

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

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The goal was to connect within a European perspective three thematic fields which each possess specific national research traditions and which have enjoyed close study in the twentieth century: research on the city and especially on the metropolis, on youth and youth policy, as well as on public space and social communication. According to our thesis, connecting these research strands should enable a new class of inquiry and open a new field of investigation, which would also bear particular relevance upon social developments of recent decades.

The enormous expansion of European cities began in the second half of the nineteenth century. In this process, massive immigration caused older visions of dissolving metropolises to become anachronistic utopias, leading to a search for 'healthy' ways of living within the city itself. First in England, then on the Continent, an intense debate developed around the reform of residential architecture and urban planning. An expression of this was the idea of the 'Garden City' (Ebenezer Howard), a concept first developed in England, which later became a topic of discussion on the European continent as well. This debate, in which left and right, conservative, liberal and socialist ideologies mixed or coexisted side by side, experienced its first peak at the start of the twentieth century and continued to define the overall development of the rest of century.

At the same time, youth (young persons aged c. 14 to c. 25) were also being discovered as an especially endangered object of urbanization, both politically and morally. Church groups, political authorities, middle-class reformers and socialist worker movements each in turn tried to help youth, move them (according to their own definitions) towards 'respectable' behaviour, and raise and educate them. Despite political differences, they all shared a strong resemblance in their paternalistic concepts of 'social disciplination'.¹

On the other hand, the factor of 'youth' is allotted relatively little weight in historical writing on political movements of the twentieth century. It has, however, been emphasized again and again, that – especially on the left and right extremes of the political spectrum – an obvious youth cult was cultivated, and that some were characterized as 'youth' movements, and that, actually, communist and socialist as well as fascist and national socialist movements were particularly

¹ Since the 1980s, historians, sociologists and education researchers (among others) have focused on the concept of 'social disciplination' as a primary theme in the reading of Michel Foucault.

attractive to young people, often as new political forces.² In contrast, less attention has been paid to radical organizations' limited power in binding youth; these organizations were, in the end, defined by adults. The 'waywardness' of youth, their desire for unmanipulated self-defined activities, was a characteristic phenomenon of the entire twentieth century, among working-class as well as middle-class youth. Particularly prominent youth cultures emerged during the deepest civilizing peace at the turn of the century as well as in the consumer society of the latter half of the twentieth century; however, the same could also be observed during the economic crisis of the interwar period and in the turmoil of the Second World War, as well as in the immediate postwar period.³ In a broader sense, discourses about youth are always discourses about crisis too. They bring up, in the example of the endangered youth, the hazards of the modern in general, and the estrangement of well-defined social relationships, fixed hierarchies and solid bonds. In this regard, all discourses about youth in the twentieth century have also been discourses about understanding society and oneself.⁴

The most important place in which groups of youths, who cultivated political as well as aesthetically flamboyant subcultures, subgroups and fringe cultures, confronted authority (police, church groups, teachers, etc.), as well as competing groups of youths, was the city, particularly the public space of the metropolis.⁵ To this extent, the category of the public sphere needs to be connected to historiographic research into the city and into youth.

It is necessary to start from a doubled meaning of the term 'public sphere', which, on the one hand, includes the handed-down definition of a universal 'public sphere' as an all-embracing category (also in the emphatic understanding and/or as an ideal in the sense of Jürgen Habermas), and which, on the other hand, recognizes the existence of discrete, primarily media-defined 'public spheres'.⁶ Therein lies an internal tension: the acceptance of an all-embracing (universal) definition of public sphere implies that all subspheres insert themselves in (and contribute to) a largely coherent system, and that they therefore participate in the politically and socioculturally potent construct of 'public sphere'. In contrast, the

² See the extensive German anthology from T. Koebner, R.-P. Janz and F. Trommler, eds., *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit. Der Mythos Jugend* (Frankfurt a. M., 1985).

³ See, for example, P. Wagner and K. Weinbauer, 'Tatarenblut, Immertreu. Wilde Cliques und Ringvereine um 1930 – Ordnungsfaktoren und Krisensymbole in unsicheren Zeiten', in M. Dinges and F. Sack, eds., *Unsichere Großstädte? Vom Mittelalter bis zur Postmoderne* (Constance, 2000), 265-90.

⁴ See U. Herrmann, 'Jugendzeit – Umbruchzeit. Jugendkrisen im Spiegel der deutschen Gesellschaftsgeschichte und Gesellschaftskrisen im Spiegel der deutschen Jugendgeschichte', in: W. Edelstein and D. Sturzbecher, eds., *Jugend in der Krise. Ohnmacht der Institutionen* (Potsdam, 1996), 41-53.

