

Ancillaries for Chapter 2 – The Origins of Urban Life and Urban Sociology

The New Urban Sociology, 6th edition

Exam Questions for Instructor Use

Learning Goals:

- 1: Students will be able to identify key points in the history of cities and describe broad trends history of urban social life
- 2: Students will be able to identify early scholars and observers of urban social life and compare and contrast their perspectives on social life in cities.
- 3: Students will be able to identify and define key models of urban development from a variety of sociologists discussed in the chapter.

Goals Assessment:

Assessment 1: This goal may be assessed through multiple choice questions in the test bank, as well as the discussion/essay questions as provided in the materials.

Assessment 2: This goal may be assessed through multiple choice questions in the test bank, as well as the discussion/essay questions and the annotated assignments provided.

Assessment 3: This goal may be assessed through student discussion or writing in response to the discussion/essay questions and the annotated assignments provided.

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. What does the urban implosion refer to?
 - a. the shift of population from rural to urban places during the Medieval Era
 - b. the shift of population from rural to urban places during the Industrial Revolution
 - c. the shift of population from rural to urban places after World War II
 - d. the shift of population from urban to rural places in the 1980s

Correct Answer: B, see page 39

2. According to Weber, the medieval urban community consisted of what?
 - a. a fusion of the fortress and the marketplace where trade and commercial relations predominated
 - b. a legal court of its own that had the authority to settle local disputes
 - c. a partial political autonomy that allowed residents to elect authorities who could administer daily affairs
 - d. Answers A and C
 - e. All of the above

Correct Answer: E, see page 36

3. For Tonnies, _____ refers to social life of small towns with individual families that have long histories, personal interaction, and interdependent job, while _____ refers to the loss of a shared sense of belonging to a meaningful community in urban life of the industrial period
- Gemeinschaft, Gesellschaft
 - Gesellschaft, Gemeinschaft
 - Mechanical solidarity, organic solidarity
 - Organic solidarity, mechanical solidarity

Correct Answer: A, see pages 42-43 and Box 2.2

4. Which of the following terms is used to describe the study of the ways of life of urban communities, dealing with culture, meanings, symbols, and patterns of daily life?
- Urbanization
 - Urbanism
 - Blasé attitude
 - Sectoral Perspective

Correct Answer: B, see page 44

5. This term is used by Simmel to describe how individuals filter out the impinging distractions as they move through life in the city.
- Nuanced indifference
 - Cold calculation
 - Blasé attitude
 - Nonchalance

Correct Answer: C, see page 47

6. Which of the following is McKenzie's model for examining urban social life through the multicentered metropolitan region?
- Concentric zone model
 - Sector theory
 - Urban ecology
 - Social area analysis

Correct Answer: C, see page 56

7. Which urban sociologist urged his students to "get the seat of their parents dirty"?
- Georg Simmel
 - Emile Durkheim
 - Robert Park
 - Ernest Burgess

Correct Answer: C, see page 53

8. Which of the following classics of urban sociology emanated from the Chicago School?
- The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man* (1923)

- b. *The Gold Coast and the Slum* (1929)
- c. *Hotel Life* (1936)
- d. Answers A and B
- e. All of the above

Correct Answer: E, see page 59

9. True or False: Durkheim was convinced that the new industrial economy presented an improvement over the limited opportunities of feudal society.
- a. True
 - b. False

Correct Answer: A, see pages 43-44.

10. Which of the following are the factors that Wirth felt could help predict characteristics of urban social life in any city?
- a. Population size, density, and heterogeneity
 - b. Food supply, political disposition, and water treatment
 - c. Technological innovation and environmental sustainability
 - d. Answers A and B
 - e. Answers A and C

Correct Answer: A, see pages 50-52 and box 2.4

Discussion/Essay Questions:

1. Urban life of the 19th century is often contrasted with feudal life. Describe some of the ways in which social life and settlement space differed in these two eras.
2. Many ancient cities were the locus of agriculture, trade, and manufacturing, and were also built using shared symbols and religious codes. Cite and describe two or three examples of religious symbolism built into the spaces of ancient cities.
3. What is the urban implosion? How was the urban implosion precipitated by the industrial revolution?
4. Robert Park, Georg Simmel, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber all contributed to the inquiry into urban social life and the origins of urban sociology. What were some of the questions about social life that each scholar sought to answer?
5. Discuss the Chicago School of urban sociology. Who were the sociologists that contributed to this school? What did they study, and what were their major contributions to understanding of urban social life?
6. Compare and contrast any two of the following models of urban development discussed in this chapter: human ecology, urban ecology, the concentric zone model, social area analysis, and factorial ecology.

Annotated Assignments

The ancillary materials and assignments for this chapter draw on three sources. These materials are meant to broaden student interest in cities and urban social life, and refer to themes and concepts discussed in the chapter. The assignments created for each may be implemented as a set or individually.

