

# Introduction

*Peter Clark and Jussi S. Jaubainen*

The ‘greening’ of European cities has been one of the most important, widespread and controversial of modern urban developments. Notions of the ‘green’ city go back at least to the seventeenth century, when Thomas Fuller described the English provincial town of Norwich as ‘either a city in an orchard or an orchard in a city, so equally are houses and trees blended in it’. But it was in the nineteenth century that references to green space in the urban context multiplied. The need for ‘zones of open country’ around London was mentioned in the 1820s and ‘green corridors’ in the 1880s, and similar phrases were picked up and disseminated in other cities and towns across the continent.<sup>1</sup> Increasingly, the concern was less with natural open space, which was increasingly built over and developed, than with artificial or planned open space. In the 1920s London County Council published a map of open spaces in the capital, including parks and sports grounds, and marked them all in green. However, the notion of an all-embracing urban green space appears to have emerged after the Second World War.<sup>2</sup>

Controversy over the creation, redevelopment and conflicting uses of green space has become a recurrent feature of urban public debate. There were protests over the squares, parks and commons in London before and after the First World War. There were tensions over the management of garden suburbs in Stockholm during the inter-war period, and over the planned rebuilding of Käpylä in Helsinki in the 1960s. Street demonstrations occurred at Kungsträdgården park in Stockholm in the early 1970s, and there has been controversy over the Green Belt around London throughout the post-war era. Though public discussion was largely absent in St Petersburg/Leningrad in the Soviet era, there was still

---

<sup>1</sup> T. Fuller, *The Worthies of England*, ed. J. Freeman (London, 1952), p. 419; J.C. Loudon, *Hints on Breathing Spaces for the Metropolis, and for County Towns and Villages on Fixed Principles* (London, 1829), p. 1; Octavia Hill, ‘More Air for London’, *Nineteenth Century*, 23 (February 1888). See also U. von Petz, ‘Robert Schmidt and the public park policy in the Ruhr district 1900–1930’, *Planning Perspectives*, 14 (1999), 163–82; R. Rotenberg, *Landscape and Power in Vienna* (Baltimore, 1995), p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *London County Council Statistics*, 32 (1926–7), 146; *Urban Parks and Open Spaces: A Review* (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 23.

considerable party debate about the purpose of open spaces in the city.<sup>3</sup> In the contemporary era, green space issues remain a vital theme in discourses about urban planning, the global city, and the environmentally sustainable city.<sup>4</sup>

What is new and important about this book is that while we consider the different forms of open space development, we are, above all, trying to look at the evolution of metropolitan green space in aggregate, to develop, however tentatively, some typology of green space and to see how the varied elements interact and network. The growing conceptualisation of green space in all its complexity is partly a function of the prominence given to it in public and planning debates, and also due to heightened environmental consciousness and lobbying for better environmental quality and maintenance of ecological systems in cities. But it is also promoted by other factors, including the widening consumption of green space in the city, as transport advances along with suburbanisation encourage town-dwellers to travel further and make use of a greater range of urban spaces. Indirectly at least, this helps to create a metropolitan 'market' in open space with some types becoming less attractive than others, having repercussions in turn for urban policy.

'Green space', of course, is not always perfectly green: sometimes it is a frozen grey or muddy brown or wintry white, especially in Nordic countries. But it is ubiquitous even in the biggest city. For we must remember not only the parks and squares, garden suburbs and green belts which have attracted most attention from historians and others, but also the infinite multitude of churchyards, cemeteries, hospital grounds, sports and school grounds, river-banks and little strips of empty land at the end of streets, as well as the fields and woodland on the edges of the invading metropolis. Rivers, sea-edges and offshore islands, sometimes described as blue space, also need to be taken into the equation.<sup>5</sup> Ecologically, all these different elements may link with the myriad of domestic gardens, quintessential private space, to form networks of green space across the urban landscape. With the rise of agro-industries and the 'de-greening of the countryside' in the late twentieth century, urban and suburban green spaces are increasingly recognised as