⁵ See the behaviour of British post-war youth immediately after the Second World War. S. Hall and T. Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through Rituals. Youth subcultures in post-war Britain* (London, 1976).

⁶ See K. C. Führer, K. Hickethier and A. Schildt, 'Öffentlichkeit – Medien – Geschichte. Konzepte der modernen Öffentlichkeit und Zugänge zu ihrer Erforschung', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 41 (2001), 1-38.

notion of the existence of plural public spheres starts from the assumption that they have formed themselves as partial spaces of communication, which are no longer used by all in the same way, which can also partly exclude and oppose each other, and which do not (at least from the outset) behave compensatorily to each other and/or complete a or 'the' public sphere.

The need for a connection between urban history and the histories of media and public sphere⁷ has arisen, since newer approaches to urban sociology as well as to urban and regional histories no longer conceive urban regions primarily as geographically definitive, closed and sociologically defined units⁸, but rather increasingly as open and individually located spaces, for which a subjective cartography, a cognitive mapping of the inhabitants, in this case of youth, is important.⁹ In any case, the reality of social fragmentation in modern cities remains the basis for any subjective cartography, a point already long emphasized by research into youth spaces at the Birmingham Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS).¹⁰

Foremost is the character of the 'neighbourhood public sphere', which has particular importance in the context of socio-moral milieus (*sozialmoralische Milieus*). The neighbourhood public sphere is understood as an ever-changing social space – a social space of interaction and communication, of appropriation and rejection, of conflict within and without, a social space marked by imposed and self-defined multilayered meanings, and finally a social space in which questions of cultural dominance play a pivotal role.¹¹ Research into neighbourhood public spaces allows various strands of sociohistorical inquiry to intertwine: the reconstruction of family and neighbour relationships, the context of mainly working-class and particularly female *Lebenswelten* (life experiences and lifestyles), as well as concepts of cultural hegemony and social disciplinatio, which appear significant even in reference to informal youth groupings.

The contributions of this volume pursue the above-mentioned inquiry into how one combines the three research fields of city, youth and the public sphere in the Euro-

⁷ A. Schildt, 'Stadt, Medien und Öffentlichkeit in Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert. Ergebnisse der neueren Forschung', *Informationen zur modernen Stadtgeschichte* (2002), no. 1, 36-43.

⁸ Particular reference is to be made here to the Chicago School (Ernest W. Burgess and Robert E. Park, among others), who themselves were strongly influenced by the German sociologist Georg Simmel.

⁹ See as an interdisciplinary overview, T. Hengartner, *Forschungsfeld Stadt. Zur Geschichte der volkskundlichen Erforschung städtischer Lebensformen* (Berlin and Hamburg, 1998), 244-58; C. Reutlinger, *Jugend, Stadt und Raum. Sozialgeographische Grundlagen einer Sozialpädagogik des Jugendalters* (Opladen, 2003).

¹⁰ Worth mentioning is the work of John Clarke, Dick Hebdige, Tony Jefferson and Paul Willis, among others.

¹¹ Ground-breaking examinations of Paris were published in the 1950s and 1960s by Paul-Henri Chombart de Lauwe (*Paris et L'agglomération parisienne*, 2 vols. [Paris, 1952]; *Famille et habitation*, 2 vols. [Paris, 1959/60]; *Des hommes et des villes* [Paris, 1965]); see also P. Bourdieu, 'Physischer, sozialer und angeeigneter physischer Raum', in M. Wentz, ed., *Stadt-Räume* (Frankfurt a. M. and New York, 1991), 25-34.

pean city of the twentieth century, and are presented in loose chronological order. Bettina Hitzer's article focuses on the worries about rural youth who were streaming into the German capital in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in order to find better opportunities for working and living. She sketches the efforts of the Protestant *Innere Mission* in their quest to take in youth who had escaped village controls and deliver them into church-controlled, gender-segregated urban associations, in order to offer them a *Heimat* (homeland) in the metropolis, ensure their salvation, and provide them with a moral future. According to her findings, these efforts were not entirely blessed with success.

In the closing article on the politics of cities in the interwar period, for example in Nottingham, England and St. Etienne in France, David Pomfret makes it clear that radical movements of the right and left, in wanting to win over youth members for their political battles, always stood in danger of losing control of these very activists. The confrontational acts of youth from opposing political camps – from the singing of rival battle songs in urban public spaces, to the waging of violent conflicts – cannot accordingly be interpreted solely as a consequence of the obvious political criteria. In this case, much also concerns youth culture's powerfully symbolic forms of expression.

