).

2.2.2 Information Polarization

Recently talk of an "information" polarization has emerged (Toffler, 1990; Graham & Dominy, 1991). This concept is usually associated with discussion of the information economy and particularly ideas of the information city. Toffler concedes that in an economy driven by information the potential exists for increasing information polarization. He writes

a potential nightmare facing high-tech governments derives from the split-up of populations into the info-rich and the info-poor. Any government that fails to take concrete action to avoid this division courts political upheaval in the future. Yet this dangerous polarization is hardly inevitable. In fact, one can imagine considerable equality of access in the emerging society, not because of compassion or political good sense on the part of the affluent elites, but because of the workings of what might be called the Law of Ubiquity (Toffler, 1990: 363).⁵

⁵ Toffler remains optimistic about the eventual results of an information economy and suggests the "codes" or principles of the information society will result eventually in greater equality (see Toffler, 1990, 359-360) The "Law of Ubiquity" means the systematic spread of the new media system around the world and down through every economic layer of society. This implies it is in the best interest of the affluent (commercially and politically) to find ways to extend the new information system to include rather than exclude the less affluent (Toffler, 1990: 364).

Canadians Dian Cohen and Kristin Shannon reflect similar sentiments but do not echo Toffler's optimism. In their book The Next Canadian Economy (1984) they recognize the emergence of a highly competitive and integrated global economy and incessant technological innovations will mean the creation of new types of jobs which require well educated, adaptive workers who can upgrade, broaden and develop a wide range of skills. Without competency in computers, communication skills, math, science, reasoning and problem-solving skills many people will be prevented from finding regular employment or moving to better jobs. This means that for many their inability to find employment will affect the quality of their lives and their ability to meet the needs of their families. They write:

[i]f we wind up with a cluster of super-smart, well-to-do computer engineers on one side of the scale, and 'techno-peasants' whose skills are in the finger dexterity end of the employment spectrum at the other side, with a sharp decline in the number of people who would describe themselves as 'middle class', the consequences sound very disruptive to the comfortable Canadian way of life (Cohen & Shannon, 1984: 47).

With regard to planning, it is apparent that the network of advanced telecommunication systems being developing are turning into the "nervous system" of the contemporary post-industrial city. As cities take on new types of economic functions a new urban hierarchy emerges with the information city at the pinnacle (Spates & Macionis, 1986: 164; Williams & Smith, 1986: 211; Logan & Molotch, 1987: 258; Parkinson, 1991: 76). While sewer, water and transportation infrastructure have long been recognized as the physical foundations of urban development, in the last decade the investment patterns of information and telecommunication companies have created new patterns of comparative advantage between cities at various points along the urban hierarchy (Graham & Dominy, 1991: 183).⁶

Manual Castells argues the move toward an information society, and particularly information cities is intrinsically dualistic in nature (Castells, 1991). His fear is based upon the realization that access and opportunity to services, labour markets and information technology will likely be highly uneven. Hence, unless measures are taken to make information and communication technology widely accessible the polarization between "info-rich" and "info-poor" will merely complement more traditional patterns of urban inequality (Castells, 1991; Graham & Dominy, 1991). The control of capital and information by a relatively few results in a skewed possession of wealth and power and implies an unfair advantage for some to articulate their positions and arguments while leaving others relatively powerless. John Forester believes this is a fundamental concern for planners since planners should continue to question the unequal distribution of resources, information and power. Essentially the idea is that because power is exerted through the control of information, "progressive" planners should anticipate and counteract misinformation which hampers true participatory planning. Forester describes this as "communicative ethics" (Forester, 1989: 22-23).

2.2.3 Polarization in an urban context

Regarding the question of cities, David Harvey describes the changing spatial and social structure of post-industrial cities as class polarization, "the incredible surge of urban poverty surrounding islands of plenty and conspicuous wealth" (Harvey, 1987: 227). To Harvey the concentration of wealth in one or a few inner-city areas results in concurrent

⁶ That cities arrange themselves into a network or pattern of hierarchical order comes as little surprise. Basic economic, geographic, religious/cultural, communication and administrative advantages help explain why cities are where they are and why some grow faster than others. Since within the existing urban hierarchy there are certain "world" cities (New York, London, Paris, Tokyo) it is at the top of the hierarchy where global financial and administrative headquarters coupled with corporate and corporate related activities concentrate. As such, certain cities within the present hierarchy are better placed than others to retain or gain prominence in a post-industrial era. These "information cities" characteristically include the control and command of finance, telecommunication and government. This generally requires resources allocated to extensive development of modern physical and electronic communications infrastructure (Parkinson, 1991: 77; Graham & Dominy, 1991; Castells, 1991). Unlike natural advantages a cities location historically offered, in a post-industrial economy urban advantages can be "man-made", suggesting the new urban hierarchy is somewhat artificial in its construct.

"ghettoization" of minorities, the poor and parts of the working class. This serves to "update" views of spatial polarization from the simple suburban/central city dichotomy to one where conflict emerges between rich and poor for central city space. The social and spatial stresses inherent in class polarization threaten to increase racial, ethnic, religious or simply "turf" violence as central city space is reorganized (Harvey, 1987: 277). Friedmann reiterates an old argument by suggesting the polarization of metropolitan space is a result of middle and upper class exodus from central cities generated an urban fiscal crises without precedent for many cities (Friedmann, 1987: 366). Returning to Marcuse, he spoke of the spatial consequences of polarization *within* cities, especially regarding housing, whereas Hall (1986), David Morris (1987), and Pahl (1984, 1988), speak of spatial or geographical polarization *between* cities or regions with special emphasis on employment activities.

Hall for example saw similar requirements for firms involved in the information economy which demonstrated the potential for social and spatial polarization between upper-level functions which are highly constrained spatially, and lower level functions which can be easily decentralized to peripheral locations (Hall, 1986: 139). He writes; "the possibility exists that increasingly, the metropolitan centres concentrate exclusively on the higher-level functions (headquarters, offices, research and development), shedding the more routine activities to far-distant regions" (Hall, 1986: 140-141; see also Kasarda, 1983: 66). Morris and Pahl both saw de-industrialization of the primary and goods producing sectors of the economy creating a spatial or geographical polarization between city and suburbs and between cities as some regions have little employment to offer while others flourish (Pahl, 1984: 197; Morris, 1987: 331)

Taking stock of the results of the previous decade recent sources from the United Kingdom have recognized polarized conditions or forecast polarization in income and employment opportunities and household types (Eversley, 1990; Thompson, 1990; Means,

1988; Dale & Bamford, 1988; Morris, 1987; Byrne, 1989). For example, on the issue of household types Pahl found that certain households tend to do more informal work which suggested to him a new division of work is emerging that is quite unbalanced. Derived from his study of the Isle of Sheppey he suggests households may have multiple income earners and as a result the pleasant problem of spending a surplus income while next door a household with growing children may be limited in income opportunities. Hence, instead of the traditional context of a spatial polarization between different class households, there appears to be a process of polarization developing among ordinary working people (Pahl, 1984: 310, 1988: 252; Pahl & Wallace, 1985: 218). Pahl writes "[a] process of polarization is developing, with households busily engaged in all forms of work at one pole and households unable to do a wide range of work at the other" (Pahl, 1984: 313). The result is a new poor who are very poor.⁷ This form of polarization appears to be relevant for smaller towns and cities rather than large metropolitan areas. Obviously in a small city or town the opportunity for rich and poor to physically separate themselves from one another is rather limited. In larger urban centres the increased population and greater geographical area offers a greater number of housing locations and hence tends to facilitate a higher degree of social and spatial segregation. This observation is drawn primarily from factor analysis methods which suggest the degree of social segregation tends to increase with city size.

In an American context, discussion of polarization is becoming increasingly frequent as worries of spatial divisions within cities or between central cities and suburbs increase. As Gans identified twenty years ago suburban housing continues to be the

⁷ Roger Savue in his book Canadian People Patterns (1990) noted the 1980s brought about the emergence of the "workaholic family" as over two-thirds of husband and wife families had two income earners, a growing number of single children still living at home in the work force, and relatives who were living in the same household also working. Nevertheless, it is virtually impossible to substantiate Pahl's finding for Canada due to his focus on the informal economy, meaning transactions go unrecorded. However, there has been a marked increase in both dual income families and families with no-income earners in Canada (Moore, 1989; Burke, 1986; Parliament, 1990; Sauve, 1990). It is difficult deciphering whether or not the increase in no earner households in Canada has been due to the increasing proportion of elderly households, and so little more will be made of this.

residential choice for middle and upper income households while a large concentration of the labour force engaged in service occupations such as hotels, restaurants and the like continue to reside in or close to inner cities. However, a further element which has made the picture even more confusing is gentrification, the emergence of privileged neighbourhoods in formerly declining areas. The result is a rather confusing picture of central cities increasingly populated by the elderly, poor and those unable to migrate and a wealthy new middle class. Robert Ross and Kent Trache observe similar patterns. They recognize that slum and disadvantaged neighbourhoods have been a feature of cities throughout the ages but recently the traditional notion of a spatial separation between affluent and disadvantaged neighbourhoods has become more complicated. Affluent suburban development is still the norm but it appears more often affluent neighbourhoods and poor neighbourhoods are found side by side. Yet regardless of their close proximity these neighbourhoods are functionally isolated from one another (cited in Logan & Molotch, 1987: 287).

Sternlieb and Hughes suggest it is possible to envision future post-industrial cities characterized by two labour markets; well paid high tech and low paid service employment which in turn fosters two separate and unequal life-styles. It is akin to having "two cities" within a single geographical area. The "two cities" are, on one hand a city of the poor and on the other a city of the rich. For the urban poor the city is no longer a place of social mobility, or the location of large-scale, relatively unskilled employment opportunities, instead it has become a location of redistribution, of transfer payments and welfare. For them the city is characterized by poverty, crime and hopelessness. On the other extreme is the city of the rich. For them the city has become a place of information processing and economic facilitation, a place of consumption rather than production (Sternlieb & Hughes, 1983: 463; see also M. Smith, 1979: 245).

Furthermore, associated with the spatial aspect of polarization is a strong racial component, generally describing divisions between blacks (and other visible minorities) and whites. American cities no longer openly accept segregated residential districts for minorities, yet in her recent book Arlene Zarembka was dismayed to find segregation as bad today as it was twenty years ago (Zarembka, 1990: 15). John Kasarda feels racial, ethnic and class polarization has replaced old notions of the urban "melting pot" in American society. Meaning the reality of the 1980s is that segregation rather than assimilation became a pervasive feature of both cities and suburbs (Kasarda, 1983: 65; see also Lowry, 1980: 180).

2.2.4 Economic Polarization

Coupled with the racial question is an increasing interest in the decline of the middle class and proliferation of the wealthy, illustrating how recent uses of the term polarization generally have an economic backdrop. Kevin Phillips used the term "economic polarization" to describe a decade in which polarizing forces were at work intensifying the contrast between proliferating millionaires and billionaires and tens of millions of others who were gradually sinking into poverty. In America, while the average millionaires income was soaring, average family income stagnated and many households took on two incomes to keep pace during the 1980s (Phillips, 1990: 22-23). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the income gap between the richest and poorest families is now wider than it has been at any time since the Bureau began keeping official statistics in 1947 (Finn, 1986: 2; Statistical Abstract of America, 1990: 423).

In 1968 the poorest one-fifth of American families with children received 7.4 per cent of the total income for all families, by 1983 this was down to 4.8 per cent. Over the same period the richest one-fifth of American families saw their share increase from 33.8 per cent to 38.1 per cent (Finn, 1986: 2). More recent data put the income share taken up by the upper 20 per cent of Americans at 44.0 per cent (Phillips, 1990: 12). Phillips notes

that between 1980 and 1985 the share of national income taken by the top 1 per cent of the population rose from 9 per cent to 12 per cent, leading him to suspect much of the increase in the top 20 per cent was taken up by those at the very top. Not everyone in the top 1 to 5 per cent prospered during the 80s, but many did see their share of income rise by 3 to 4 per cent. In a \$4 trillion dollar economy this represents a movement of \$120 to \$160 billion a year upwards (Phillips, 1990: 164). Data for 1986 revealed the share of wealth held by the "super-rich" (the top one half of one percent of American households) rose significantly during the 1980s after having fallen for the previous four decades. Phillips writes:

here is where the economic polarization of the 1980s left its most striking mark - on the record share of post war U.S. affluence that was being enjoyed not so much by the top quintile of the population as by the top 1 per cent or even one half of 1 per cent (Phillips, 1990: 164).

Real income and wages declined for the working majority and the number of people living in poverty rose from 28.3 per cent of the population in 1978 to 35.2 per cent in 1986. Data from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, shows that from 1977 to 1987 the average after-tax family income of those in the lowest 10 per cent (in current dollars) fell from \$3,528 to \$3,157, a 10.5 per cent drop. During the same period, average family income of the top 10 per cent increased from \$70,459 to \$89,738, an increase of 24.4 per cent (Phillips, 1990: 14). The income of the top 1 per cent, which in 1977 was \$177,498 rose to an astonishing \$303,900 in 1987. An increase of 74.2 per cent (cited in Phillips, 1990: 14). Thus not only did the concentration of wealth quietly intensify during the Reagan era, the sums involved took a "mega-leap". This has fueled speculation America is becoming a two tiered nation, divided between an affluent minority and a vast horde of poor and underprivileged (Finn, 1986: 2). Ed Finn suggest a similar situation may become a reality for Canada as well.

2.2.5 Economic and social polarization in Canada

The fundamental restructuring of Canada's economy coupled with fears of an overly taxed and declining middle class has left many to question whether Canada will exhibit forms of economic polarization similar to that of the United States (Economic Council of Canada, 1987, 1990; Chisholm et al., 1989; Picot et al. 1990; Wolfson & Evans, no date; Russell, 1991a; Statistics Canada, 1991; Cox, 1991; Canadian Press, 1991). In Canada the period from 1973 to 1979 was characterized by greater equality in income distribution while the reverse was true for the period 1979 to 1986 (Ross and Shillington, 1989: 29; Savue, 1990: 105; Ronald, 1989: 21). High unemployment, rising prices and increasing taxes reduced most income gains during the 1980s. Labour income, which increased in dollar terms by 140 per cent between 1975 and 1987 represented a real increase of only 1.5 per cent after being adjusted for inflation. In fact, Beth Moore Milroy argues salaries fell by 1 per cent in real terms, suggesting the 1.5 per cent increase is due primarily to increases in employee benefits. The draw back to this is that large segments of the labour force do not have access to those benefits, especially part-time workers (Moore Milroy, 1991: 528). As a result Ross and Shillington argue that from an income perspective the 1980s were hardly worth passing through for most Canadians (Ross & Shillington, 1989).

We cannot ignore the sense that as Canada enters the 1990s signs that something has gone amiss are all around us. According to Ross we would have to go back to the 1930s to find a similar decade characterized by stagnant incomes for lower and middle income Canadians. In the 1950s the average family income increased 27 per cent, this increased to 53 per cent in the 60s, dropped to 42 per cent in the 70s and was down to only 9 per cent in the 80s (Ross, 1990: 12). Furthermore, this nine percent growth was due in large part to declining family sizes. This means many low and middle-income Canadians were worse off in 1988 than they were at the beginning of the decade. Income distribution

data illustrates there has been growth in the upper income quintile, little relative change in the bottom income quintile and a subsequent decline in the middle three quintiles. In 1979 the share of total income for the lowest income quintile was 4.8 per cent while the highest quintile received 40.5 per cent. In 1989 the shares of total income were 5.2 per cent and 41.9 per cent respectively. Increases of 0.4 per cent versus 1.4 per cent (Statistics Canada, 1991: 14). The 60 per cent of Canadian households with total annual income between \$18,000 and \$64,000 saw their share of income fall by two per cent during the 1980s (Statistics Canada, 1991: 9). Frances Russell cautions that as the middle class gets smaller Canada begins to resemble more and more the American situation where the population is polarizing dramatically between rich and poor (Russell, 1991b).

Furthermore, Ross feels the strongest images of poverty in the 1980s were the homeless and the rise of food banks. He writes "not since the bread lines of the 1930s has Canada witnessed such a shameful reminder of the shortcomings of the labour market and the holes in the income safety net" (Ross, 1990: 12-13). There are children going hungry and more and more families and individuals who find it necessary to use food banks. With 1,121,000 poor children in Canada in 1986 they represented 30 per cent of all poor people. The rate of poverty among children increased by 4 per cent between 1973 and 1979, but rose by 7 per cent between 1979 and 1986 (Ross & Shillington, 1989: 93). Canada does not technically have a "poverty line" but Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut Off is generally used as a similar indicator. In 1986, there were 3.7 million persons living below the poverty line in Canada. What these figures fail to show is that many are well below the line (Ross & Shillington, 1989: 58). According to Statistics Canada while the rate of poverty diminished by almost two percentage points between 1973 and 1986, the number of poor families has grown from 701,000 in 1973 to 895,000 in 1987 (Ross & Shillington, 1989: 21). Over the last decade impressive gains were made in reducing poverty rates among the elderly, but single parents and single income families with children

have experienced increases in poverty (Ross & Shillington, 1989: 41; Sauve, 1990: 115; Moore Milroy, 1990: 529).