---

<sup>3</sup> *London Society, Journal*, 108 (1927), 2; for London commons and green belts see below, pp. 42 *et seq.*; 62 *et seq.*; for Stockholm garden suburbs and the Kungsträdgården controversy see below pp. 108–9; for the planning debate in St Petersburg/Leningrad see p. 261 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> R. Young, 'Green cities and the urban future' in K. Parsons and D. Schuyler (eds), *From Garden City to Green City* (Baltimore, 2002); also D. Gordon (ed.), *Green Cities* (Montreal, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> For a survey of the many different spaces in London see below, pp. 32–3; also in St Petersburg see p. 251 *et seq.*

important ecosystems on a local scale, vital refugia for indigenous plants and animals. Development processes in the contemporary context of urban green spaces have multiple directions. On the one hand, there is the shrinking and destruction of green space, both natural and otherwise, as non-built-up areas are converted into a built environment. This is linked to the internal and external densification of urban regions. At the same time, there are processes by which the amount of green space is increased through the conversion of former industrial sites into housing areas interleaved with parks (often on the urban waterfront), and through the cleaning-up of polluted land and conversion to parks and the like.<sup>6</sup>

Analysis of the development of urban green space as a whole is essential not only for illuminating the physical, social and ecological changes in European cities. Such work can also help us understand the way that cities interact – emulating, competing and networking – with one another. Though historians have for many years studied the evolving commercial and financial relationships of cities – from the age of the great medieval fairs to modern stock exchanges – much less research has been done until recently on the process of cultural networking, as big cities internationalise in the contemporary world.<sup>7</sup> One of the concerns of this book is how ideas and policies on the different forms of green space as well as the wider notion get exchanged between different European cities: the channels of transmission, the chronology of diffusion, and their impact. The theme can thus offer a window to understanding the formation and working of a more integrated and international urban system in Europe during the modern and contemporary period.

All urban change is negotiated and ideas and policies, whether international or not, are constantly adapted, refined and reformulated in different time and space contexts. Ideology is almost always transformed by political process and power relationships that determine the distribution of resources. The reception and implementation of new ideas and policies on green space is often the outcome of sustained and even fractious dialogue between city politicians, planning professionals and

---

<sup>6</sup> T. Elmqvist, 'Patterns and Processes in Urban Ecosystems', paper at the Nessling Foundation Environment Symposium Environmental Problems and Policies in Growing Urban Areas, Espoo, Finland, December 2003. K. Pihlainen and E. Tirkkonen (eds), *Rustica Nova: The New Countryside and Transformations in Operating Environment* (Turku, 2002). T. Elmqvist et al., 'The dynamics of social-ecological systems in urban landscapes: Stockholm and the national urban park, Sweden', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1023 (2004), 308–32; A.P. Kinzig and J.M. Grove, 'Urban-suburban ecology', *Encyclopedia of Biodiversity*, 5 (2001), 733–45.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. H. Diederiks and D. Reeder (eds), *Cities of Finance* (Amsterdam, 1996).

administrators, private developers, environmental organisations and engaged local householders. In a number of the chapters below, we shall see how that political process in different cities works, shaped by their distinctive economic and cultural landscapes and power structures. At the same time, the wider debate about green space, its uses and meaning, is not limited to the political and civil arena. Of vital importance is the wider public sphere, how ordinary local people understand and respond to green space, how they perceive and use it. Here we are not dealing with the relatively closed world of experts and policy-makers, lobby groups and administrators, but with the vast urban majority of citizen consumers. What do they make of it all? Once again, however, this is not a simple question. Uses and attitudes to green space may be affected by economic interest (propertied or property-less?), social class and gender, and also by life-cycle and change over time – not least because of the widening scope of choice of green spaces available in the city.