The contribution from Alfons Kenkmann examines dissident groups of working-class youth in various German cities (especially in the Ruhr area), who eluded the control of the Nazi regime and the *Hitler-Jugend* (*HJ*) state youth organization, and who, during the Second World War, battled with the police and with *HJ* formations. Many years after the Second World War, there were still discussions about whether these dissident groups, who in the cities were associated with such names as *Edelweißpiraten* and with such clothing as leather shorts and white socks, etc. (with which they could instantly recognize each other), were to be regarded as political resistance or simply as apolitical delinquent petty criminals. This illustrates the complicated chemistry of mixing maladjusted youth culture with political repression, especially under fascist regimes.

Dissident working-class groups were also at loggerheads with certain youths from middle-class family homes, who were likewise regarded with suspicion by the Nazi regime, and even persecuted and arrested during the war. Such groups were labelled *Swing-Jugend* (Swing Youths), because they favoured American swing music and dressed in the style of English gentlemen (including umbrellas). Their stronghold was also in the metropolis, and in certain semi-public spaces, bars and dancehalls; they were especially well-represented in Hamburg, but even in the German-occupied Paris of the Second World War there existed this phenomenon of an ostentatious civilian nonchalance which set the Nazis' blood boiling.¹²

¹² Although insufficient according the standards of historical science, see the work of J.-C. Loiseau, *Les Zazous* (Paris, 1977); see also B. Polster, 'Swing Heil' – *Jazz im Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, 1989); R. Pohl, "'Schräge Vögel, mausert euch!'" Von Renitenz, Übermut und Verfolgung Hamburger Swings und Pariser Zazous', in Wilfried Breyvogel, ed., *Piraten, Swings und Junge Garde. Jugendwiderstand im Nationalsozialismus* (Bonn, 1991), 241-70; M. H. Kater, *Gewagtes Spiel. Jazz im Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne, 1995).

Alexander Mejstrik examines this youth culture in his article about Viennese *Schlurfs*, whose lifestyle and patterns of consumption not only highlighted the boundaries of national socialist 'total domination', but at the same time also hinted at the genesis of later youth consumer practices.

Even in the late-Stalinist European societies of the 1950s, when a socialist city was planned for youths (to whom the future should belong), youthful 'waywardness' caused the regime considerable problems, according to the Sándor Horváth's article on Sztálinváros (Stalintown), where instead of the intended cultured life in socialism, there developed a pronounced hooliganism. He makes clear what substantial disparities must be considered in the analysis of youth cultures in Europe. On the one hand were the conflicts between traditional rural and new urban lifestyles in this very youthful Hungarian industrial city; on the other hand was the need for communist functionaries to intervene against the influence of Western fashions and pop music. Even here, there appeared youthful desires which were not easy to slot into political pigeonholes.

The last three contributions of this volume consider the mobility and orientation of youth in the city, as well as their preferred public and semi-public spaces. On the basis of an interview project, Colin Pooley, Jean Turnbull and Mags Adams deal with the development of mobility, the use of urban spaces, and the visibility of children from the ages of 10-11 and youths from the ages of 17-18 in two urban regions – Manchester/Salford and Lancaster/Morecambe in northwest England – since the 1940s. Hans-Liudger Dienel and Malte Schophaus report on a project examining the use of urban wastelands by youth who sought uncontrolled urban spaces, and their significance for youth cultures in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1990s. Different time frames were connected to a broader comparative level. The study covers mainly West Berlin, but along the way also embraces comparisons with Amsterdam and Naples. Finally, Alexander Sedlmaier devotes himself to the use of department stores as youth culture meeting points, comparing the biggest department store of West Berlin, *KaDeWe* (*Kaufhaus des Westens* or 'Department Store of the West', opened in 1950) with that of East Berlin, capital of the GDR until 1990 (*Centrum-Warenhaus*, opened in 1970). The significance of shopping in today's youth culture suggests that youth consumption in urban semi-public spaces is yet another important dimension of the field at hand. Each of these contributions makes it clear that urban space is more than just a neutral container for social actions, but is also in itself symbolically charged.¹³

Here are presented exemplary case studies which use techniques from very different methods and disciplines, but which nevertheless attempt to introduce the research field of the 'European metropolitan youth public sphere' as a promising starting point from which to launch further investigations. With this, however, there is no claim to having done more than sketch a few outlines of the research area. It is no accident that in this first attempt, two perspectives dominate: on the one side are the different perceptions, motives, and methods of grown-up players in

¹³ See D. Görlitz, H. Harloff, H.J. Mey and J. Valsiner, eds., *Children, Cities, and Psychological Theories* (Berlin, 1998).