All of this occurred while Canada had the second fastest growing economy (i.e. Gross National Product) in the Western world since 1984 (Chisholm et al., 1989: 57). Many economists and social-policy analyst feel Canada is at a financial crossroads that will determine the future shape of Canadian society. If the erosion of middle incomes continues, the next decade could produce an extremely polarized society; a small rich layer at the top and a growing stratum of lower-income families at the bottom. The country would be wealthier, but there would also be more poverty (Chisholm, et al., 1989: 62). Chisholm et al. note that of a selection of experts on social trends almost 80 per cent felt polarization will happen (Chisholm et al., 1989: 62). Chisholm et al. write "[t]he potential result of wider wage disparity could be dramatic - rising crime rates, eroding social services and a two-party political system deeply split between conservative and socialist groups..." (Chisholm et al., 1989: 62). This seems to foreshadow disaster if present trends do not change.

2.2.6 Social polarization of Canadian housing

The question of polarization in housing tenure has received relatively mild attention in Canada (Hulchanski & Drover, 1986; Hulchanski, 1985, 1988b; Murdie, 1991). Hulchanski and Drover argue that because access to home ownership is one of the primary objectives of housing policy we have made ownership an irresistible goal. This has been done by establishing numerous programs to stimulate home ownership as well as creating a favorable tax climate where principal residences are exempt from capital gains tax. One of the strongest criticisms of housing stimulation programs over the years has been that the majority of gains over time favor those least in need. Such trends are not due solely to housing programs, obviously macro-economic conditions continue to work against lower income households, especially those who are not currently homeowners. Nevertheless, the overall result is a growing trend toward increasing polarization of income groups by tenure

(Hulchanski & Drover, 1986: 66; Hulchanski, 1985: 30, 1988b: 151-152).

From 1967 to 1981 households in the two highest income quintiles made substantial gains in home ownership rates while households in the two lowest income quintiles increasingly became tenants. The percentage of households in the lowest income quintile who were home owners fell from 62 per cent in 1967 to 43.0 per cent in 1981. For households in the highest income quintile the percentage of home ownership increased from 73.4 per cent in 1967 to 83.5 per cent in 1981 (Hulchanski, 1988b: 152-153). More recent statistics show that for households in the lowest income quintile the rate of home ownership has continued to fall, reaching 39.2 per cent in 1990 while the rate of ownership in the highest income quintile increased to 86.5 per cent in 1990 (Statistics Canada, 1991: 10). Statistics Canada suggest the amount of home ownership in the lowest income quintile is likely to continue to decline (Statistics Canada, 1991: 11).

The increasing rate of home ownership among upper income groups indicates a significant and troubling trend for the private rental sector. The rental sector is becoming a residual one, containing virtually all lower income Canadians and very few higher income tenants. Hulchanski argues this has not always been the case (Hulchanski, 1985: 30) As recently as 1967 the tenant population for all but the highest income group was divided almost equally between each of the income quintiles. Since then, however, those households able to take advantage of home ownership options did so, leaving those with little choice in either the private rental sector or social housing (Hulchanski, 1985: 31). It is little wonder why private rental stock cannot build and make money. The residualization of the private rental sector in Canada means demand for rental housing increasingly falls into the category of social need rather than market demand, yet since the private sector only responds to market demand the construction of new unsubsidized private rental units has been in decline for the past 15 years (Hulchanski, 1985: 31, 1988b: 143, 1988a: 35-37).

A recent study on housing affordability by Pierre Filion and Trudi Bunting

concluded there is an emerging "economic polarization" in Canada which translates into two different forms of housing affordability problems.⁸ In the first instance affordability problems take the form of difficulties in entering overheated owner-occupied markets. Meaning middle income households access to home-ownership is hampered in a few expensive markets. In these same markets the high rents and low vacancy rates mean the poor, working poor and middle class are hard pressed to obtain adequate, affordable shelter. In the second situation a large tenant population experiences affordability problems despite relatively low rents due to low incomes. Meaning that available housing exists but that it is still beyond the grasp of some segments of the population. Both of these elements tend to seriously restrain the fluidity that traditionally existed between the rental and home-ownership market (Filion & Bunting, 1989: 35).⁹

From a general standpoint Mary Ann McLaughlin writes "Canada came out of the 1980s with higher standard, more spacious housing - for those who could afford it. Paradoxically, by the end of the 1980s, more people were homeless. And the demand for affordable housing far outstripped the supply, as housing prices rose while wages declined and unemployment worsened" (McLaughlin, 1990: 34).¹⁰ Forecasts for the 1990s

⁸ The term "economic polarization" is perhaps inappropriately used by Filion and Bunting since their study makes little or no reference to structural changes in the economy. This is not to imply I disagree with their findings, only to suggest that perhaps a term such as "socio-economic" or "socio-tenurial" polarization would have been more succinct.

⁹ Consider the case in Toronto for example. Robert Murdie's study of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority revealed that over the past 15 years (1971 to 1986) tenant characteristics within MTHA projects have become increasingly unlike the rest of the Toronto Metropolitan area. Given that MTHA projects have become home to the impoverished a form of social polarization has emerged between public housing and other forms of tenure (Murdie, 1991: 20). Furthermore, Murdie feels there is a growing polarization *within* public housing as well. These trends are not encouraging signs for those who advocate a social mix in housing (Murdie, 1991: 32).

¹⁰ Homelessness grew substantially in the 1980s. McLaughlin cited the number of homeless in Canada at 20,000 to 40,000 while Beth Moore Milroy suggests a range of somewhere between 130,000 and 250,000 homeless (McLaughlin, 1987: 1; Moore Milroy, 1991: 530). Actually counting the homeless is an impossible task and the numbers above are arbitrary and unofficial. The only nation-wide attempt to count the homeless in Canada was carried out by the Canadian Council on Social Development with a one night "snap shot" survey on January 22, 1987. The survey found that close to 8000 persons slept in temporary or emergency shelters across Canada that night. From these findings the CCSD estimate more than 100,000 persons were provided with shelter during 1986 (McLaughlin, 1987: 1). The International Year of Shelter and the Homeless and the CCSD snapshot survey showed the depth of homelessness in Canada was

suggest the "absolute deficit" of adequate, affordable housing will continue (McLaughlin, 1990: 37). Clearly, one response to fears of polarization of housing tenure is to preserve the existing stock of moderate priced housing but this is no easy task.¹¹ The current trend toward the conversion of older rental units into luxury rental or condominiums and the de-conversion of large single dwellings from multiple rental or single room occupancies into owner-occupied homes removes moderate priced units and exacerbates affordability problems.

This suggests Canadian housing policy in the 1990s must deal with the legacy of a post-war housing policy which failed to address the housing needs of all Canadians and the impact of the adverse income, employment and poverty trends of the 1980s which are affecting even more households (Hulchanski, 1988a: 39). As more lower income Canadians cannot afford the luxury of home ownership the private rental sector, social housing sector and third or informal sector are saddled with increasingly difficult problems of supply and demand. Taken in the light of contemporary declines in the private rental sector and diminishing social housing budgets this becomes troubling since few options become available to modest income Canadians who cannot purchase a home. This gives

far greater than most believed. Over and above these figures are thousands more who are near homelessness, that is, those living in temporary or seriously inadequate housing (Moore Milroy, 1991: 530). Perhaps the most visible change in the homeless population during the 1980s was the dramatic increase in the number of women and children, as well as the decreasing average age of homeless males. The problem is no longer confined to the stereo-typical drunk, middle aged male drifter rather, whole families experience homelessness.

¹¹ In light of gentrification and changing inner city dynamics it would appear a substantial component of future affordable housing will be involved in finding, reclaiming, or reconstituted a larger proportion of housing units from within the existing stock, or at least from the reuse of previously developed land. For developers, builders, planners and governments this is a major challenge since initiatives such as these require new and innovative approaches in development. Traditional sprawl development is a rather simple process since "raw" land typically involves relatively large pieces of land in single ownership where externalities can be internalized to a considerable degree. When dealing with existing residents or re-developing land there are not only many more interests per unit of space, there are many more types of interests which need to be accommodated. This complicates the planning process considerably. In light of this it appears Gans' fears that planning will be applied to create and put in place physical barriers to supplement the political and economic barriers that wall off the haves from the have nots will come true. If for no other reason than that it is a far easier approach to undertake. For example, evidence from Britain and the United States suggest that moves to the central city are usually accompanied by "defensive" architectural designs that wall off (literally as well as figuratively) exclusive residential enclaves from the deprived who are within close proximity (Hamnett, 1987: 543; Robson, 1991: 45).

rise to the need to re-examine the filtering theory as well as assumptions the private rental sector will bear the burden of housing those below the median income with social housing filling in the gaps.

2.2.7 Polarization and Canadian cities

Recently debate regarding polarization and the transition of Canadian cities have began to appear in literature (Ram, Norris & Skof, 1989; Bunting and Filion, 1991; Ley, 1990, 1991; Bourne, 1991; Gertler, 1991; Murdie, no date). There appears, however, to be little agreement on whether Canadian cities will experience polarized conditions similar to those witnessed in American and British cities. In The Myth of the North American City (1985) Michael Goldberg and John Mercer brought attention to the differences rather than similarities between Canadian and American cities, but their work may prove to foster a false sense of security for Canadians.

Recent talk of a global market place and North American free trade zone have resuscitated the uniquely Canadian identity crisis regarding our relationship with America. The expressed fear is that a growing resemblance between the two countries will result in an adoption by Canadians of both good and bad characteristics exhibited by their southern neighbours. This is illustrated by the concerns expressed during a conference in 1985 which brought together Presidents and Chancellors from Canadian and American universities. Considering that universities will be indispensable centres for developing human and economic capital so necessary for future economic growth it is easy to see a relationship between universities and cities in a post-industrial era. Beginning from the premise that the expanding information economy knows no boundaries Frank Horton, president of the University of Oklahoma, suggested Canadian and American cities will become more and more alike as our societies approach the next century. He writes "advanced technology will affect the nature of work and social mobility. The trend toward a permanent urban underclass most likely will continue or even accelerate. The social and

economic fabric of Canadian and American cities could well become threadworn" (Horton, 1985: 1).

A similar sentiment is made by Len Gertler who argues a potential future scenario for Canadian cities in a high-tech service economy is an unrestricted corporate continental Canada growing and developing as a component of the American system.¹² In this perspective Canada is seen as increasingly presided over by an administrative and professional elite which in turn fosters a polarized society. He writes

...the economic, social, and regional disparities of this scenario will generate a great deal of social discontent and stress. This is a society that is not only 'high-tech' but high tension. Government will intervene to maintain social peace by paternalistic redistributive policies such as 'guaranteed annual income' and social housing. But the general tenor of society will be one of precarious polarization (Gertler, 1991: 139).

Michael Goldberg (responding to Brian Berry's prediction of increasing polarization in American urban centres) dismissed the likelihood of polarization occurring in Canadian cities. Stressing the necessity to be extremely cautious in generalizing American based findings to Canada, he argues Canada has not experienced the level of spatial dispersion seen in American urban centres (Goldberg, 1985: 38). Moreover he asserts Canadians are well aware of the dangers of polarization and suggests this is one reason why Canadian cities strive to achieve diversity and social mixture. He writes

¹² Gertler used a three scenario approach to examine the potential future of Canadian cities: 1) business-as-usual; 2) high tension; 3) developmental society. All three were formulated upon seven societal dimensions (technology, institutions, economy, values and life-styles, population, resources, and human settlements) and reflect different assumptions about technology, economic policies, political attitudes and society in general (Gertler, 1991: 136). The first scenario reflects the somewhat uneven and precarious pattern of the status quo. The second assumes technological imperatives are taken to their limits, while the third represents well balanced development in which the application of information technology is tempered by human, social and environmental considerations (Gertler, 1991: 137). Gertler's most fascinating scenario is the "high tension society" which sees Canada growing and developing as a component of the American system.]

we have a much greater willingness in Canada to invite and encourage government involvement in normal market processes to achieve broader social, environmental and political goals. So while the forces of polarization will exist in Canada, I think Canadians will have a number of institutional buffers which should minimize polarization's negative aspects (Goldberg, 1985: 40).

Furthermore, Goldberg feels Canada's industrial structure is very different from America and that while both are advanced capitalist systems Canada's economic system is more dependent on natural resources, less dependent on manufacturing, and more firmly rooted in export and commercial activities than the American economy (Goldberg, 1985: 39). Finally, he suggests Canada's social safety net is much more complex and able to buffer vulnerable groups whereas the American safety net is less elaborate, suggesting polarization will wreak greater havoc in the U.S.

There is reason to believe, however, that cultural and social values will not fend off the social, economic and spatial changes being observed in America. Canada's social welfare network is far superior to America's but recent Canadian government policies in the field of social welfare have mirrored American efforts to limit the availability of public assistance. Distinctions will remain but the similarities in economic shifts and reduction of social responsibility for those less fortunate will mean American urban conditions mirrored in Canadian cities. Goldberg's argument that CMHC's co-op and non-profit housing programs which require the mixing of income classes could serve to mitigate polarization is weak and unrealistic, especially in light of the declining funding for social housing.

Regardless of the debate as to why polarization may or may not appear in urban Canada, it is clear the social geography of Canadian cities is changing. A cursory glance at inner cities and suburbs in contemporary Canadian cities would suggest the traditional dichotomy between these areas remains but this simple image has in recent years become more confusing. That is, inner cities remain problem areas, often coincident with pockets of poverty and other indicators of social malaise but at the same time have changed with the

introduction of new high or medium priced private housing enclaves in certain desirable locations plus extensive downtown revitalization.

For example, during the 1980s many Canadian cities exhibited either a slowdown or reversal of certain long-term historical demographic, family, cultural and socio-economic trends. Perhaps the most revealing change has been the turn around in a long standing trend of inner-city population decline (Ram, Norris & Skof, 1989: 18). In cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary a turn around in inner city population began to occur in the late 1970s. Between 1981 and 1986 all Canadian inner cities gained in population by an average of 5 per cent, only Montreal and Saint John continued to exhibit a declining inner city population (Ram et al, 1989: 18). Ley suggests the population increases observed during the previous decade were due in large part to redevelopment projects, particularly projects on former industrial lands since in many instances these developments include mixed uses such as medium and high density housing (Ley, 1991: 317).

Coupled with the changing demographic conditions Ram et al recognize increasingly sharp contrasts between inner cities and the rest of metropolitan areas.¹³ Many Canadian inner cities are becoming, with time, increasingly populated by well educated white-collar workers. Coupled with this is a large concentration of the labour force engaged in service occupations such as hotels, restaurants and the like who continue to reside in or close to the inner city. Blue-collar workers appear to be moving to the suburbs (Ram et al, 1989: 29-31). Distinctions between inner cities and suburban areas in terms of income remain. In fact, between 1970 and 1985 the income differential between inner city and suburban areas widened (Ram et al., 1989: 32). This indicates that although there is a slight move toward inner cities by affluent households the majority continue to reside in suburban areas (Ram et al, 1989: 36).

¹³ In their study Ram et al saw five key variables which tend to illustrate the differences between inner cities and suburban neighbourhoods: education, occupation, income, home ownership, and cost of dwelling. Over the years some differences have become more pronounced while others have diminished.

These trends add shape and texture to suggestions a polarization between deprived inner cities and affluent suburbs is far too simple a dichotomy to explain the social and economic geography of Canadian cities in the 1990s. Bourne feels the old image of a declining central city surrounded by homogeneous and affluent suburbs (an image fostered by American situations) is out of date for Canada. He writes

[i]n its place we require a new image, one that conveys a sense of the much more complex and varied social landscape of Canadian cities, a landscape in which variations in social status are sharper, more distinctive, and less easily mapped. Both inner-city and suburbs have become less homogeneous, and richer and poorer, at the same time (Bourne, 1991: 35).¹⁴

Bourne asks whether the effects of urban growth can be made more equitable? His query is in reaction to the realization there are individuals and groups who are not beneficiaries of economic progress and urban growth. Indeed, many experience worse situations precisely because of the rapidity, selectivity and concentration of urban growth (Bourne, 1991: 41-42). While there has always been a "poor and disadvantaged population in Canadian cities, there is a widespread sense that new and distinctive disadvantaged groups have appeared due to economic restructuring, technological change, and occupational de-skilling" (Bourne, 1991: 41-42). Among the more obvious disadvantaged groups are street people and transient youth, but there are others for whom the situation has likely worsened during the 1980s: those on fixed incomes, those in low paying jobs and marginal incomes, single parent families headed by women and

¹⁴ Similar sentiments are echoed by Ley who comments "...the contemporary Canadian inner-city includes a confusing mix of wealth and poverty: extremes of half-a-million dollar condominiums and renovated homes against the homelessness of at least 130,000 urban Canadians, perhaps a third of them mental patients released from institutions by cost-cutting governments" (Ley, 1991: 342). However, even though Canadian cities demographic, ethnic and housing variables show a clearly defined gradient, the socio-economic differentials tend to be minor in nature. This means that while pockets of poverty exist in Canadian cities we have generally escaped the extreme scale of poverty and ghettoization exhibited in larger American urban centres (Ley, 1991: 316). Hence, stark images of polarization between inner cities and suburbs witnessed in America do not exist in the same scale in Canada.

households faced with severe housing constraints (Bourne, 1991: 42). The challenge for Canadian planners is to respond to the needs of those left behind by urban growth and economic progress.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to give a cursory glance at how the term polarization has been used by various authors. The regional planning context of polarization has all but disappeared today while the culmination and integration of social and economic polarization has become more intense. Early writers were not solely concerned with regional or economic matters since the most devastating consequences of polarization were seen to occur in the social, and to a lesser extent, spatial structure. This is particularly true regarding the negative consequences which result from the concentration of poor and disadvantaged groups within certain geographical neighbourhoods. In many of the early works evidence of polarization was fragmentary and inconclusive, meaning results varied according to data bases, methodological techniques, geographical extent, levels of spatial disaggregation and time periods (Hamnett, 1987: 538).