Fundamental then to our analysis are two general questions: how far is there a trend for European metropolises between 1850 and 2000 to converge in their policies and programmes of urban green space, that convergence affected by common challenges, by international planning and environmental ideas, and by the impact of intercity competition and emulation; and how far do we see a persistent level of local development, shaped by specific socio-economic contexts, institutional patterns and local demands?

In this book we seek to look at these and other issues through the prism of four Northern metropolitan cities: London, Stockholm, Helsinki and St Petersburg. All represent different types: London always in the first rank in the period 1850–2000, as an imperial and now (like Paris) a global city; Stockholm and Helsinki figure as medium-rank European capitals but the second a late developer, only becoming the capital of an independent state after 1917; and St Petersburg, a former capital city, which has spent much of its modern history under the Soviet system. As we shall see below, they have experienced quite distinctive economic, political and cultural trajectories. Yet they have often faced similar challenges and share at least some common features. All have been innovative cultural centres in their own countries and, in particular, they have been international gateways for new ideas and policies in the realm of green space. Important interactions and exchanges have occurred between the cities. London at least up to the Second World War was one of the most innovative and fertile cities in terms of generating green space ideas which were diffused across Northern Europe. Stockholm too had a significant international role during the 1930s and after the Second World War, influencing Helsinki, London and beyond. As well as its links with Stockholm, Helsinki enjoyed a historic cultural

relationship with St Petersburg in the period before 1917 when the Finnish capital was part of the Russian empire. Thereafter St Petersburg (as Leningrad) went its own way in key respects, but Soviet-era policies on green space show more than a passing resemblance to those in the West.<sup>8</sup>

In this introduction we look first at evolving theories about green space, then at the broad urban trends, problems and resources of our cities. Finally, we explore some of the key themes framing the international and local development of urban green space, in relation to the detailed chapters that follow.

### Theoretical perspectives

Historians have been rather slow to focus on environmental developments in the modern and contemporary city. There has been some discussion of the problems of pollution and waste disposal, and the impact of urbanisation on the countryside, but relatively little on changing ideas, policies and attitudes to green space.<sup>9</sup> Admittedly, a great deal of often detailed work has been done by urban historians on public parks and boulevards and by planning historians on the Garden City movement in Britain and its many international offshoots.<sup>10</sup> But there

---

<sup>8</sup> For the influential Stockholm exhibition in 1930, cf. E. Rudberg, *Stockholmsutställningen 1930* (Stockholm, 1999), pp. 191, 193; see below, p. 261 *et seq.*

<sup>9</sup> For example: B. Luckin, *Pollution and Control: A Social History of the Thames in the Nineteenth Century* (Bristol, 1986); B.M. Ratcliffe, 'Cities and environmental decline: the sewage problem in Paris', *Planning Perspectives*, 5 (1990), 195 *et seq.*; also M. Melosi, *The Sanitary City* (Baltimore, 2000); J. Sheail, *An Environmental History of Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, 2002); J.R. McNeill, *Something New under the Sun: an Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World* (London, 2000). Among the few works dealing with green space in a more general way is Rotenberg, *Landscape and Power in Vienna*; Helen Meller of Nottingham University is also working on the subject and gave an important lecture on Green Space and the City at the International Urban History Conference in Edinburgh, September 2002.

<sup>10</sup> On parks see, for instance, H. Conway, *People's Parks: the Design and Development of Victorian Parks in Britain* (Cambridge, 1991); also the major study on Swedish parks by Catharina Nolin, *Till stadsbornas nytta och förlustande* (with English summary) (Stockholm, 1999); on Helsinki parks, Mauno Häyrynen, *Maisemapuistosta reformipuistoon: Helsingin kaupunkipuistot ja puistopolitiikka 1880-luvulta 1930-luvulle* (Helsinki, 1994). On the European-wide Garden City movement see, for instance, the various articles in *Planning Perspectives*, 5 (1990) onwards; Parsons and Schuyler (eds), *From Garden City to Green City*.

has been only limited discussion of post-Second World War ideas and policies and almost no attempt to relate different ideas and initiatives together to provide a coherent discussion of the evolution of urban green space as a whole, whether from a national or comparative perspective. No less striking is the absence of a theoretical perspective on urban space.