- “You have to see the world’s busiest intersection.” Video from *USA Today*. Available at: <https://www.usatoday.com/videos/travel/2017/05/15/you-have-see-worlds-busiest-intersection/101708966/>
- “The surprising math of cities and corporations.” Geoffrey West. TED Talk available at: https://www.ted.com/talks/geoffrey_west_the_surprising_math_of_cities_and_corporations/transcript?language=en
- “The Race Underground,” film from *American Experience* on PBS: <https://www.pbs.org/video/american-experience-race-underground/>
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Assignment 2.1: The World's Busiest Intersection and the Blasé Attitude

For this assignment you will watch a short video from USA Today and draw on the material in the chapter about Simmel's writing on the blasé attitude to answer the questions below.

- "You have to see the world's busiest intersection." Video from USA Today.
 - Link: <https://www.usatoday.com/videos/travel/2017/05/15/you-have-see-worlds-busiest-intersection/101708966/>

Short answer essay questions:

1. What is Simmel's idea of the blasé attitude? How would you explain it?
 - a. Simmel used the term to describe the disinterestedness expressed by city dwellers as they filtered out distractions while moving about the city. Students may explain this in a variety of ways in their own words.
2. The video depicts the intersection near Shibuya station in Tokyo, Japan, widely considered to be the busiest intersection in the world. How many lanes of traffic and crosswalks converge at this intersection? How many pedestrians might cross the intersection at one time?
 - a. 10 lanes of traffic and 5 crosswalks converge
 - b. 2500 pedestrians at a time
3. Imagine you were attempting to cross through this intersection. Why would it be beneficial for you to adopt a blasé attitude? Would this be easy or difficult for you to do, and why?
 - a. If you got distracted by other people or stimuli as you crossed the intersection, you might slow down and not make it across the intersection in time, or you might get disoriented. Some students may say this would be easy for them – perhaps they regularly move through busy intersections. Others may not.
4. Simmel wrote about the blasé attitude many years ago when cities were burgeoning, but not at the scale we see in Tokyo and other cities today. What do you think Simmel would say about cities like Tokyo today?
 - a. Answers may vary here.

Assignment 2.2: Urbanism as a Way of Life and the Surprising Math of Cities

For this assignment you will watch the TED Talk by Geoffrey West, and draw on material in the chapter about Wirth's analysis of "urbanism as a way of life" to answer the questions below.

- "The surprising math of cities and corporations." Geoffrey West. TED Talk.
 - Link:
https://www.ted.com/talks/geoffrey_west_the_surprising_math_of_cities_and_corporations/transcript?language=en

Short answer essay questions:

1. In his model of urban social life, Wirth argued that three characteristics of any city may be used to understand other aspects of urban social life in each city. What are these three characteristics, and what did he expect each would say about urban social life in any city?
 - a. Wirth argued that as population size, density, and heterogeneity of people in any particular city increased, so would the extent of urbanism as a culture increase in that city.
2. For West, what does economy of scale mean, both for organisms and for cities?
 - a. West argues that biological rules of economy of scale hold for cities as well – that the larger the organism, or physiological process, or city is, the less energy or resources needed "per capita" to keep that system going.
3. West argues that math may be used to understand social life in cities. What are some examples and what evidence does he describe supporting these?
 - a. West argues, for example that as a city grows in population, the number of gas ("petrol") stations will also increase, but at a sub-linear rate similar to other scalable things.
4. West argues that many characteristics of cities increase at a super-linear scale a city's size increases. What are some examples?
 - a. West finds that crime per capita, patents per capita, and income, for example, all increase at a super-linear rate. His summary is that "doubling the size of a city systemically increases income, wealth, number of patents, number of colleges, number of creative people, number of police, crime rate, number of aids, flu cases, amount of waste,... all by approximately 15% regardless of city."
5. Compare and contrast West and Wirth's video of urban social life.
 - a. Both are interested in identifying quantifiable rules describing social life in cities. Both draw on biological analyses. Wirth is more interested in cultural outcomes, while West examines a range of quantifiable characteristics of urban social life.
 - b.

Assignment 2.3: The Race Underground and Models of Urban Development

This assignment is based on a feature-length documentary on the race between Boston and New York City in their development of the underground rail, or subway, systems. The film also describes and shows images of urban social life in these cities during the era of the industrial revolution described in the chapter. The questions ask students to apply the various models of urban development discussed in the chapter in reflecting on the history of the development of subways in these two cities.

- “The Race Underground,” film from *American Experience* on PBS.
 - Link: <https://www.pbs.org/video/american-experience-race-underground/>

Short answer essay questions:

1. What motivated Boston to explore underground rail systems as a means of transportation?
 - a. The film illustrates how the city had become densely populated and overcrowded, with problematic traffic jams regularly clogging the streets.
2. Was the idea of building the subway in Boston popular at the time it was being constructed? How did the political leaders of the day deal with public opinion about the project?
 - a. The film documents substantial disagreement among the public about the value of building the subway system, and also highlights how explosions and the digging up of Boston Common resulted in public mistrust of the project.
3. The film describes Boston’s trolley system. To what extent did the design of this system and the development of urban space around this system, follow the expectations of Burgess’s concentric zone model?
 - a. The design of the trolley system followed a wheel and spoke model that paralleled Burgess’s model to some extent.
4. The development of the first subway system depended on several technological innovations. What were one or two of these and why were they essential to the opening of the first subway?
 - a. Students may write about Sprague’s motor, or techniques used to make digging tunnels safer. They might also reflect on the idea from West, before, that density contributes to innovation.