More recent literature suggests the patterns of social and economic disadvantage seem to be taking on a more fragmented appearance as opposed to the past. As Bourne noted, polarization is more than merely a simple geographical pattern of rich and poor neighbourhoods. Instead, polarization must be viewed as a complex socio-economic process operating within a spatial framework. Therefore, it would be a disservice if this chapter merely perpetuated the simplistic image of polarization as merely poor inner cities and affluent suburbs, home owners and tenants or rich and poor. Polarization is a problem so broad in scope and complex in depth that it seems permissible to call it anew phenomenon. And yet elements of the phenomena such as social dislocation, ghettoization, poverty and inadequate housing are not new. This implies a new challenge to urban

planning is unfolding. The problems planners traditionally encountered remain, however we require renewed vigor in examining and reassessing planning theories and practice in light of contemporary urban dynamics. Given that cities differ in incalculable ways the level and magnitude of socio-economic polarization is likely to be varied, meaning the same effects will not be produced in every city. Moreover, no standard formulae or strategy in addressing the concerns of polarization will prove effective. As a result, emphasis must be placed upon the need for creativity and innovation in responding to polarization. Creativity and innovation must be augmented by alternative solutions to problems. This implies the necessity to take an idea and put it to new uses, modify it, adapt it, rearrange or reverse it.

One important question planners will need to seriously reassess is who should planning benefit most? As the SPSE plan conceded, an objective of planning should be to create an environment for people of all kinds. This is a commendable goal, and yet the overriding message of this chapter is that this goal is not being achieved. Indeed, there is an increasing sense we are observing more inequality, poverty and social dislocation. Therefore we must now turn toward examining why there is a sense of polarization emerging in the 1990s. The next chapter attempts to illustrate the rationale behind this emergence.

3 *The Rise and Cause of Polarization*

3.0 *Introduction*

This chapter attempts to illustrate not only why polarized conditions have emerged but why such conditions accelerated during the 1980s. It is argued polarization is a more apt term today than any other time in history due to a culmination of demographic shifts, changing political realities and a fundamental change in the nature of the economy. Due to the number of issues encountered in developing the polarization argument no single cause can be identified as the sole event responsible, only when taken together can we understand their impact upon each other and upon the overall situation.

The beginning of the polarization question reaches back further than merely the last decade. For Western democracies the post World War Two era has represented a crescendo of diverse and complicated trends and movements which left some in awe, some in misery, but most baffled. Many have sought a cause to the ambivalence and turbulence frequently felt but few have professed an answer. Frequent references implied western industrial society was undergoing a "transition" or "restructuring" and the "post" and "neo" prefix seem to be affixed to every phrase. But these seem to only add to our confusion.

Perhaps the best place to begin is with Daniel Bell. A main thesis of Bell's The Coming of Post-Industrial Society (1973) was that in the next 30 to 50 years we would see the emergence of what he termed a "post-industrial society".¹⁵ The concept was meant as

¹⁵ Bell envisioned five dimensions of post-industrial society. First, the *economic sector* would see the economy move from a goods producing economy to a service economy. Second, the *occupational distribution* would see a pre-eminence of a professional and technical class. Next was the *axial principle*. The axial principle of the social structure would be premised upon economizing, allocating resources according to principles of least cost, substitution, and maximization. This axial principle rested upon the centrality of theoretical knowledge as the source of innovation and of policy formulation. The fourth dimension was a *future orientation* or social and ecological control of new technologies. Finally *decision-making*, the creation of a new intellectual technology, was the fifth dimension (Bell, 1973: 14). It is unclear whether he intended to suggest a hierarchy of importance by ordering these in this manner, one suspects he did not. However, this thesis regards the economic sector as the focal point from which social, cultural and spatial manifestations of the post-industrial era arise.

an analytical construct not a picture of a specific or concrete society, "post" merely signified a transition. Unlike industrial society which was oriented to the co-ordination of machines and production of goods, Bell envisioned a new society directed by and organized around knowledge which is used for the purpose of social control, innovation and change. As with earlier transitions this new era produces new social relationships, political organizations and new social stratification (Bell, 1973: 483).

Alvin Toffler raised the question of a shift from an industrial to "post-industrial" society in Future Shock (1970) and again in The Third Wave (1980). The first wave was the agricultural revolution, the second being the industrial revolution while the post-industrial or information era represents the "third" revolution. Toffler's most recent book Power Shift (1990) reiterates the idea of large scale change claiming the tremendous upheavals spreading across the planet are due to a new system of wealth creation.¹⁶ He argues the entire structure of power that once held the world together is now disintegrating and a radically different power structure is taking form (Toffler, 1990: 4).

Examining the issue of post-industrialism within the confines of a single chapter is a difficult task. We begin by discussing the service economy and fears of a declining middle class. Synonymous with the question of a service economy is the issue of globalism, particularly with regards to a world wide market place. This issue forms the second part of this chapter. Finally we close the chapter with a brief discussion of political attitudes during the past decade.

¹⁶ Toffler suggests that as the economy spreads over the globe and new technologies allow local production to become competitive once again the "politics of levels" will emerge. This will effectively split society into four distinct segments: globalists [sic]; nationalists [sic]; regionalists [sic]; and localists [sic]. Each will defend its own perceived identity and economic interests. He argues this split is already beginning to emerge in America. He writes: "...a close look at statistics for the 1980s already shows widening differences between the two coasts, the midwest, and the oil patch, and between the big urban centers [sic] and the suburbs, whether measured in housing starts, rates of growth, employment levels, investment, or social conditions, these differences are likely to widen further, rather than narrow, under the impact of a new economy that runs counter to the homogenization of the smokestack era" (Toffler, 1990: 247). Whether there is a split of society into two distinct segments or four distinct segments or even 80 segments for that matter is unimportant for the moment, what is significant is that these trends start to unravel the myth that society is converging upon some ideal "middle class".

3.1 The Service Economy: occupational shift and the declining middle

For western economies perhaps the most significant element leading to an unravelling of middle class society and the fostering of a potentially polarized economic structure has been the changing age and sex composition of the labour force coupled with an occupational shift underway since the end of the second world war. In the post war era the economies of the United Kingdom, United States and Canada have been characterized by dramatic growth in the share of the labour force accounted for by service sector employment and a concomitant decline in the proportion of the labour force found in industrial, goods producing and natural resource oriented employment sectors.¹⁷ This occupational shift can be confusing and misrepresentative since it seems to imply a monolithic change in the nature of the economy, this is a gross oversimplification. Such generalizations tend to downplay the tremendous increase in industrial production which permits capital and resources to be allocated to non-productive activities with no loss in material output (Lawrence, 1991: 81). Measures undertaken to improve material output are themselves contentious issues in the polarization question and are discussed in detail elsewhere in this chapter. For now, acknowledging that the term "service economy" is misleading we must press on.

Even more confusion arises due to the eclectic nature of the jobs classified under the rubric of "services". Hence, at the outset it is necessary to distinguish the characteristics of a service economy which provide the particular forces that produce polarization in wage

¹⁷ Using Canada as an example we can see that in 1951, 47 per cent of the Canadian labour force was involved in service industries, by 1981 this had increased to 66 per cent and reached 71 per cent in 1987. Two out of every three people employed were service sector workers. On the other hand during this same period the proportion of goods producing workers in Canada declined from 53 per cent in 1951 to 33 per cent in 1981. This does not mean the goods producing sector of the Canadian economy did not grow, between 1951 to 1981 it increased by 45 per cent, but the service sector labour force grew by 220 per cent over the same time period (Picot, 1987: 8; see also ECC, 1990: 4; Lindsay, 1989: 20). Furthermore, the shift is far from over. During the 1980s virtually all net job creation in Canada took place in the service sector (ECC, 1990: 1). Similar trends were observed in America and Britain. The proportion of all workers employed in the service sector grew substantially in the United States during the 1980s, reaching 70 per cent by 1987 (Gower, 1988b: 15). In the United Kingdom the number of employees in the service sector grew steadily between 1971 and 1989 accounting for a third of the overall economic increase (Social Trends 20, 1990: 74). UK forecasts suggest service employment will continue to increase in its share of total employment in the decades ahead (Social Trends 20, 1990: 20; Ward, 1990b).

and earning distribution.¹⁸ Two explanations have been put forward although there is considerable dispute over the reasons. The first suggests the increasing participation of women in the labour force, the increase in "nonstandard" employment (i.e. part-time) and the entry of the the baby-boom generation into the labour market depressed wages and skewed the distribution of incomes toward the low end of the scale. The second explanation is that the transition of the economy from goods production to services fueled a polarized income distribution (ECC, 1990: 15).

As a result of the combination of the considerable skill and labour force requirements coupled with the considerable variation in growth rates between different elements within the service sector a "good jobs/bad jobs" scenario has arisen (Kolko, 1988; ECC, 1990; Picot et al. 1990). The good jobs scenario focuses on job growth in different *occupations*. This suggests growth in managerial, professional and technical occupations have been more rapid than other occupations and that these jobs pay more on average than other kinds of work. The bad jobs rationale is based upon the realization growth is occurring in different *sectors* of the economy. Jobs in services are growing faster than those in goods producing sectors and on average are paid less. This is especially evident due to the rapid growth in the very low wage consumer services sectors such as retail trade, food, accommodation and personal services (Picot et al., 1990: 16).

Furthermore, economists Barry Bluestone, Bennett Harrison and Lucy Gorham suggest the rise of women in the labour force has paralleled the growth of service work and

¹⁸ See the Economic Council of Canada's *Good jobs. Bad jobs* (1990) and chapter one of Lars Osberg et al (1989) for a discussion of different definitions of a "service economy". In this thesis, a general definition of a service economy is when more than half of the labour force produces intangibles. For Canada this was reached during the mid 1950s. According to this definition, by 1976 nearly all western industrialized nations were "service" economies (Kolko, 1988: 95). The service sector generally includes; banking, insurance and brokerage-trades, transport, communications, maintenance, professions, tourism and leisure, advertising, health, personal and business services. As would be expected there is considerable variation in growth rates between different industries within the service sector (Lindsay, 1989). The service economy could be quantified even further into an "information" or quaternary economy. This is a further distinction between sectors of the economy ranging from primary, secondary and tertiary to quaternary. This last sector deals exclusively with processing and transmission of information (Castells, 1991: 7; Jones, 1990: 92).

decline in mining and manufacturing (cited in Kuttner, 1986: 7). Increasing female involvement in the labour force is expected to continue in most advanced economies. Of the projected labour force growth of one million in the UK over the next 10 years, 90 per cent are expected to be women (Social Trends 20, 1990: 19). Proportionately similar levels are projected for Canada (Sauve, 1990: 5; Parliament, 1990: 18). This is an important element which should not be glossed over. As traditional male employment opportunities dwindle in availability many women will have to step forward to support or supplement family incomes. Given inherent patriarchal values in western society this will be no small task. Due to a chauvinistic degradation of jobs characterized as "gender specific", women tend to occupy jobs which on average are the lowest paying, earning only 60 per cent of average male salaries. In the UK, female full-time employees earn on average two-thirds of full-time male employee earnings, though the differences have declined in recent years (Social Trends 20, 1990: 20). Canadian statistics show the gap between what men and women earn is decreasing slowly, in 1984 women earned 65.6 per cent of what men earned, a wage gap closure of only 0.2 per cent (Cox, 1990: 23).

Associated with the increased participation of women in the labour force has been an increase in part-time work and to a lesser extent job sharing. The advantages of this "nonstandard" or "contingent work force" to employers is obvious: no sick pay, health insurance, or vacations, wages are lower than full time workers, jobs are relatively insecure, and transient labour is usually unorganized making it easier for employers to fire and hire part-time or temporary help with few objections (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982: 94; Kolko, 1988: 312-313; Drache, 1989: 4; ECC, 1990: 12; Ward, 1990a).

In Canada the number of part-time jobs (less than 30 hours a week) increased by over 45 per cent during the 80s, 72 per cent of which are held by females (Sauve, 1990: 66). Jo-Anne Parliament notes that in 1989, 15 per cent of all employed people worked part-time compared to 13 per cent in 1979 and 11 per cent in 1975 (Parliament, 1990: 19). Involuntary part-time work (workers who would have preferred full time if available) has

been increasing as well and now accounts for 24 per cent of all part-time employment. Nearly half of all part-time jobs created since 1981 are involuntary part-time (ECC, 1990: 11). In America part-time jobs doubled between 1980 and 1987 (Gower, 1988a: 18; Lindsay, 1989). Celebrations of the growth of employment in the 1980s ignored the fact that it was part-time work that increased while the actual number of hours worked and weekly earnings declined (Kolko, 1988: 312-313). Examining shifts in the American labour force Ward Morehouse and David Dembo write "what appears to be happening is that higher paying jobs that are being lost - mostly by prime-age male workers - are being replaced by much lower paying jobs, largely in the service industries and largely by women entering the work force" (Morehouse & Dembo, 1985: 33; see also Kuttner, 1986: 7). This is resulting in a "feminization of poverty" and the "pauperization of paid employment" since wages barely keep above poverty levels. In the United Kingdom Pahl notes that between 1960 and 1980 the number of part-time workers doubled to 4.4 million whereas the number of full-time workers declined by over two million. Of the increase in part-time employment most jobs were taken up by women, with almost all of them being in the service sector (Pahl, 1984: 335).

Given the high level of urbanization in countries such as Britain, America and Canada these trends describe the *type* of urban labour force we can expect to see emerge in the years ahead. Upper level managerial, administrative and professional occupations require unique individual skills which cannot be easily replicated or eliminated through computer or similar technological advances. The same is true for low skilled, menial service jobs where automation is either not possible or simply not cost effective. On the other hand middle level white collar and blue collar workers can be replaced with labour substituting technology and automation (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982: 35; Kolko, 1988: 339; Ramsay, 1991: 33; Phillips, 1990: 21-22). As a result Joyce Kolko writes

[j]obs in the general category of services are polarized between high-salary professional work, such as that of Wall Street lawyers, and the lowest-wage labor [sic], such as that of fast-food kitchen helpers without benefits; the numbers of middle-income jobs is very limited (Kolko, 1988: 96).

Before moving on it is interesting to recognize that considering the implications of the transition to a new service economy proves to be an excellent vehicle for considering the issue of whether there is a declining middle class. The logic behind this is quite simple and is based upon the premise is that one effect of rapid advances in technology will be a distribution of income that is skewed to the upper and lower classes leaving relatively fewer middle income households. This question seems to be primarily centred in North America since no debate on whether the middle class household should be placed on the endangered species list has surfaced in British or other European literature. Perhaps due to the deeply ingrained middle class values associated with American and Canadian societies we have had greater difficulty accepting "middle classdom" as an anachronism.

The concept of a declining middle class was popularized by economist Robert Kuttner in 1983 when he predicted current trends in the United States economy could lead to a distribution of skills and income skewed to the upper and lower extremes. Technological change was not the only reason cited, Kuttner felt regressive public policy and the decline of unions were also part of the cause.¹⁹ For many, particularly minorities with little education or skills, middle wage employment opportunities afforded by the primary and manufacturing sector led the way into the middle class. Kuttner argues that coupled with the shift to a service economy there is a great deal of evidence which suggests de-industrialization and the resultant loss of traditional employment opportunities is accompanied by and *responsible* for a polarization in the structure of wages and incomes

¹⁹ Measures of political and union intervention in past eras were instrumental in raising lower-skilled, poorly paid jobs into middle income ranges. These forms of intervention have always been necessary to re-direct wealth to the disadvantaged. However, these forms of intervention are unlikely in present situations due to the weakening of unions and prevalent political conservatism enunciated by demands for fiscal restraint.

as well paid production jobs vanish (Kuttner, 1986: 7 emphasis added).

Aside from Kuttner, two other authors argue the middle class is shrinking but differ as to whether it is due to movement up or down the social scale. Katharine Bradbury suggests reports of more families in poverty and high-income "yuppies" fueled perceptions the American middle-class is shrinking - a perception Bradbury believes is correct due to the decline of real family incomes and increasing unequal distribution of income over the last few decades (Bradbury, 1986: 41). While accepting the problems associated with defining the middle class, Bradbury views families with incomes between \$20,000 and \$50,000 as "middle class". This group yielded a decline of 5.1 per cent between 1973 and 1984. However, while the fraction of middle class families in relation to others declined the total number of middle class families increased by about 8 million (15 per cent) between the same period, meaning the actual number of middle-class families increased by about 1.1 million (Bradbury, 1986: 45).

Bradbury notes the reality of American society becoming less middle class would not be a cause for concern if families were generally becoming richer, however, increasing affluence has not been the general case between 1973 and 1984. Many families are finding they are unable to achieve the living standards they expect to attain (Bradbury, 1984: 45). The stereo-typical middle class family (headed by a male 25 to 44 years of age, with non-working spouse and two children) fared poorly between 1973 and 1984, declining by 8 percentage points compared to a 5 percentage point decline for all families. Furthermore, their median income declined by 7.4 per cent in real terms over the period, from \$34, 200 to \$31, 600. This led Bradbury to feel there is concern real economic well-being is on the decline and that the fabric of society, based historically on a strong middle class is disintegrating (Bradbury, 1986: 52).