politics, churches and the urban public sphere against the phenomenon of an at once endangered and dangerous youth; on the other side is the 'waywardness' of associated groups of coevals, both politically and church organized as well as 'autonomous' ones. Of course, at the centre of attention stand precisely those youth who provoke the most discussion among their contemporaries. Investigation into minority subcultures, who, as a rule, also use(d) ostentatious aesthetic markings – clothes, speech, music – in public spaces and on the streets and squares to distinguish themselves from both the world of adults as well as that of 'normal' youths, remains a prime area of research,¹⁴ because they often seismographically express(ed) the yearnings of a much larger segment of youths and the outlook of the wider society in general. This found its distinct expression in the European youth culture of the 1960s and 1970s, 'between Marx and Coca-Cola' (Jean-Luc Godard).¹⁵

In future research, historical investigations into the great majority of 'ordinary' youth could certainly be expanded upon, as some of the present contributions have at least hinted, and additional fields of social history could be incorporated, of which only a few shall here be mentioned: the role of family networks in the city; the school as a public space for the orientation of youth in confrontation with adults (teachers) and as a site for meeting and socializing; the workplace, where, after leaving school aged 14 to 16, the majority of youth in European cities until the 1960s spent most of the day; unemployment, which in times of crisis created even more time and opportunities for youth action in urban spaces; the wide range of leisure¹⁶ in sports clubs, church youth groups and hobby groups of all kinds; consumption as an appropriation of semi-public spaces¹⁷ and as a central focus of youth culture, as exemplified by purchasing habits, and the stylization of physicality through trying on new fashions to be seen in bars, cafés or at dances. The significance of this aspect is shown by commercial advertisements, which increasingly identified urban youth as trendsetters.¹⁸

¹⁴ See U. Luig and J. Seebode, eds., *Ethnologie der Jugend. Soziale Praxis, moralische Diskurse und inszenierte Körperlichkeit* (Münster et al., 2003).

¹⁵ See A. Marwick, *The Sixties. Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford, 1998); A. Schildt and D. Siefgried, eds., *Between Marx and Coca Cola. Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980* (New York and Oxford, 2004).

¹⁶ As a gross empirical overview, see A. Szalai, ed., *The Use of Time. Daily Activities of Urban and Suburban Populations in Twelve Countries* (The Hague, 1973) – a survey in the EEC countries, the United Kingdom and the USA, in the middle of the 1960s; theoretical considerations in H. Jansen, *The Construction of an Urban Past. Narrative and System in Urban Society* (Oxford and New York, 2001), 275-303.

¹⁷ See H. Siegrist, H. Kaelble and J. Kocka, eds., *Europäische Konsumgeschichte. Zur Gesellschafts- und Kulturgeschichte des Konsums (18.-20. Jahrhundert)* (Frankfurt a. M. and New York, 1997); documentation of development in Germany in the first half of the twentieth century in A. McElligott, *The German Urban Experience, 1900-1945. Modernity and Crisis* (London and New York, 2001), 129-63.

¹⁸ See C. Wischermann and E. Shore, eds., *Advertising and the European City. Historical Perspectives* (Aldershot, 2000).

Finally, future historical research could further examine interactions with mass media and communications technologies, which have strongly influenced the territorial habits, mobility patterns, and mental maps of youth in the metropolis. It is noteworthy that attention to the role of mass media has largely been lacking in the field of urban history. When one accepts that the entire public sphere of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been shaped and overarched by the mass media, then all other dimensions of the public sphere can only be incompletely grasped without its inclusion. Political street protests were always in large part generated by the media, requiring press coverage and – in a differing construction – filtered by it. The overarching influence of mass media on urban public sphere is not limited to the level of foreground events, but also extends to the gradual moulding of guiding images (*Leitbilder*) and opinion sets, which in turn are significant in the everyday practice of neighbourly communication and for the general ‘moral order’¹⁹ of the city. On this note, perhaps youth who use the internet and mobile phones to send an SMS (Short Message Service) as a rendezvous ritual,²⁰ for example, to arrange night-time amusements, will be seen by future historians as a deep cultural caesura, because here begins a completely new mix of (virtual) private and public spheres.

In any case, the issue of the interrelationship between city, youth, and the public (and/or semi-public) sphere in a comparative framework is proving itself to be a useful key in understanding the history of modern European society in the twentieth century.

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¹⁹ R. E. Park, *Human Communities* (Glencoe/Ill., 1951), 121.

²⁰ See B. Schäfers, *Jugendsoziologie* (Opladen, seventh edition 2001), 154-8.