Phillips on the other hand argues the upper-middle class (those making \$50,000 plus) increased from 13 per cent of the total income picture in 1970 to 18.3 per cent in

1985. Households making \$15,000 to \$50,000 a year declined from 65.1 per cent of the total income picture in 1970 to 58.2 per cent in 1985 (Phillips, 1990: 24). This led Phillips to suggest "economic polarization and middle-class 'decline' involved roughly as much *promotion* and upward mobility as demotion" (Phillips, 1990: 24 emphasis in original). Phillips contends many have moved up during the 1980s, resulting in a proportionately smaller middle while Bradbury argues more families have moved down in social and economic position. Bradbury's analysis considers the relative importance two incomes have in retaining middle class purchasing power, Phillips has relatively little to say about dual income families or whether they played a role in the upward movement of formerly middle class families. Nonetheless, both concede the decline of the middle class is not transitory.

The Economic Council of Canada's Innovation and Jobs in Canada (1987) took up the question of a declining middle class in Canada.²⁰ The ECC identified three concerns regarding the prospect of a shrinking middle class. First, without middle level employment opportunities workers seeking advancement will be trapped and frustrated by low wage or unchallenging jobs. Second, the middle class represents an important source of consumer demand and are thus vital to economic stability and growth. Finally, the middle class is considered as traditionally representing a source of social and political stability (ECC, 1987: 57). Sensing the impacts of technological change on skills and income could lead to an erosion of the middle class the ECC undertook research to further test this hypothesis. In addition to this the ECC were interested in whether inequality was increasing and whether there was a growing polarization of the population. They used the Gini coefficient to gauge inequality while using the W-Pol to ascertain levels of polarization.²¹ The W-Pol is based on the extent to which the population tends to cluster

²⁰ In investigating the declining middle class the ECC developed a number of complementary measures to assist them. They define the share of income going to middle class earners in two ways: first as the middle one-third and second as the middle 60% of earners ranked by employment income (ECC, 1987: 60). A further approach focused on identifying the distance of earners income from the mean. In this case the middle class included those whose income fell within 25 % above or below the mean income (ECC, 1987: 60).

at two discrete points along the income spectrum. The higher the value the greater the polarization. A value of one would indicate not only a completely polarized distribution but also complete inequality (ECC, 1987: 60).

While the ECC study was inconclusive it did find evidence which suggest a slight decline of the middle class coupled with increases in inequality and polarization. They found that between 1975 and 1985 shifts took place in the distribution of income across the sexes, age groups, educational levels, occupations and industries. Using two categories (share of total labour force and income share) they observed that professionals and managers increased in both categories; clerical workers share in the work force was stable but their share of income declined; blue collar workers saw decline in both share of work force and income share (ECC, 1987: 61).

The income share of middle class males and females remained fairly stable at roughly 30 per cent respectively. However, the number of both males and females in the middle class declined as a proportion of total labour force (ECC, 1987: 66). The results are somewhat misleading because non-demographic factors reveal less inequality and polarization. The proportion of employment income accounted for by the middle class appears to be increasing while on the other hand the share of the work force with middle class incomes shows slight decline. Hence, while the actual size of the middle class changed little, the proportion of workers with middle class incomes declined from 30 per cent in 1971 to 26 per cent in 1983 (ECC, 1987: 61). The ECC concluded "[w]hile there is, thus far, no *strong* historical evidence of middle-class decline overall, there are enough signs pointing to the possibility of erosion that we feel compelled to sound a note of

21 Michael Wolfson and J.J. Evans of Statistics Canada suggest that it is necessary to distinguish between poverty, inequality and polarization. Wolfson and Evans argue recent discussions of the "disappearing middle class" involves a concept which is not the same as either poverty or inequality but is better captured by the term polarization. They developed the W-Pol which indicates the degree in which income is concentrated near the extremes in the distribution spectrum. By doing so they consider the range or "shape" of income distribution rather than "size" of income distribution (Wolfson & Evans, no date: 65). This is yet a further evolution of the polarization concept, one which strongly relates polarization to a service sector economy.

warning" (ECC, 1987: 68 emphasis in original). It further suggest that due to Canada's lag in new technologies "...it may be that we are too early in the process for clear signs of middle-class erosion to have appeared" (ECC, 1987: 68). Clearly we are still only in the early stages of the current wave of technological change and new advances to come promise to cause further changes in our working and home lives.

3.2 The Global Economy: economic restructuring and de-industrialization

The implications of the service economy and the reasons for the apparent decline of the middle class must be further understood in the context of a global economy. There appear to be two emerging schools of thought regarding the global market place. One foresees a virtual cornucopia of goods and wealth which will result in increasing prosperity for all (Saaty & Boone, 1990: chapter two; see also Crook, 1990; Lipsey, 1990). The other argues the global economy will perpetuate inequality and increase on a grand scale the existing gap between rich and poor within and between nations (Brundtland et al, 1987; Kolko, 1988).

The Brundtland commission recognized that technological advances which continue to change the social, cultural and economic fabric of nations and the world community overall offer enormous opportunities for improving health, raising productivity and living standards and conserving the natural resource base. On the other hand there was also a recognition that ill-considered development could lead to greater problems by marginalizing large segments of the world populations (Brundtland et al, 1987: 44). Fears of ill-considered development are well founded. A recent United Nations report Overall Socio-Economic Perspectives of the World Economy to the Year 2000 (1990) suggested that

[i]f current patterns were to continue unchanged, the world distribution of income would worsen and the gap between the richest and the poorest countries would continue to widen. Projections for social indicators reflect the same pattern. As

assessed under these circumstances, the world economy of the year 2000 would present a picture of both economic advance and decline, of structural change and stagnation, of rapid improvement in levels of living in some countries and rising numbers of people living in absolute poverty in others (United Nations, 1990: 37).

This is a disheartening image. As it stands economic growth is still seen as vital to eliminating poverty, especially in developing and underdeveloped countries but growth at any cost will not do. Ideally growth must be sustainable for the present as well as future generations and it must be equitable by helping those most in need (Brundtland, et al, 1987: 8). Sadly, over the past decade development policies and initiatives to foster growth have rarely met these challenges. Instead a brutal sense of competition and government off loading has occurred.

The phrase "no pain no gain" originated as a fitness slogan but it has been adopted as a motto by business in readiness for greater global competition. In light of the economic downswings of the 1970s and early 1980s there has been growing pressure to "restructure", intensifying the desire for competitive, efficient, and rationalized operations for business and government. Kolko writes;

[r]estructuring involved reversing even rhetorical policy goals such as full employment and the state's role in welfare provisions, dictated not only by ideology but also by the fiscal crisis in the context of the economic system. Unemployment was in fact an important backdrop permitting the restructuring of labour relations in the capitalist nations. This policy orientation led to, among other things, denationalization, deregulation, dismantlement of welfare systems, and de-indexation of wages. State expenditures beneficial to capital, on the other hand, continued and in many cases grew substantially (Kolko, 1988: 53).

The result has been a new economic world order which gave rise to a new international division of labour where capital is free to roam, national allegiances are reduced, and corporate and financial elite accumulate increasing wealth and influence. This

is of course simplifying an elaborate process since the world economy is made up of hundreds of thousands of actors who make individual decisions based upon expectations of self interest and individual perceptions. It is a contentious issue but it appears no one person or group is the originator of the need for economic restructuring, although it is clear certain groups and persons enjoy greater benefit than others the process is generally underway without individuals having any notion of a grand design (Kolko, 1988: 64).²² Kolko suggests capital simply surges to where profits are found or expected, which implies restructuring has resulted from a number of individual decisions that have interacted to produce a change in the nature of the world economy (Kolko, 1988: 58). Whether one accepts this explanation or not a question which begs asking is why this originated and when?

During the Great Depression and even after the second world war there was little discussion of economic restructuring or concepts of permanent planned reductions rather, debate centred on recovery (Kolko, 1988: 11). And recovery did indeed occur. Overall growth in the world economy between 1950 and 1970 surpassed all records. Hence in the early 1970s most saw growth continuing unabated while few foresaw oil price shocks or stagflation. But after 1973 most western economies began to experience unforeseen economic difficulties. Coupled with countries individual battles with inflation and unemployment the overall world economy began to sputter and stall, as a result notions of restructuring gathered momentum. The idea is that the emergence of a global economy coupled with measures to "reorder" the distribution of national income would be a panacea to the crisis of accumulation engendered by precarious levels of growth.

While restructuring the economy globally is a relatively new concept the forces which fuel such measures are not, indeed they are systemic and structural features of

²² Economists describe this as "rational actors seeking gain". Lipsey et al. note that while free market economies are usually driven by the price system, the basic engine which drives any adaptation of the economy is windfall profits or losses. Acting in their own best interests, individuals and firms react to such signals as windfall profits in different sectors of the economy and move in that direction (Lipsey et al., 1985: 407). Moves of this nature will continue until windfall profits are driven to zero.

capitalism which have always characterized the system. Legitimation and accumulation have been essential characteristics for maintaining and enhancing the capitalist system. Legitimation refers to socio-political functions which ensure the capitalist social order appears "just", "fair", and that social harmony is maintained. Accumulation broadly refers to economic functions which essentially ensure profitability. A highly competitive global economy presents new and difficult challenges to foster and sustain accumulation while legitimizing the existing and emerging divergence in the social structure. Thus, while the orientation of the economy may shift to the services sector (structural) the ideology of accumulation (systemic) will remain (see Kolko, 1988: 8-9 for a discussion of systemic and structural features of capitalism). This is the primary justification for fearing that moves afoot to restructure will mean that, as in earlier periods of economic turmoil, the gains arising from increased productivity, competitiveness and material progress will be shared by a relatively small elite.

These fears are further reinforced when the issue of "de-industrialization" (the reduction or removal of industrial employment activities in some geographical region in favour of other regions or countries) is added to the picture. In their analysis of the de-industrialization of America Bluestone and Harrison use the term de-industrialization to define a widespread, systemic disinvestment in basic productive capacity (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982: 6). They use the examples of divestment and disinvestment to illustrate their point. Divestment means the sale or closure of a plant; disinvestment means the deliberate starving of a subsidiary of funds or the draining off of profits for reinvestment elsewhere. Divestment is usually used as a bargaining tool with labour or government. Disinvestment is more insidious, it is invisible to most people until plywood goes over the windows and "out of business" signs go up. To disinvest is to "milk" a plant for all it has in order to reallocate those profits; a step beyond "milking" is to deliberately run a plant down by failing to replace worn out or obsolete machinery and then close the plant because

it is "unprofitable" (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982: 8; Kolko, 1988: 72-73). In light of this it becomes clear that to understand de-industrialization requires an analysis of modern corporate managerial strategies in the context of an increasingly competitive global economic market. De-industrialization does not just happen, increasing "capital mobility" over the last two decades coupled with the changing economic environment have made it feasible (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982: 15-16).

The unrestrained pursuit of self-interest by individuals and corporations epitomized by de-industrialization or capital mobility is seen as capital merely acting rationally. Simply put, this has been one approach taken by some businesses to capture the availability of lower costs wages elsewhere while escaping the restriction of unions and other legislative measures such as environmental protection laws which reduce profit margins. The result has been disastrous for labour, leaving many vulnerable to unemployment. What new investment which has occurred in existing industrial plants has emphasized the replacement of labour by the installation of energy and labour saving equipment rather than on the construction of new productive facilities. Meaning new technology and automation resulted in both productivity growth and rising unemployment in most traditional industries (Kolko, 1988: 338).

This means heightened capital mobility plays a key role in providing the right timing and environment for polarization. Russell comments that in a global sense capitals "...arrival in a country doesn't mean the creation of schools, roads, social services and a higher standard of living. On the contrary, it means workers and resources are exploited at minimum cost and then abandoned when another, even more exploitative and profitable, location emerges somewhere else in the world" (Russell, 1991a: 7). This flexible capital, to borrow Harvey's term, exacerbated the trend toward geographical concentration of employment and investment on a local, national and even world wide scale. Observing the consequences of this trend Phillips wrote

by the late 1980s the polarization of wealth was emerging as an important factor in both rich and poor nations around the world. The rich nations were mostly getting richer, while impoverished continents and regions lost ground, especially Africa and Latin America. Economic polarization was also intensifying inside Third World nations, as local elites sent hundreds of billions of dollars of flight capital from the soft-currency Mexicos, [sic] Brazils [sic] and Nigerias [sic] to the security of Miami, New York, London and Switzerland while the rest of the population languished (Phillips, 1990: 146).

Closer to home, Daniel Drache suggests de-industrialization is almost singlehandedly changing the role of labour in Canada. Soon a large segment of the population will belong to a post-industrial work force which will have very little job security and which will be forced to work at contractual, casual, temporary and part-time employment (Drache, 1989: 1). Drache feels the current epidemic of plant shutdowns is the consequence of widespread systematic disinvestment in Canada's industrial capacity, especially branch plant operations. Plants shut down are not necessarily unprofitable, they close simply because the operation did not fit into the corporate strategy of the parent company. The mass of production industries which once served as the bedrock of Canada's modern industrial society are being transformed and new technological innovations create burgeoning unemployment.

In the United Kingdom, areas where service sector industries were dominant developed rapidly with new jobs and capital investment while areas where manufacturing had traditionally been of greatest importance continue to decline (Pahl, 1984: 197, 1985: 189; Dale & Bamford, 1989: 482; Keeble, 1986: 175-182). The result has been the North-South divide, a split between the prosperous, greedy South and a bleak, depressed North (Dale & Bamford, 1989: 482; Means, 1988: 402; Phillips, 1990). Dale and Bamford comment the North-South divide is not a new phenomena but actually something that has been exacerbated by economic recession and associated levels of high unemployment. Pahl describes the North-South split as evidence of the "geographical polarization"

underway and suggests it will likely become more acute in years ahead. There are similarities in America where a marked shift of population and capital from the "Rustbelt" to "Sunbelt" regions has taken place. In Canada a similar process is exhibited by a further concentration of higher-order occupations in Central Canada, especially Toronto and its surrounding region, and a decline of traditional employment opportunities elsewhere. Since Canada has no sunbelt region similar to America when plants close down they rarely relocate elsewhere in this country, closures tend to be permanent (Drache, 1989: 18).

If we are to believe the prevailing political and economic wisdom what we are experiencing today is similar to Joseph Schumpeter's theory of economic reincarnation or "creative destruction". To Schumpeter, creative destruction was recognized as an essential aspect of keeping capitalism working. The idea was that perpetual growth and destruction would free labour and capital from relatively unproductive uses in order that they be put to work in more productive areas (Lipsey, Purvis & Steiner, 1985: 251-252). It was believed governments and business could stimulate the economy and generate jobs to replace those being eliminated elsewhere. If one million people were unemployed the principle would be to prime the economy and create one million jobs since most jobs created would be highly interchangeable and thus filled by virtually anyone. In light of the shift from manual to sophisticated mental labour such solutions are less workable as methods and procedures of work become more individualized, meaning more jobs are less interchangeable (Toffler, 1990: 212).

A crucial question arising from this is whether we can afford the social costs of creative destruction when it comes down to who shall have a job and who shall not during the transition to the next economy? (Cohen & Shannon, 1984: 190; Shannon, 1986: 12). Contemporary situations and projections of future conditions have begun to cast doubt upon the old truism that growth creates jobs. Instead post-industrial economies appear to create the spectre of "jobless growth" since increases in GNP are not matched by more jobs

(Cohen & Shannon, 1984: 52). This in turn places great strain upon the social welfare system. As this strain begins to mount, coupled with increasing economic strain on an ever increasing number of citizens, there is renewed contempt for the high ideals once promised by the Welfare State. Indeed, recently there is growing concern the continued faltering of the Welfare State will ensure its demise (Mishra, 1986).

3.3 The faltering Welfare State and revival of Neo-Conservatism

The Welfare State that emerged since the end of the Second World War has been instrumental in mitigating extreme poverty in advanced western societies. The Welfare State assumes responsibility for the well-being of its citizens through a range of interventions in the market place such as full employment measures and social services. During the 1960s social welfare ideas were increasingly accepted as prosperity made it easier for private affluence and public generosity to go hand and hand (Mishra, 1986: 4; Lipsey et al., 1985: 745). In most regards the Welfare State was viewed as doing no harm and perhaps much good to the market economy (Mishra, 1986: 12). That perception has changed in recent years. While difficult if not impossible to substantiate it seems the confusion and turbulence created by the sputtering world economy over the last two decades brought many (whether they are conscious of it or not) to the belief or assumption that neo-conservative or laissez faire economics will allow them to weather out the storm.

In his book The Welfare State in Crisis (1986) Ramesh Mishra felt a neo-conservative revolution in social and economic thought had been percolating since the mid 1970s. Since the late 1970s there had been a marked shift in general economic policy orientation among western governments as confidence in the welfare state and Keynesianism measures of "fine-tuning" the economy were rejected. It is unfair perhaps to "reject" Keynesianism per se since it was never really fully implemented in any real sense. Nevertheless, there has been an increasing sense the welfare state is acting as a barrier to

economic recovery (Mishra, 1986; see also Kolko, 1988: 19; Bluestone & Harrison, 1982: 141). As a result the economic difficulties of the past two decades have driven a wedge between the economic and social aspects of welfare. It is this rift neo-conservatives have exploited, making social welfare the scapegoat for the failure of the economy. Mishra writes "neo-conservatives offer what, on the face of it, looks like a coherent and plausible analysis of the current problems besetting welfare capitalism as well as a set of prescriptions for their solution" (Mishra, 1986: 28).

Neo-conservatives argue the economic crisis facing western industrialized countries is due to a decline in the moral fiber of society and that the social welfare system is not only inflationary, but also the root cause for the lack of commitment to entrepreneurialism, innovation and old-fashioned hard work, what George Gilder called the "psychological means of production" (Gilder, 1981: 28). A reduction in the relative ease of obtaining welfare measures and the outright elimination of some assistance programs to those in middle income ranges was seen by some as just the prescription for "disciplining" labour. Because most government spending is largely directed to certain segments of the population to begin with, restraint in welfare state measures have been painful for many high need, lower-income households and individuals.

Clearly then, some consideration must be given to the effect changing political attitudes have had on either mitigating or worsening polarized conditions. Three western countries are focused on herein: Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. It is not meant to suggest that by examining the fortunes of the UK, America, and Canada that trends have mirrored themselves in each country, this would be far too simplistic an expectation. The aim is to merely illustrate where similarities between the countries can be drawn. There are similar structural shifts in their economies and each has moved to the Right politically resuscitating pressure for fiscal austerity and conservative ideology. The main contention is that (taking the obvious differences in magnitude and

scale between the countries into consideration) situations currently being seen in the UK and USA will find their way into the political, social, economic and urban structure of Canada.

The restructuring of the global economy discussed earlier was largely facilitated by an conducive political climate during the 1980s. This is clearly seen with regard to measures introduced by different countries to restructure their economies in order to better compete internationally. While conservative governments emerged in Britain, America and Canada, socialists became the governing parties in France, Spain, Italy and Greece. Yet despite differing ideologies the ubiquitous characteristics of restructuring strategies became apparent as all of these nations began exhibiting measures which pursued the same global (capitalist) economy (Kolko, 1988: 41). The UK, America and Canada each had federal governments which facilitated restructuring measures with a vengeance. This rekindled a close relationship between capital and the state. Faced with similar problems and guided by similar political ideologies these governments all began to operate in familiar fashions.

Consider the situation in the United Kingdom. In the grasp of economic decline and decay brought on by the collapse of the manufacturing sector, especially in industries such as ship building and steel production, Britain's Labour government sought to stem the tide by relying on welfare state measures during the 1970s. In the late 1970s, in order to deal with the countries continued and unrelenting decline the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher shifted to a supply-side approach with tough and challenging central government policies emphasizing disinflation and abandonment of full employment policies (Dale & Bamford, 1989; Thompson, 1990; Bohunicky, 1990: 7). Elected Prime Minister in May 1979, Thatcher proposed the reduction of taxes, curbing of government spending and reduction of waste and bureaucracy caused by big government, a platform which would come to idealize "neo-conservative" approaches to the problems undermining advanced western economies.

In America the liberalism that prevailed since the "War on Poverty" and "Great

Society" left a legacy of angry Conservatives indignant over downward income distribution. This, coupled with popular frustration with big government and inflation in the late 1970s was enough to reinforce the momentum for the new economics in the 1980s. The Reagan administration, which came to power a little over a year after Thatcher in Britain, promised an even more dramatic shift to the "new" Right ²³ (Mishra, 1986: 46; Morganthau et al, 1982). As the 1980s began the United States faced similar problems to those of Britain; declining productivity, slowed growth, de-industrialization, increasing regional disparities and the threat of declining living standards. The system that seemed so capable of providing a steadily growing standard of living has become totally incapable of providing people with a simple home mortgage, stable job or secure pension (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982: 4-5).

The recent political and economic history of Canada has mirrored trends seen elsewhere during the past decade. Like most advanced industrial countries after the second world war Canada saw a massive expansion of the social safety net as the country rode the crest of an unprecedented economic boom. As the 1970s unfolded and economic growth stalled Canada was faced with the distressing prospect of de-industrialization and declining living standards. By the early 1980s Canada was in a recession (Granatstein et al, 1986: 392-395). The liberalism of the 1970s came under great fire during the 1980s as government costs began to outpace government revenues. Social programs initiated during prosperity when governments had money in surplus are now supposedly beyond the governments means.

The search for a solution and desire for a new approach to politics was expressed by Canadians in the September 1984 federal election when Brian Mulroney and the

²³ Phillips maintains the 1970s represented the "end point" of the liberal ideology in America and that the Reagan election in 1980 signalled the beginning of a sharp move in the opposite direction. In his review of America following the aftermath of the Reagan administration Phillips wrote, "the 1980s were the triumph of upper America - an ostentatious celebration of wealth, the political ascendancy of the richest third of the population and a glorification of capitalism, free markets and finance" (Phillips, 1990: xvii). Accumulation and concentration became simultaneous hallmarks of the Reagan era.

Progressive Conservative party came to power. Cohen and Shannon write:

[w]hat Canadians elected in 1984 was a government that reflects a 'new conservatism'. Canadians remain committed to the objective of a society characterized by social equity. What they have begun to question is the scale, the powers, and the role of the government in defining and meeting that objective (Cohen & Shannon, 1984: 145).

The immediate problem for the government was how to pay for the social policies of the previous generation in the fiscal realities of the present and second, how to get the economy going again. In turn the government placed their faith in competitiveness and productivity as the panacea to revive the sluggish economy. ²⁴

It is in the United States where the increasing socio-economic polarization of the population can be most directly linked to changing political attitudes, particularly neo-conservative measures. During the Reagan era public policy mirrored private business agendas. The private sector was looked upon to solve urban problems as reliance on privatization, new federalism, housing vouchers and enterprise zones became pillars of the Reagan governments urban policy. ²⁵ William Tabb described Reagan's urban policies as anti-poor and anti-working class. He writes:

²⁴ The governments strategy, described in the 1984 Agenda for Economic Renewal, had four thrusts. First, a reduction of government spending. Since most government spending is largely directed to certain segments of the population to begin with, reduced government spending affects many high need, low income household and individuals. Second, tax reform which reduced income tax upon the wealthiest sectors in society in order to foster investment. Third, an increase in revenue where necessary such as the Goods and Services Tax. And finally, structural reforms to the economy such as Free Trade with the United States to improve potential economic growth (Government of Canada, 1991: 84). The government placed the key to future prosperity in an increase in productivity and the creation of an environment "favorable" to the growth of competitive enterprise (Government of Canada, 1991: 17).

²⁵ In an attempt to reduce "big" government Reagan sought to shift more responsibility for urban social services on to state and local governments in exchange for increased federal funding of Medicare. Publicly the rationale for these decentralization policies were based upon the virtues of "local control", but the real objective was to place social services in competition with other programs at the local level so that they would inevitable be cut (Tabb, 1984: 267; Sancton, 1991: 472). The end result could be the reduction or elimination of social services with little blame pointed at the federal government. Perhaps more important, such decentralization increases the ability of capital to play off one taxing jurisdiction against another. Capital could favor areas with little or no social services and/or no organized labour (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982; see also Tabb, 1986, Logan & Molotch, 1987; Sancton, 1991).

[i]n examining the application of the Reagan philosophy it is not difficult to conclude that he is interested in forcing down the individual and social wage of the working classes. Denied adequate funds for health, education, and welfare, low-income workers are thrown increasingly into a Dickensian 'Hard Times' world, forced to take any job at any wage and under any working conditions, on pain of starvation (Tabb, 1984: 268).

"Reaganomics" challenged the notion of social policy which had come to be accepted over the past few decades.²⁶ Instead of following the idea that a fair social policy consists at least in part, of redistributing wealth downward from the haves to the have-nots, the Reagan administration believed the solution to the economic woes of the country lie in a stronger, vibrant economy which in turn produces the employment opportunities that allow those not on the economic "train" to step aboard. The panacea to economic revival was pegged as a shifting of resources and power to investors and entrepreneurs.

While the Reagan administration accepted such policies were likely to widen the gap between rich and poor they defended their apparently uncompassionate stand by arguing

²⁶ "Reaganomics" meant the needy shouldered the brunt of budget cuts while policies aimed at spurring production and investment made the rich wealthier than ever (Morganthau, et al. 1982: 17; Kuttner, 1986: 7). Reagan's move to cut taxes across the board made the 1981 Economic Recovery Tax Act attractive to the American public. However, upon closer examination the benefits of this legislative measure went to corporations and wealthy individuals. Corporate taxes were reduced and depreciation benefits liberalized. Since only a relatively small stratum of the population derive much income from unearned sources, reductions in the taxation of unearned income resulted in a reduction in the top personal tax bracket from 70 per cent to 25 per cent between 1981 and 1988 (Phillips, 1990: 76). Furthermore, in order to under take across the board tax cuts, deficit financing measures were required. William Grieder argues the most immediate result of the 1981 Tax Act was higher interest rates and consequently higher interest payments on the countries debt (cited in Phillips, 1990: 90). This means a higher proportion of taxes taken from all Americans go solely to pay down the debt. The troubling aspect of this is that upper-income persons collect approximately 80 per cent of all monies allocated to interests payments and since taxes on unearned income were reduced those persons paid less tax on that income. The end result is wealth flowing upward to those already wealthy but in a more insidious and difficult to detect fashion. Hence, many feel public policy is directly to blame for the increasing gap between rich and poor, and responsible for the increasing polarization of inequality in America (Morganthau et al., 1982: 19; Kuttner, 1986: 7; Phillips, 1990: 26; Finn, 1986). Lester Thurow argues simply raising the income of capitalists, with tax cuts that are paid for by higher taxation of workers, is unlikely to achieve either more investment or a higher growth of productivity (cited in Mishra, 1986: 148). Thurow argues social policy is necessary to help create a healthy and skilled labour force which is crucial for growth in the next economy rather than mere investment.

efforts of previous administrations to narrow the gap were "unsustainable". The heavy tax burden was undermining economic growth and destroying the basis for paying increased social welfare costs (Morgenthau, 1982: 17) The rationale for such public policy is two-fold: " a vehement faith in the public benefits of private enterprise, and an equally fervent conviction that decades of government subsidies have done little to reduce the ranks of the poor, but much to sap the nation's economic vitality" (Morgenthau et al, 1982: 17).

Reagans critics contend a strong economy is built upon the backs of the poor and that the belief in the eventual good life for lower-income citizens as a result of the trickling down of affluence is a falsehood. Many argue confidence in economic growth as the panacea for urban ills is misplaced since many of the poor lack even the rudimentary skills necessary for entry-level jobs (Morgenthau, 1982: 19; see also Phillips, 1990). Sar Levitan feels that even if the Reagan administrations economic plan worked, the question of equality would remain. The lower segments of the income distribution shoulder most of the burden yet receive no direct benefits. For the lower segment of society it is "...pay now and you *may* fly later - if any seats remain and after all the others get their goodies first" (quoted in Morgenthau et al, 1982: 19 emphasis in original).

Similar attacks upon the welfare state were undertaken in Britain and have began to appear in Canada. In the UK not everyone benefitted equally from strong free market measures. This left critics suggesting Thatcher's enthusiasm to restructure the British economy had rekindled notions of Victorian extremes as the gap between rich and poor widened. The government rewarded the stronger parts of the British economy while ignoring the lower and middle classes. The result: between 1979 and 1985 the number of children living below the poverty line in Britain doubled to more than three million (Dale & Bamford, 1989). As unemployment rose to record levels there was a sense the result of legislative measures and public policies undertaken by the Thatcher government was a polarization of incomes, increased regional imbalances and increased poverty (Thompson,

1990: 10). Dale and Bamford comment:

the advent of a conservative government in 1979 began a period of radical reform affecting the social security system, housing and also union and employment legislation. The emphasis since 1979 on the use of market forces to produce an economic turn-around has meant an implicit policy of the 'weakest to the wall' while the strongest and most vigorous survive (Dale & Bamford, 1989: 483).

What made the situation even more disturbing was the seemingly ruthless and cold hearted manner with which the government set out to establish its vision of Britain. During her eleven and a half year tenure Thatcher thrived on confrontation, dividing the world into "us" and "them" (Bohunicky, 1990: 7). The theme of confrontation is neatly illustrated by the hostility between the central and local governments. Since many local authorities are controlled by the Labour party, the governing Conservatives removed power from local authorities (through legislative spending limits for example) and abolished the labour oriented Greater London Council (Brook, 1991: 120; Eyles, 1989).

In Canada the concern over government deficits and unjustified welfare has had tremendous impact at virtually every level of government.²⁷ One of the less innovative but most widely used measures to relieve financial strain is to "off load" the cost of programs or services to lower levels of government. Hence in Canada the federal government has reduced government transfer payments to some provinces. In turn provinces have elected to shift responsibility or additional costs on to municipalities. Municipalities, who have fewer off loading options, are faced with the choice of raising taxes (property and business) or cutting services. For the most part municipalities have

²⁷ Andrew Sancton argues that while the federal government has relatively little direct contact with municipalities, we should not ignore the importance it has on the quality of urban life. Sancton writes "[t]hrough its monetary, fiscal, and trade policies, it plays a central role in defining the nature of urban economic activity. Its policies concerning taxation and intergovernmental transfers have much to do with determining the capacity of provincial governments to respond to municipal demands for additional funds for urban services. Federal jurisdiction over railways, ports, and airports is of crucial importance to many aspects of urban development; so is the fact that the federal government is the biggest landholder in urban Canada" (Sancton, 1991: 466).

undertaken both options (Bird & Slack, 1983). However, it is all too apparent that people are beginning to feel the "pinch" because the federal government has been able to sell the idea that regardless of the "pain" which may be inflicted, tight fiscal restraint measures have to be implemented. Russell suggests this was a windfall for the governing neo-conservatives because it has manufactured an excuse to reduce Canada's social safety net (Russell, 1991d: 7). As a result many not responsible for the debt/deficit crisis are the ones who shoulder the largest burden. 28

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to identify why contemporary society, more than any other time in history, has the potential to achieve a polarized social structure. Over the past few decades progress has been bittersweet as the gap between those who prosper and those who languish has grown. This has moved western society away from any ideal equality and resulted in a greater accentuation of the extremes socially and economically. Given the rise of the service economy, global business priorities and the accentuation of jobs available at the extremes the distribution of income creates something of a two "class" society as an increasing number of haves demand greater variety and quality while an increased number of have-nots demand merely basic necessities. There is a decided potential threat to

28 Russell commented a secret Statistics Canada report suggests that social programs such as medicare are not the culprits the federal government would have us believe regarding Canada's debt/deficit crisis (Russell, 1991c, 1991d). The Statistics Canada study shows that 44 per cent of Canada's \$400 billion debt is due to tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy. Another 50 per cent is due to the growth of interest payments, only six per cent is attributed to government spending (Russell, 1991c; 1991d; see also Beauchesene, 1989: 20). Furthermore, Neil Brooks and Linda McQuaig claim that despite the governments campaign to shrink the deficit a generous new tax loophole is in the making. At a time when the government claims to have sought all possible sources of funds a potential source of billions of dollars has been quietly passed over by relinquishing tax on private trusts. Brooks and McQuaig comment "[t]he money would have come from the richest families in the country as part of an overhaul of the tax system worked out two decades ago. It would have come from the private trusts of these families - storage places of great wealth that are almost entirely shielded from the public eye" (Brooks & McQuaig, 1991). Under the former Liberal government tax reform these trusts would owe taxes starting January 1st 1993. The newly created loophole allows wealthy families in almost every case to choose to put off payment until their youngest child dies, thus delaying taxes for another generation or more. The result is a deferral of a fortune in taxes (Brooks & McQuaig, 1991).

democracy if such trends continue. Not only does increasing inequality strike hard at the roots of democratic society but polarization signals the death knell of the "public interest" or "consensus" politics. A demise of this sort casts serious doubt upon the emergence of actions or policies deemed to be of societal value or public good. To use Murray Bookchin's analogy, there is a growing impression we have lost our sense of direction. He suggests our sense of purpose, even our idealism, seems to have been lost in our relationship with social life and modern society. The lack of social identity and meaning has been replaced by a sense of ambiguity (Bookchin, 1989: 20).

Over the last hundred years a principal task of modern governments in the western world has been to reduce the political, economic and social gap between the highest and lowest earners of income and possessors of wealth (Eversley, 1973a, 1990; Macridis, 1983; Granatstein et al, 1986). Beginning in the late 1970s efforts to restructure economies meant this direction was not only reversed, as the chasm between haves and have nots reopened, but was coupled with declining political will to resolve equality issues. The 1980s are characterized as the "neo-conservative" decade (Kingwell, 1991: A20; Doer, 1989: 7; Nordheimer, 1991: 7; Keegan, 1990). These characterizations seem to imply such thinking began during the past decade but such is not the case, the foundation for this momentous move to the Right had been placed many years before. Recently people have expressed a belief the 1990s will harbor humbler and simpler values, but this too is an oversimplification which implies the ideology which drove the 80s has ceased to exist. Mark Kingwell believes the new morality of the 1990s will merely serve to hide the fact there are those who still adhere to the adage "greed is good". The only difference is that this will be done in a much more quiet fashion (Kingwell, 1991: A20). Vestiges of the laissez-faire decade shall linger for generations to come. In this regard benign neglect is unlikely to produce a new decade which is simpler and humbler, such a decade will be achieved by choice, not chance.

Given the rather pessimistic tone of this chapter one may get carried away with the impression socio-economic polarization is inevitable. However, if we recognize the potential problem(s), debate them fully, and sincerely strive to change the direction we are now following polarization need not be inevitable at all. Indeed, measures which have the potential to mitigate polarized condition have been identified. These measures include rather traditional approaches such as rebuilding the industrial base, progressive taxation, higher wages and bolstered labour unions (Chisholm et al., 1989: 62; Kuttner, 1986). Other solutions lie in the establishment of knowledge based, information driven economies that concentrate on using leading edge processing methods (J. Cohen, 1991: 7; Toffler, 1990). This suggests there is no return to the industrial era. Instead, it is hoped that in the long run everything will even itself out. At the very centre of these efforts are measures which wish to focus on human resources development, primarily through upgraded education and training systems (Hunsley, 1990: 7). Ross and Shillington feel we must put more resources into child development, with the aim of finding ways to ensure more social and intellectual enrichment of children living in poverty. Policies dealing with poverty in the future must change. "In [the] future, the road out of poverty should depend more on solid training opportunities and good paying jobs than barely adequate income programs" (Ross & Shillington, 1989: 13).

It should be readily apparent that many of the measures regarded as ameliorating or reducing the potential for polarization are beyond the realm of direct urban planning influence or responsibility. However, this does not mean planners can ignore the question of polarization. This is the issue we turn to in the next chapter.

4 *Toward An Urban Perspective*

4.0 *Introduction*

The journey has just began! The previous material put forward in a broad sweeping stroke the polarization question by establishing its context, symptoms and reasons for its rise. This chapter begins yet a further journey examining in closer detail particular circumstances which are directly related to cities, urban planning and the quality of urban life. Given the high level of urbanization in western society it almost seems to go without saying that as the fundamental nature of the economy changes so to will the form and function of cities. This chapter wishes to bring into clearer focus the relationship between the factors discussed in previous chapters and their effect on planning and the quality of our urban environments.

Examining the effects of increasing social and economic polarization was a precondition for exploring contemporary urban dynamics in western society. We now turn from the question of polarization per se and turn toward planning and contemporary urban problems. Given the nature of change currently characterizing urban environments planners cannot help but get caught up in the raging debate over the value and virtues of the Welfare State. As a result, more and more planners are confronted with whether they favor an unrestricted market place or an extensive welfare system.²⁹ At present the question is not whether we should have planning, but rather how planning should be done (Hodge, 1986; Thornley, 1991). Ironically, we must recognize that the problems urban planners may deal with in the future are likely to be little different than those dealt with in the past. Surveying the social, political, economic and cultural climate of cities in the 1980s Hall was dismayed to find that many of the problems which gave rise to planning in the early stages

²⁹ In all fairness the market approach and the welfare state both aim to achieve the same end: promote public welfare. One is merely more indirect than the other. In fact, the welfare state is set within the context of the market economy. Hence, the welfare state modifies market forces (i.e market failure) but does not supplant the market altogether (Plant, 1988: 21).

of the nineteenth century still abound. He wrote

after one hundred years of debate on how to plan the city, after repeated attempts - however mistaken or distorted - to put ideas into practice, we find we are almost back where we started. The theorists have swung sharply back to planning's anarchist origins; the city itself is again seen as a place of decay, poverty, social malaise, civil unrest and possibly even insurrection. That does not mean, of course, that we have got nowhere at all: the city of the 1980s is a vastly different, and by any reasonable measure a very much superior place compared with the city of the 1880s. But it does mean that certain trends seem to reassert themselves; perhaps because, in truth, they never went away (Hall, 1990a: 11-12).

Recognizing this, indeed even accepting it may be difficult for some because it gives an impression the profession of planning is moving backwards rather than progressing. However, nothing could be further from the truth. It is essential that we continue to recall that we are contemplating planning in a society which is undergoing fundamental changes, meaning traditional approaches to old problems are simply not effective.

An interesting question arising from this is whether urban theory or the "modus operandi" of city planners will change accordingly? Robson writes "[c]ities have changed in response to changes in technology, changes in production and distribution within the economy, and changes in the social structure of the population, but urban theory has changed little to keep abreast" (Robson, 1975: 4). Rod Nasewich felt planning has a responsibility to keep abreast of the changes and shifts occurring in society and to relate these changes to its own theory and practice by re-evaluating traditional planning models, roles and concepts. Yet "[t]he broader and more complex problems of employment, economic development, poverty, and so on, still do not loom large in planning activity although they are the predominant problems in most communities" (Nasewich, 1989: 154). Nasewich argues the planning profession has an "historical aversion" to change or re-

evaluate its traditional theories and practices. If this is true city planning will become an anachronism in a post-industrial society. Hence this begs the question whether the profession of city planning will be up to the challenge the new era will bring? And if so how will the practice of planning change?

Recently we have begun to get a glimpse of what the rapidly changing urban environment has done to the practice of planning. Hall argued that during the 1980s planning seemed on the verge of self destruction. Conventional planning, long range plans and regulations designed to guide the use of land seemed more and more discredited. Instead, planning turned from regulating urban growth to encouraging it by any and every possible mean (Hall, 1990a: 343). Kent Gerecke and Barton Reid articulate this further by suggesting two competing views of planning are emerging. One view is associated with globalism and a corporate/laissez faire approach whereas a competing perspective stresses localism, empowerment and ethics (Gerecke & Reid, 1991).

4.1 The prevailing vision of planning

There is a growing realization that time has caught up with many cities. In this light the corporate or market view of planning is grounded in the realities of the changing urban economy. During the immediate post-second world war period most cities in advanced economies were able to exist as relatively high wage islands despite the fact there were millions of unemployed people in underdeveloped countries. The most apparent reason was that many economic activities were relatively fixed due to heavy infrastructure outlays in plants and equipment, hence curtailing any hopes capital may have had to take advantage of relatively cheap labour elsewhere. Recently, however, coupled with aging plants and new technological advances which facilitate capital mobility the new international division of labour has allowed producers to tap labour markets willing to work for a fraction of prevailing wages in advanced economies (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982: 17; Mishra,

1984: 70; Kuttner, 1986: 7). One result of this is that since the 1970s many of the oldest and largest urban centres in western industrialized nations have, to varying degrees, exhibited similar problems. Urban sprawl has meant a flight of capital and population while de-industrialization has led to a serious decline in manufacturing and other goods production industries. Furthermore, a dramatic increase in social problems has fostered a proportionately greater number of disadvantaged.

Over the last two decades cities have begun to acknowledge that the rules of the game regarding obtaining and sustaining urban prosperity have changed. Since the decline of manufacturing has not gone unnoticed there is much speculation regarding what economic and physical arrangement cities will take in the future. Confronted with the myriad of problems identified in the previous chapter cities could not stand still and hope a cure to their economic woes would materialize out of thin air. Instead measures were consciously undertaken to restructure urban economies. To most local business elite, politicians and public policy advisors it became apparent that since the co-ordination and logistics of how things get produced has become just as important as actual production, cities could rely on the concentration of "information" industries, money capital and a gamut of financial, administrative and professional services to facilitate prosperity (Williams & Smith, 1986; Logan & Molotch, 1987; Hall, 1990b). This is inexplicably tied to the information economy discussed in the previous chapter.

Such concepts of future prosperity came to be wholeheartedly endorsed by anyone who wished to be thought of as a "visionary". Michael Parkinson argued that if cities fail to pursue alternatives to manufacturing as a motor for urban growth they would likely face a continual loss of private sector employment and would slide down the urban hierarchy, eventually ending up as "welfare cities" (Parkinson, 1991: 77). In order to avoid this gloomy prospect city leaders have felt compelled to compete bitterly with other cities in attracting new jobs and investment to ensure some semblance of future stability. In order to do so public policy has begun to enshrine the concept of "competitiveness" as a guiding

principle. In turn cities have emphasized the dual need of creating an attractive business climate while becoming more "entrepreneurial" in their approach to investment and economic development.³⁰

All of this must be further considered within the lexicon of a "global economy". As the global economy dictum found its way into more and more local urban growth strategies cities began looking to the world economy rather than local or even regional economies as a key to prosperity. In order to retain and attract the right type of investment cities felt it is necessary to improve their image as well as upgrade cultural, commercial and educational facilities to "world class" standards. Such initiatives are essentially marketing or status seeking measures which strive to put a city "on the map" (Ferguson, 1986: 25). Once cities have grasp or been sold on the idea "unique" revitalization schemes of world class calibre are the panacea to their current woes, national or transnational land development firms are ready to oblige. As a result, over the last decade the renewal of largely derelict and depressed inner city areas has become big business (Harvey, 1987, 1989; Tabb, 1984; Sawers, 1984; Eversley, 1990).

With regards to planning, the corporate view sees planning as a cost burden to development and detrimental to wealth creation. This is not to suggest planning has no credence, there are clearly planning functions that support the market such as the coordination of infrastructure (Thornley, 1991: 209).³¹ Nevertheless, it is obvious there

³⁰ Harvey described four dimensions which characterize increasing competition between what he termed "entrepreneurial cities". First, competition for position in the international division of labour by building on old employment strengths or investing in new growth industries such as high tech firms. Second, competition for position as centres of consumption by turning cities into centres of spectacle, play and conspicuous consumption or tourist and cultural/historical areas. Third, competition for control and command of functions such as financial and administrative activities. Fourth, competition for military and other government redistribution contracts (Harvey, 1987: 264, 1988: 34-35). These measures are not mutually exclusive. Cities can undertake more than one of these strategies at the same time.

³¹ In the past, city planners concentrated on a social and political agenda dominated by land use considerations. Now cities place more emphasis on economic development while social concern appears to wane in priority. Matthew Kiernan suggest the emphasis on growth and development is leaving planners out of the picture but this seems far from correct (Kiernan, 1990). Gerecke and Reid argue planners have an important role to play in fostering urban conditions that are compatible to global market desires (Gerecke & Reid, 1991). They write "with many planners acting as bond servants to...corporatist planning, planning

are certain interests who would like to see the planning system simplified in order to be more conducive to development. "Creative partnerships" between city and higher level governments and the private sector, Enterprise Zones and Urban Development Corporations are examples which readily come to mind (see Hall, 1990a: 348, 1990b; Leo, 1988).

During the past decade in cities where public-private partnerships emerged a business elite has usually stepped forward to take control of the city's future direction. This approach has generally fostered a growth machine mentality where land use restrictions are loosened and urban elite seek to increase prosperity by upgrading and intensifying urban land use.³² Most visions articulated by public-private partnerships tend to have a "bricks and mortar" bias to revitalization schemes. In order to implement revitalization schemes a further tool - urban development corporations (UDC) emerged. Not only are many of these corporations created to operate at arms length from government but they can also operate with a great deal of secrecy, meaning they prove to be far more capable of stick handling through "red tape" and thus able to get things done quickly.

Critics of UDCs fear that using secrecy in the name of expediency can lead to a "death" of

policies have played a role in *amplifying* rather than diminishing the social dislocation and urban polarization caused by the restructuring of our cities" (Gerecke & Reid, 1991: 61 emphasis added). Larry Sawers writes "the function of the professional urban planners today is to plan the restructuring of urban space in such a way that the process of capital accumulation is rationalized; that is, so that the urban environment is an arena in which profits can be maximized. This is true whether the planner realizes his or her role. Planners supply technical expertise in the organization of this restructuring which increases the efficiency of the planning process. The ideological role of the planner, however, is to technocratize what is essentially a political process in which some people gain (capitalist and possibly others) and some people lose. Different ways of organizing or reorganizing the city lead to very different patterns of benefits and costs. This issue is thus fundamentally a political one" (Sawers, 1984: 11-12).

³² Logan and Molotch note that while it is unclear whether there is a pluralistic competition or cohesion between urban elite on different issues, what is clear is that one issue which consistently generates consensus among local elite and separates them from people who view the city principally as a place to live and work is the issue of growth. That is, property owners seek to increase their wealth by increasing the value of their land. However, since property values can go either up or down, and because property values tend to change as a result of the location of a property vis-a-vis other property, property owners typically work in concert. The rationale for cooperation is that aggregate growth (through the intensification of land use for example) which increases the value of some land will raise the value of all land (Logan & Molotch, 1987: 32).

local democracy (Thornley, 1991: 168; see also Leo, 1988). Christopher Leo suggests development corporations pose serious dangers due to a combination of the size of their undertakings and the secrecy with which business is conducted. He writes "...the combination of bigness and secrecy will make it more difficult for communities to take control of their own development" (Leo, 1988: 24). Nevertheless, the extravagant re-development projects produced are heeded as keys to transforming declining inner cities into showpieces of urban revitalization. Implying the means justify the end.

Pervasive throughout many current urban development strategies is the idea that prosperity wrought by growing employment enterprises will facilitate overall prosperity, meaning greater benefits for all city residents either through new jobs or healthier city finances for social assistance. Whether current revitalization schemes really do result in a trickle down of affluence or not is a contentious issue. Harvey asks how many successful convention centres, sports complexes, Disney world copies and shopping malls can there be? Successes which do arise are generally short lived and imitated elsewhere (Harvey, 1987: 278, 1988: 35). Finally Harvey argues resources allocated to create an attractive urban image

...takes resources away from the poor and puts them into the hands of the already well-heeled. The impact on real incomes is regressive rather than progressive. Subsidizing the yuppies to stay in town, the middle class to visit museums, and industrialists not to flee to Hong Kong takes the place of social services to the poor. Of course, not all urban governments choose, or even need, to take that path, but inter-urban competition creates an ineluctable pressure to do so or get left behind (Harvey, 1988: 35).

As a result, in many cases cities place emphasis on economic development and expensive entertainment facilities while social concern wanes. This is easy to appreciate if one considers the massive new office buildings, hotels, unique market places and convention centres as only the most visible signs of the post-industrial city. More insidious

signs include the replacement of housing, services and facilities geared to lower-income groups with new shops and restaurants which serve as a consumption hub for elite and upwardly mobile patrons (Sawers, 1984; Tabb, 1984; Knight, 1986; Kleniewski, 1984; Ley, 1991). This is the playing out of Sternlieb and Hughes vision of "two cities". Moreover, this heightens the potential for polarized social, economic and spatial conditions by stratifying cities to an even greater degree.

This implies contemporary measures to prop up failing urban economies have not generated *equitable* results. Many individuals and groups fail to share in the benefits of revitalization and have even endured significant hardships. The disturbing contradictions becoming evident in the post-industrial city left Spates and Macionis to conclude that "post-industrialism and the windfall of the urban upper classes may be flashy and hopeful on the surface but, in reality, these 'improvements' may not penetrate far beyond a very small circle of friends and businesses associates" (Spates & Macionis, 1986: 89). They argue that just because a few areas within cities have become havens for the affluent this has done nothing to change the very poorest areas of those cities.

It is becoming painfully clear there is another reality of social decay which lies behind the successful images of current urban revitalization schemes. It would appear the challenge for planners would be to respond to these concerns and to raise a voice of reason and compassion which speaks for those who are not directly benefitted or are adversely affected by the process of reformation which cities are undergoing. Within municipal bureaucracies planners are one of the few professions which are in a position to raise the question of whether we have ignored or down played alternative options to the myriad of economic woes facing cities in the present. If we do otherwise the urban landscape will adapt to the polarization of earnings and begin to reflect greater segregation and inequality in the future (Berry, 1985: 30). This underscores the necessity to refocus urban development strategies and give higher priority to alternative planning visions.

4.2 Alternative vision(s) of planning

Alternative visions of city planning call for creating human-scale, livable urban environments. This is not to imply corporate visions do not wish to achieve similar ends; merely that in light of current circumstances it appears corporate measures to restructure cities foster more problems than they resolve. For example, given that growth industries in post-industrial cities tend to employ professionals and those with special skills while declining industries historically employed less educated, semi-skilled or the unskilled, "successful" adaptation to a post-industrial economy creates an environment where the potential for social and economic polarization is heightened. This implies that whatever we do to revitalize cities won't matter much without long term productive jobs for the minimally educated and minimally skilled (Gratz, 1987: 22).

Contrary to globalism, world class revitalization schemes and the corporate city vision, there has been a turn toward self-help (Short, 1989), empowerment (Heide, 1991), community economic development (Nozick, 1988; Nasewich, 1989) and community development corporations (Fulton, 1987; Gratz, 1987) as alternatives to fostering growth. Critics of the globalism ethic suggest that the real result of the restructuring of urban space has been an increasing concentration of capital in transnational corporations. There is a sense these corporations have redefined the economic function of cities and unleashed wholly new patterns of urban development, patterns which make cities virtually interchangeable. This has generated fear over a loss of "place" or sense of control people have for their own communities and neighbourhoods as well as creating an overwhelming sense of dependence (Kantor & David, 1988: 170; Castells, 1991: 17; Logan & Molotch, 1987; Gerecke & Reid, 1991). It is argued that a global economy dominated by transnational corporations leaves one fearing for the survival of the human spirit, whereas community oriented growth aspires to strengthen and encourage control over ones own life. This suggests the emergence of a rather paradoxical situation where a global economy gives rise to a greater focus on neighbourhood planning in order to address urban

problems. This is not to suggest planners ignore national or international concerns, merely that they put these matters within a context that is within the ability of planners and the community to control (Castells, 1991: 18; Chorney, 1990: 7).³³

If the "world class city" considerably improves the balance sheet of large development firms, banks and commercial establishments while exacerbating powerless, alienated and hopeless conditions encountered by the urban poor, empowerment and the community economic development ethos is concerned with development which improves the quality of life of those most in need. Marcia Nozick writes "CED has to be understood as part of a wider pattern of alternative ideas cutting across all disciplines and emerging in response to a deepening world crisis in poverty, ecological destruction and alienation in industrialized society" (Nozick, 1988: 1). CED holds social and economic development as inseparable since the ultimate purpose of development is enhanced quality of life.

Nozick describes CED as development fostered from within a community. She argues this approach can humanize the development process since its goals are based upon

³³ This fundamental struggle between community and capital is neatly described by Friedmann as two geographies which constitute "unity of opposites". The first is what he terms "life space" while the second is called "economic space". Friedmann feels these two are inherently in conflict even though they are both necessary for the sustenance of modern society. Life spaces exist at different scales and are typically bounded, territorial space, it is a political community with a name and identity. Economic space on the other hand is abstract and discontinuous, unbounded and unlimited it can expand in all directions, it also undergoes continuous change and transformation and can expand ruthlessly. He argues over the last two centuries economic space has been subverting, invading and fragmenting the life space of individuals and communities. Deprived of their life spaces peoples lives are reduced to a purely economic dimension of workers and consumers (cited in Bluestone & Harrison, 1982: 20). If we wish to understand this concept within an urban perspective perhaps neighbourhoods are the best place to begin. Logan and Molotch argue "[t]he city is a setting for the achievement of both exchange values and use values and the neighborhood [sic] is the meeting place of the two forces, where each resident faces the challenge of making a life on a real estate commodity. From the point of view of residents, the creation and defense of the use values of neighborhood [sic] is the central urban question..." (Logan & Molotch, 1987: 99). Any piece of real estate has both a "use" value and an "exchange" value. An apartment building for example provides a home for residents and thus has a use value. At the same time, however, the same building generates rent for the owner(s) and hence produces an exchange value (Logan & Molotch, 1987: 1-2). Given that attempts to pursue exchange value can hinder peoples use values, conflict tends to arise when different people or groups differ as to which aspect (use or exchange) is most crucial. According to Logan and Molotch these conflicts closely determine the shape of the city, the distribution of people and the way people live together (Logan & Molotch, 1987: 2). Furthermore, given that poor people are less spatially liberated than the affluent, the use values of poor people are particularly damaged when their neighbourhoods are disrupted (Logan & Molotch, 1987: 105).

human needs rather than merely material possessions. For example, unlike the phenomena of "jobless growth" associated with large firms and technological advances, CED strives to establish a self-reliant and sustainable local economy based upon the principles of diversity, self-reliance and appropriate scale. Nozick argues self-reliance can play a role in replacing jobs lost due to structural changes in the economy and thus may help reduce the gap between rich and poor (Nozick, 1988: 71).

In light of the trend toward the "corporate city", public-private partnerships and government induced incentives to attract investment, a clear responsibility for planners is to articulate the fact that cities need to do more than merely count jobs. Planners need to consider the quality of employment being created (Short, 1989: 20). John Short writes

we need to develop useful work that harnesses and stretches human creativity without disrupting the ecological balance or creating unstable economies. If the investment produces damages to the environment, distorts the local economy so that worker's futures are based on unstable market conditions and create boring, repetitive employment, then the proposed solution becomes part of the problem (Short, 1989: 20).

The answer is not the simple exchange of low wage jobs in slow growth sectors of the economy for low wage jobs in high growth sectors. Growth per se is not a panacea to urban poverty. A critical question is the *kind* of growth and how it benefits local residents. That is, rather than building economies geared toward world markets we should think about increasing our investment in local markets. This replaces the concept of advancing economic growth by attracting new foot loose capital from elsewhere and replaces it with investment in human capital (Short, 1989: 20). "Human capital" is a euphemism for a people based strategy which concerns itself with how investment could be used to enhance local skills and entrepreneur potential. For the majority a move toward greater self-reliance for example is the best solution to providing long-term, sustainable

work. This implies we must look elsewhere for innovative solutions to meet the needs and wants of most city residents. At the present time, however, this appears to be no easy task.

Because alternative revitalization measures usually have small impacts people have a tendency to dismiss them as unworkable or insignificant (Short, 1989: 136). Yet there is increasing recognition that ten small projects that each create ten new jobs can have a far greater positive impact on the well being of a community than one large project which creates one hundred jobs. For example, there is greater likelihood that profits generated from small local projects will remain in the community. This may not be the case if a branch plant or subsidiary of any large company locate in a community (Fulton, 1987; Nozick, 1988). Roberta Brandes Gratz argues that by failing to reject large scale business or corporate visions of urban revitalization many inappropriate and unnecessarily expensive solutions have destroyed our cities while more modest and creative alternatives could achieve the pronounced goals with less damage (Gratz, 1987: 21).³⁴

When it comes down to articulating alternative planning strategies we soon realize there is no singular strategy which can be defined. Instead we encounter a plurality of

³⁴ As an aside, one cannot help but be struck by the similarity of style and concept of urban life Gratz shares with Jane Jacobs. Gratz's book is an attack on current "urban renewal" disasters while Jacobs classic work The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961) was an open attack on the planning status quo. Jacobs described her work as "an attempt to introduce new principles of city planning and rebuilding, different and even opposite from those now taught in schools of architecture and planning" (Jacobs, 1961: 3). Jacob's main thesis was that planning in the 1960s has been "unbuilding" rather than rebuilding cities. She felt this was due to planning strategies which followed ill-conceived ideas and ignored significant features of city life that are necessary for generating vibrant, enjoyable cities. Furthermore, she argued that if the city were understood properly we would realize that with a slight push here and there the city itself would naturally result in more urban renewal than million dollar civic centres and large housing developments. In a later work Jacobs argued that cities, particularly large cities, are settlements that generate their economic growth from their own local economy (Jacobs, 1969). The city is seen as the basic economic unit, the centre where economic "energy" is generated, passed on to surrounding regions and exchanged with other cities (Jacobs, 1969). Economic growth is based upon innovation as well as efficiency in the use of resources. Gratz believes genuine revitalization should be akin to "urban husbandry". Urban husbandry means the care, management or conservation of the built environment (Gratz, 1987: 147). The fundamental principle is that change is gradual, natural, non-cataclysmic and responsive to genuine economic and social needs (Gratz, 1987: 148). The goal is to encourage local economic growth which assists the semi-skilled and unskilled before needlessly adopting a service sector mentality toward employment. This would serve to benefit local residents rather than commuters or tourists. Physically the aim is to save and repair the existing built environment before new structures are needlessly built. Overall the emphasis is on direct investment in buildings and people, not just buildings.

directions each attempting to deal with certain more specific areas of concern. In other words, rather than merely setting your sights on attracting new investment and hoping to foster any type of economic growth, alternative measures of urban development consciously identify practices which are likely to bring improvements in the well-being of those considered most in need. As a result target populations are just as varied as the types of measures employed. However, all of them should be understood from a local (civic) perspective because that is where alternative visions of the city draw their strength.

One approach which is generally widely used to is to build upon resources already available in communities by looking inward rather than outward. To do so we begin by recognizing the greatest resources a city has is its citizens (Short, 1989: 136). One of the most popular tools used to foster growth from within have been Community Development Corporations. CDCs are not just a matter of having your heart in the right place they also know how to crunch numbers and make deals (Fulton, 1987: 11). Thus with entrepreneurial zeal CDCs build and renovate affordable housing, refurbish commercial strips and set up job training programs. William Fulton writes "the continued survival and growth of CDC's in a period of public-sector cutbacks confirms one of the basic lessons of the 1980s in community development: if you want something done, learn to do it your self" (Fulton, 1987: 12). Synonymous with the idea of self-help is the concept of "empowerment". Empowerment has become a popular theme, particularly regarding ideas toward alternative visions of the city. Wayne Heide suggests that if we are going to experience empowerment alternatives we will have to create them. Heide writes

by beginning on a small scale level such as the household and living your life to reflect the goals and values of empowerment, you provide an alternative. By recognizing the inequalities and biases of the present system and working to equalize them wherever possible you are providing an alternative. If you increase your personal knowledge about how to deal with the system or in order to be more independent of the system, you are providing an alternative. All of these actions amount to a form of empowerment.... By providing alternatives you are

confronting the system and making it defend itself (Heide, 1991 122 emphasis added).

The few examples identified above are only a small part of the increasing interest in approaching urban problems such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality from different perspectives. These ideas, and many more like them, will continue to strongly impress upon planners that their role with regard to the question of polarization need not be benign. Since everyone has a stake in the city it would seem a logical purpose of planning would be to ensure that no one self-interested vision predominate. Gratz suggests a city is not the creation of one person or one developer but rather "...has something for everybody, because it was created by everybody. The imprint of both powerful leaders and anonymous residents shape a city. Its character is never permanently defined and shouldn't be, certainly not by one person or corporate group, and certainly not all at one time" (Gratz, 1987: 315).³⁵ The cure for urban ills is not a science, there is no exact formula. Instead, the revitalization of cities is an art. Effective revitalization depends on creating variation, innovation and a choice of opportunities (Gratz, 1987: 141). This gives every city the freedom to choose their own destiny. In the end the ultimate goal is to ensure no one is left out of the process of shaping their own environment.

4.3 The Challenge I: planning the contemporary environment

The competing visions of planning have potentially tremendous influence on the shape and form of urban, social and economic policies. As illustrated in chapter three,

³⁵ Ray Spaxman argues that while many cities seem to have some things in common, cities are striking in the way each have their own characteristics. By a combination of its own unique physical setting and the impact of the values of the people who affect it, a city emerges with its own distinctive personality. Some cities may be happy and romantic places, others dull or oppressive. Just as we hope the people we meet will be good to be around, we similarly hope the city we live in will be a good place to be. A "good" place to be is usually defined in words that suggest an environment that is safe, healthy, friendly, beautiful, prosperous and affordable (Spaxman, 1991: 91). Spaxman writes "the most successful cities provide an environment which goes beyond efficiency and comfort. They are places which are inspirational; where the pride of the community is exhibited in the form and fabric of the city: where 'happiness' is as important as 'wealthiness'; where artists flourish as well as bankers" (Spaxman, 1991: 92).

many of the measures regarded as potential "solutions" to polarized conditions are beyond the realm of *direct* planning influence or responsibility.³⁶ Nevertheless, the main conjecture of this section is that planning should be seen as an asset rather than liability in the resolution of polarized social and economic conditions. We begin by recognizing that the prevailing vision of planning can actually exacerbate polarized conditions. It is the classic case of good intentions gone bad. Conventional planning wisdom suggests cities flexible enough to be compatible with post-industrial economies have prospered while cities which have failed to replace manufacturing jobs by grafting a growing service sector unto their economic base perform poorly. In declining cities poverty, inequality, fiscal stress, deteriorating inner cities and growing social polarization appear increasingly evident. Ironically, however, there is considerable evidence that many "successfully" revitalized cities have similar problems. Alternative measures hold out the promise that sincere attempts at empowerment and locally oriented regeneration measures will reach those most in need.

For planners and other urban administrators one task required for planning the contemporary urban environment is to unravel why some cities create the dynamic economic, social and political forces that foster equitable regeneration strategies while other revitalization schemes fail. In order to do so we must first concede that cities cannot unilaterally choose their place in the urban hierarchy or the economic roles they adopt. Cities are constrained by their economic, social and environmental resources as well as the capacity of local leaders to exploit those resources (Parkinson, 1991). By taking a realistic perspective of a city's place within the urban hierarchy and coupling this with the creation of a typology of urban successes and failures, planners and other urban administrators can

³⁶ However, planners should be aware of the qualitative and quantitative aspects of such diverse issues as migration rates, population fertility rates, technological changes, progress of the economy, and how economic changes effect the size, composition and distribution of national income. In other words, planners "...learn to identify those issues, partly under their control, but mostly bearing on the subjects they monitor, and which must affect their own thinking" (Eversley, 1973b: 6)

better access the potential development paths a city could or should follow. This can best be achieved through the process of scenario building and hence, the identification of policy directions and implications.

How? To begin with it would appear Gerecke and Reid's urban audits point us in a positive direction.³⁷ Urban audits would begin from the premise of asking simple questions such as what patterns of social cohesion or segregation may develop in cities in the 1990s. From there the goal would be to identify policy initiatives in matters such as local neighbourhood plans, housing, sustainable transportation options, local economic development, social welfare provision and training and education that could prove not only economically efficient but also equitable. If this is not done there is real potential polarized cities will be the end result. This may seem like an undue burden of responsibility but realistically, planners are in a position to articulate not only the spatial but also the social, economic and political consequences of chosen urban growth strategies. In order to do so there would be a need to identify more than merely land use issues. No one said it would be easy. All of this must further be undertaken and understood within the fiscal realities of the 1990s.

The delicate balance between economic well-being and social well-being continues to be a fundamental question for city planners. The question of who benefits and who pays for urban development is so fundamental in shaping the social, economic and spatial landscape of cities it cannot be glossed over lightly. In light of increasing violence and crime in city streets, homelessness, poverty and the urban underclass there is a sense planners must be prepared to call out like a clarion a warning to the rest of society that we

³⁷ Urban audits are different than urban indicators. As society became more sensitized to a wider range of social and environmental issues during the past three decades there has been greater interest on examining the distribution of "ills" that were, apparently, the inevitable handmaidens of urban and economic growth. Concern for those who found themselves the victims rather than the beneficiaries of economic change raised the question of how to identify the disadvantaged, the vulnerable and the victimized. The collective response of academics and policy-makers was manifested in the so-called "social indicators movement", an unprecedented burst of interest into the numerical measurement of social conditions (Knox, 1989: 34). However, difficulties with appropriate data at required spatial scales, coupled with difficulty in the conceptualization of terms meant the results were less than exceptional.

must re-evaluate what is happening to our cities. Consider for example that efforts by planners to speak out about the lack of reasonable balance between physical redevelopment and social costs of massive urban revitalization schemes have been viewed as an unwillingness to assist in the shift to a post-industrial era. Such condemnation is unfair. Few planners oppose a post-industrial economy in some sort of neo-Luddite fashion, rather they merely register concern over what this may mean for certain vulnerable segments of the population.

An overriding concern derived from elaborate making and remaking of cities is whether we are precipitating further ghettoization and segregation of marginality groups. For example, one effect of contemporary urban dynamics is a growing sense of conflict over urban space, particularly within central cities in light of gentrification and renewed emphasis on downtown revitalization. Overall the aim should be to identify urban strategies that are equitable as well as effective in fostering a stronger urban economy and improved urban environment.

4.4 The Challenge II: planning thought and action

John Forester argues that in light of contemporary urban dynamics planners should re-examine and refine ideas of advocacy planning (Forester, 1989: 46). He suggests that if planners wish to be progressive they should aim to nurture well-informed, genuine democratic politics by enabling everyone to articulate their concerns about issues affecting them. Forester writes

[b]y broadening the content of alternatives presented to affected citizens in community, labor [sic] and environmental organizations, planners may work to expand citizen's vision, to clarify real policy and productive possibilities, and to focus public attention on actions that directly address the needs of the poor, the undeserved, and the powerless (Forester, 1989: 79).

The implication is that planners should not only work to encourage attention to alternatives that powerful interests might otherwise suppress but that social and economic redistribution efforts are true planning considerations. Perhaps the most important consideration is that alternative measures are seen as the tools which provide the opportunity to move the practice of planning down a new road (Gerecke & Reid, 1991: 66; see also Gerecke, 1987).

Given that jobs are generally fewer in areas affecting the poor this amplifies the importance of "social planning".³⁸ Barry Checkoway claims "[s]ocial planning is more important than ever, because economic changes and program cuts have worsened conditions for many persons and communities" (Checkoway, 1987: 57). A planning approach of this nature would embrace the protection of the Welfare State coupled with the realization that in a time of tight fiscal realities new and innovative measures are required to ensure social commitments are fulfilled. This is based upon the moral premise that planners have a responsibility to protect those whose interests are especially vulnerable to market actions and choices. This dictates making provisions outside the ordinary economic market for certain kinds of people and certain kinds of interests (Plant, 1988: 20; Thornley, 1991: 20).

Not all planners agree, however. Guy Benveniste in Mastering the Politics of Planning (1989) dismisses the view that planners have a special mission to protect the underprivileged. Benveniste concedes that "effective planning" is planning that makes a difference but he argues this need not suggest any particular political orientation. He feels

³⁸ Social planning is an ill-defined concept. Checkoway describes social planning as a process to develop and implement plans and programs responsive to social values and human service needs. Planners attempt to "...improve conditions for all people while emphasizing resources and opportunities for those lacking in both; or to reduce disparities between rich and poor, white and black, men and women. [Planners]...promote justice and equity in the delivery of the services, and involve people in the planning decisions that affect their lives" (Checkoway, 1987: 57). Eversley describes social planning as "...the total effort by all agencies to achieve changes in the physical environment, and in the economic and social structure which exists within that environment, in pursuit of improvements in the living standards of an urban population" (Eversley, 1973b: 3). Social planning, as opposed to traditional notions of apolitical land use planning, attempts to influence events rather than to control them.

it is beyond the bounds of planners to redress the balance of power in society. "Planners take power into account, they do not redistribute it" (Benveniste, 1989: 282). This thesis rejects Benveniste's argument. In light of issues such as polarization, planning should, as Forester suggests, reassess whose interests they serve. Only by doing so can planners contribute in a positive way to the reduction of polarized conditions.

There is a long and proud history of planning taking an active and forceful role in articulating the concerns of the powerless and voiceless.³⁹ Modern city planning is generally acknowledged to have emerged as a response to the evils of the nineteenth century city (Benevolo, 1967; Bookchin, 1986; Friedmann, 1987; Hall, 1990a). Leonardo Benevolo comments the first attempts at planning found expression in two antithetical schools of thought: utopians who favored the elimination or withdrawal from industrial society, and pragmatic reformist who wished to improve the quality of urban life by promoting technical and legislative means to implement new health regulations and public services. This latter group laid the foundation for modern town planning legislation (Benevolo, 1967: xii; Eversley, 1973a: 57; Bookchin, 1986: 135).

Benevolo suggests planning was regarded as an integral part of the general attempt to extend the potential benefits of the Industrial Revolution to members of all classes,

³⁹ In order to continue we should briefly reflect on the history of planning thought. I hesitate to embark upon an elaborate examination of the history of urban planning since this has been done adequately elsewhere but it is interesting to note that a dichotomy in the ideology and perspective of planning is not new (Friedmann, 1987; Forester, 1989; Hall, 1990; Hodge, 1986; Galloway & Mahayni, 1977; Hudson, 1979; Gunton, 1984). The evolution and maturation of city planning as a professional and intellectual movement is laden with a multitude of philosophical, religious and utopian streams of consciousness; political ideologies and individual genius which spawned concepts and models that contributed to planning thought and action. Planning's earliest guise dates to antiquity in Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and the Romans but found its greatest expression in the mid-nineteenth century in the hands of Baron Haussmann in Paris, Ildefonso Cerda in Barcelona, and later in Pierre Charles L'Enfant in Washington (Hall, 1990: 9; Friedmann, 1987: 22). Friedmann describes this planning as "orthogonal design" which emerged from design professions such as architecture and engineering. These approaches brought techniques which sought to create aesthetic environments as well as develop a rational ordering of space (Friedmann, 1987: 22). In this sense early planning measures served a minority elite as the splendor of ancient cities were built at the expense of the poor (Eversley, 1973a: 39). This architectural and engineering "monumentalism" was itself a form of social control and became one strand of the fabric upon which planning thought was developed. Its influence on planning has never completely vanished although its importance has waned during the twentieth century.

implying planners were an odd combination of social reformers and protectors of the industrial capitalist status quo. But least one be overcome by such a combination it is important to remember that real planning initiatives did not materialize until wealthy citizens were affected by conditions brought about by disorder and overcrowding (Benevolo, 1967: 89; see also Eversley, 1973a: 50). The divorce between social reformer and status quo protector seems to occur in the late 1840s when planning began to distance itself from political discussions (primarily socialist oriented) and take on an increasingly technical viewpoint. Benevolo comments a new class of planners and civil servants who were scientific, competent and satisfied with administrative responsibilities emerged. This does not mean planning became politically neutral, on the contrary, it merely became entrenched within the new European Conservative ideology of the period (Benevolo, 1967: 110). This left a further legacy of bureaucratic planner as status quo protector.

At the same time planning was beginning the metamorphosis which would culminate in its legitimization as a profession. Utopians continued to influence some elements of planning thought. As a result, the distinction between the fairly common view of planning and that of social reform began to widen. This gap, which can best be described as being between competing visions for planning, has become tremendous since the 1960s. The 60s were a time when the technical view of planning (i.e. systems planning) was paramount. The more conflict ridden atmosphere of the late 1960s and 1970s began to challenge this apolitical stance. The practice of planning moved from inflexible "blueprint" or rational comprehensive plans to a *process* planning approach which included flexibility and public participation. Furthermore, planning came to be recognized as extending beyond mere land use regulation. Recognition of employment and training opportunities, education options, social provisions, the environment and general improvements to the quality of urban life began to find their way into planning documents. The rationale was that physical improvements will follow suit if improvements to the quality of urban life are undertaken (Faludi, 1973: 136). Faludi suggests that overall the

role of planning was expanding and broadening and many young planners adopted the role of "agents for change" (Faludi, 1973: 152). In turn planning adopted additional purposes such as advocating concern for those in society who were impoverished and powerless. This brought the social implications and redistributive effects of planning into the open. Coincident with the continuing growth and broadening of planning interests, however, was growing criticism (Goodman, 1971).

From the 1960s on there has been an avalanche of books and articles which articulate new models and processes for urban planning. Many new approaches argued planning should take a political, socially active stance regarding the protection and improvement of the social and economic well-being of the most vulnerable and powerless citizens. Three of the more prominent examples are described below.

In the mid 1960s Paul Davidoff argued that in order to establish and ensure an effective urban democracy planners have to openly express political and social values, ideally in some form of advocacy for groups or organizations. Surveying the contemporary environment one is struck by how timely Davidoff's work remains, particularly regarding his commitment to pluralism. He recognized that in the process of city development political ideologies will ultimately clash so he suggested planners prepare for an unavoidable "bifurcation" of the public interest (Davidoff, 1965: 332). He argued there should be a plurality of plans: conservative plans and liberal plans, plans to support the market and plans to support greater government involvement. His rationale was that, because planning was generally done by a single agency there was a lack of alternative visions regarding the possible road a community can travel (Davidoff, 1965: 335).

In the early 1970s Eversley wrote The Planner in Society. (1973) In it he argued that the profession of planning was at a crossroads and well on its way to becoming an anachronism due in large part to the professions inability to respond to the fundamental changes which British society had undergone since the end of the Second World War.

Eversley argued that in order to plan properly, planners would have to not only take greater responsibility for their actions, but expand in scope the elements considered necessary to make proper decisions so that they would be sensitive to extraneous influences which may profoundly alter the circumstances under which people live (Eversley, 1973a: 6).⁴⁰

That urban development actually fosters greater local inequality gave rise to the concept of "equity planning" as articulated by Norman Krumholtz et al. During the mid 1970s the Cleveland city planning department, led by Krumholtz, brought out into the political realm the question of who benefits and who pays for urban development. For example, when faced with development projects planners assessed the project against a certain set of criteria. They asked whether the development would contribute jobs at livable wages for city residents. They wondered what the impact would be on the level and quality of local public services. And they questioned whether this would support neighbourhood vitality or contribute to neighbourhood deterioration. If a development scheme failed these criteria the planning staff would oppose the project (Krumholtz, Cogger & Linner, 1975; Krumholtz, 1982; M. Smith, 1979).

Questions similar to these were raised by planners long before Krumholtz et al set them in motion. The difference was that "equity planning" made these questions public and used them as a means to guide their actions. In this regard, equity planning served as a healthy addition to planning thought, illustrating that planning is a value-laden, conflict based measure inspired by the desire to articulate the concerns on behalf of the powerless and poor. The Cleveland planners recognized that if they failed to assume the role of politically committed activists serving the interests of the vulnerable working class and

⁴⁰ Almost twenty years later, and in the wake of neo-conservative policies which exacerbated inequality in British society, Eversley has reiterated his claim that planners must focus on the equitable distribution of resources. His main thesis is that planners should shift their focus to confront the most urgent economic and social problems facing society. He writes; "the planner has to change his role from that of a passive respondent to the developers applications, to that of the community watchdog" (Eversley, 1990: 18). He continues to believe a new planning ethic is necessary, and that instead of allocating resources and efforts to the most strident advocates, what he calls "planning by decibels", planning should take a more equitable focus (Eversley, 1990: 16).

urban poor those groups would continue to be exploited by economic development and land-use decisions which benefited major economic and political interests (M. Smith, 1979: 267).

Almost thirty years ago Norton Lang wrote "the question is not whether planning will reflect politics, but whose politics will it reflect. ...In the broad sense they [plans] represent political philosophies, ways of implementing different concepts of the good life" (cited in Klosterman, 1978: 39). The importance of this has never vanished. Indeed, the future promises to rekindle this argument. Planners, whether they adhere to conventional or alternative views of re-ordering the city will not be able to ignore their role in influencing the quality (or lack thereof) of urban life. But this is a positive sign. No doubt there will be conflict, debate and disagreement, but this will help nudge greater scrutiny of how we plan and whom we plan for.

Furthermore, planning will continue to become more interdisciplinary in nature. This is also positive. Now is not the time for myopic visions regarding the roles of planners. Both conventional and alternative views of planning would likely see the polarized city as overridden with negative connotations, although for perhaps different reasons. The conventional view may see polarization as making a city unattractive to investment, thus hurting the city's chance for growth. Alternative views may see polarization as disruptive to the creation of a sense of community and social responsibility for one another. Given that the overriding goal of conventional and alternative views of planning is the promotion of public well-being the competing visions of the city should be searching for some form of consensus building. The goal is to minimize harmful residual effects of different growth strategies.

4.5 Conclusion

We have come to a crossroads. There is emerging evidence that the conventional

wisdom regarding strategies to regenerate cities for a post-industrial era are in themselves creating problematic conditions. That is, given that growth industries in post-industrial cities tend to employ professionals and those with special skills while declining industries historically employed less educated, semi-skilled or the unskilled, "successful" adaptation to a post-industrial economy creates an environment where the potential for social and economic polarization is heightened. For planners, as with many others concerned with cities, this engenders the need to re-examine the problems that have been identified and ascertain whether possible remedies exist. This is no easy task. The tendency of observers to interpret the same events in very different ways is strongly evident today. The urban scene is so vast and changing so rapidly that it is possible to select persuasive evidence indicating conditions have never been better, or that we are on the brink of social disaster. Hence, it is apropos that we frequently hear the facetious yet poignant description "it was the best of times and the worst of times".

There is an obligation on the part of planners to ensure, to the best of their ability, that our cities are vibrant, diverse and available to all. Realistically "availability" is limited by market barriers that planners can do little about. Within these constraints what is not appropriate are conscious efforts to foster exclusivity rather than accessibility. There are interests which would like nothing better than to carve up the urban environment into exclusive enclaves. Planners should condemn such visions as morally and ethically bankrupt. The problem of course is that the ethical questions planners face are rarely so cut and dry. Instead the interests and concerns of different groups must be weighted against one another. Should planners give any one interest special attention? Are all views given the same weight? Do economic concerns precede social concerns or visa versa? Are there hidden costs or benefits which are not being acknowledged? Is it my responsibility? All of these are fundamental questions planners have to internalize, resolve and then engage in through action. Those actions are precipitated by the individual values and beliefs each planner harbors within.

Different values and political ideologies (whether admitted or not) guide individual planners who in turn approach urban issues from different perspectives. This is not to imply the elements which make up the underlying foundation of planning thought and action can be dismissed. Rather, there should be a greater mixing of approaches to achieve objectives. For example, many suggest the paradigm of rational comprehensive planning is bankrupt. This does not mean the entire process of rational or technical planning can be brushed aside. Instead we should strive to make it better by saving the good aspects and eliminating others. As this process evolves entirely new approaches to planning emerge. One of the inevitable results of this ever constant change and progression is that planning takes on a more fragmented or pluralistic character. This in turn could lead to planning practice taking on an even more "individual" or "localized" nature. This is not as radical as it seems. Indeed, given that there is no theory of urban planning per se, we are left to conclude that localized and individual planning is exactly what has carried the profession to date.

5 Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

When research for this thesis began more than a year ago it was assumed the question of polarization could be articulated very briefly, but the realization soon set in that to render polarization probable or even intelligible it was necessary to discuss certain more general questions. In one sense a Masters thesis is merely a vehicle to portray a students research skills, his or her ability to read, understand, and compress a myriad of views, ideas and concerns into a logical and concise examination of the question at hand. Hopefully this thesis has performed that task adequately. In the same vein there is a desire to go beyond this, to choose a field of study which presents the challenge of scarce and sketchy literature sources. Such has been the case regarding polarization.

5.1 Thesis objectives and conclusions

This thesis set out with the objective of examining the phenomenon of polarization. The goal was to determine the characteristics of polarized conditions and consider what polarization meant for the theory and practice of urban planning. Because of the ambivalent nature of the word "polarization" much of the thesis has had to concentrate on establishing what is meant by this term. Therefore the first chapter sought to establish the framework of how the implications of current societal, economic, political and cultural changes now upon us relate to polarization. The aim of the second chapter was to express the eclectic nature of polarization by identifying the various manners in which polarization appears to be emerging. Such areas included income distribution, housing type and tenure, racial and gender concerns as well as the very recent fear of information polarization. The goal was to bring these various elements together to illustrate how they all encompass the larger phenomenon of polarization. At this point, however, the task had only begun. The third

chapter was pressed with a rather difficult task; identifying why polarization is more likely now than at any other time in history. This was done through an analysis of changes within demographics, domestic economies, the global economy and changing political attitudes. The third chapter concluded that polarization is not inevitable, however, a number of contemporary factors imply that if current trends are not changed, the ability to fend off polarization will be lessened.

The fourth chapter concluded that polarization has far less to do with planning than originally imagined. Since many of the economic and behavioral problems which cause polarized conditions lie beyond the realm of *conventional* planning it is easy to disregard the issue of polarization altogether. This does not imply planners will deny the existence of polarization, merely that most planners may feel hopeless to do any thing about it. On the other hand, alternative visions of planning do present the opportunity for a more serious consideration of planning and polarization. Therefore, this thesis concludes that the apparent polarization between those who prosper and those who lag further behind should be taken to heart as a serious matter for planning consideration.

While it is true the causes which underlie social and economic polarization are perhaps beyond the purview of a planners acknowledged responsibility, planners cannot ignore the effect that poverty and affluence have on the form and character of urban areas. Within the concept of polarization are many of the most insidious ethical questions planners face. Having the social and economic fortunes of different segments of society moving in diametrically opposite directions is a recipe for conflict, conflict which is likely to be played out in cities where the needs, wants and demands of diverse groups are increasingly juxtaposed. Planners are not the sole professionals confronted with ethical dilemmas in light of poverty amongst affluence. This is a situation which should raise moral questions for everyone. However, in light of the changing role of cities in the global economy planners must be overtly conscious of such situations. To omit or ignore the potential

problems fostered by increased poverty, ghettoization, commercialization and new residential patterns would be akin to foregoing the stated and implied aims of planning all together. If planners truly are the "conscious" of the city they must make a special effort to consider the needs of those most vulnerable. Moreso perhaps if one truly considered the influence public policy has on exacerbating or reducing societal and economic extremes. The less emphasis planners place on considering the potential of polarized socio-economic and spatial disparities, the more likelihood such circumstances will arise. By bringing the polarization question out for examination we may engender a renewed interest in debating some of the most important questions which underlie the *raison d'etre* of planning. This thesis contends that polarized urban conditions should be viewed as an affront and indication of the failure of planning.

By articulating a planning philosophy which believes the city belongs to everyone, and using that as a guide for action, planners can hopefully have a positive role in ameliorating the potential for social, economic or spatial polarization. In other words, planners should strive to ensure that developments which promise short-term advantages do not jeopardize long-term community interests. If we do otherwise the goal of socially cohesive, vibrant and diverse cities which are available to all will be beyond our grasp. Overall the goal should be to spark dialogue, to make people question whether how we plan is just, and if not, to conceive of new ways to make it so.

5.2 A final word

All of this has tremendous implications for Canada. As work on this thesis progressed the sense of "swimming" against the current has been a powerful one. Few people appear to agree that we in Canada are heading toward a situation where cities become stratified and polarized to the extent they become unworkable. Hopefully they are right! On the other hand it would be wrong of us not to recognize that the potential for polarization does exist. Indeed, by ignoring the emerging concerns which seem to

suggest we are heading toward polarized conditions we may actually hasten their arrival.

Given that the expanding information economy knows no boundaries, Canada will likely experience conditions of social, economic and spatial polarization witnessed in the United States and Britain. However, there is a caveat. Socio-economic polarization is not an immediate prospect. Hence, to raise the issue of polarization in a current context is likely to generate only mild concern. Nevertheless, there is every reason to believe polarization will take place. This is based upon the presumption that another decade like the previous one will polarize the entire population into segments of haves and have nots. Theoretically the potential for this has always existed but a post-industrial economy, coupled with changing political attitudes towards the social welfare system and cultural values accentuates its likelihood. The most apparent fear is that things will have to get worse before they get better.

However, if we recognize the potential problem(s) associated with polarization, debate them fully and openly, and sincerely strive to change the direction we are following, then polarization in Canada need not be inevitable. Indeed, chapter three and four identified measures which may have the potential to mitigate polarized conditions. However, as Bourne suggested nearly 20 years ago, the question of polarization will only be seriously addressed when and if the adverse developments that it fosters challenges the well-being of the comfortable. When this happens sincere measures to ameliorate the economic and social forces shaping despair, violence and polarization will likely find their way into political discussions and planning documents. It is up to us to muster the political will to encourage and implement measures, no matter how small or insignificant they may at first appear, which hold out the promise of a) not making the situation worse, and b) providing opportunities for those truly in need to acquire the skills and self-confidence to help themselves. In this way we can hope to strive and reduce the gap between rich and poor, not through regressive measures, but through measures which build upon hope.

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