In contrast, geographers have been more adventurous in their formulation of ideas and theories, raising intriguing questions about the competing and complementary forces connected to internationalisation and localisation in the context of urban space. Urban space – whether built-over grey, tarmac black or open green – is, it is argued, the key to understanding the urban environment. Michel Foucault claimed once that the nineteenth century was the century of time: time was privileged over space that was immobile, fixed and dead. The organisation of society through time was important to initiate the development of modern industrial society. The twentieth century would be the era of space when space would be active, mobile and fertile. The expansion of modern industrial society was realised through the neat functional division of space in towns. Areas for work, sleeping and free time were spatially separated and connected with each other through efficient transport systems. Urban space – including its ‘green appearance’ – was a commodity, a dynamic part of the land market, to be divided and regulated with modern urban planning so as to improve the functionality of towns. One might go further and claim that the twenty-first century will be the era of space-time, in other words the intertwining, compressing and contextualising of space and time.<sup>11</sup> The former mono-functional areas are increasingly converted to mixed land-use in post-industrial cities, in which green space is exploited as an attraction to enhance the use and value of land as a key commodity in capitalist society. The compression of space-time means simultaneous trends in ‘green space conversion’ in many cities around the world.

Already in the 1970s David Harvey argued that the importance of spatiality and space focuses on the question of how different human practices create and make use of distinctive conceptualisations of space. The urban social problems of the 1970s led Harvey to underline the necessity to analyse space more profoundly in order to understand contemporary cities, their past and their near future. The key was an

---

<sup>11</sup> For a survey of the extensive literature by geographers, M. Crang and N. Thrift (eds), *Thinking Space* (London, 2000); S. Holloway, S. Rice and G. Valentine (eds), *Key Concepts in Geography* (London, 2003). M. Foucault, ‘Of other spaces’, *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), 22–7; D. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (London, 1989), pp. 260–307.

analysis of urban setting with an extended time-scale. Over time, urban space has functioned as initiator, medium and outcome of social, even revolutionary practices in the European cities.<sup>12</sup>

Architects and planners, sometimes geographers, are the key professionals in shaping urban space, physical urban environment and thus, to some extent, the spatial practices of people. There is a certain reciprocity between power, space and knowledge. Foucault refers to space as an organised form of control through different social technologies. Surveillance and control are aspects of spatial power in cities. Space can be controlled implicitly by not questioning the reproduction of customary spatial practices of people and spatial relationships in cities. Nevertheless, power cannot be limited only to those activities that control the city. It is not enough to categorise space in its varied forms but we need to study how space, power and knowledge are interrelated in the urban environment and urban planning. This means that we must also pay attention to the colloquial, mundane and everyday aspects of urban space, including not only the constructed and designed green space of parks and recreation areas but also the many and varied small green areas left over between the urban infrastructure.<sup>13</sup>

Urban space is reconfigured continuously. As we shall see in later chapters, notions of public space have changed in cities over the last century alongside the possibilities to use public space. There are not only significant differences in urban public space between the United States and Europe but also between different European cities. Green space in the city in the late nineteenth century is not the same as green space in the early twenty-first century – even if we talk about a park that is physically located exactly in the same place. In trying to unravel the processes by which urban, public or green space is made, key questions have to be asked: for example, who acts as gatekeeper to whom in urban space, how different notions of space are communicated and represented in the media and broader local discourses, and what is the role of urban space in political and power relationships.<sup>14</sup>

Green space is a vital, dynamic part of urban space. It not only has a physical dimension as parks, gardens or wasteland within the built environment, but it also functions as social space. Parks and other green areas are sites of public cultures, social gatherings and informal get-togethers, bringing together many kinds of people. In contemporary

---

<sup>12</sup> D. Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (London, 1973), pp. 13–14.

<sup>13</sup> Foucault, 'Of other spaces', 22–7.

<sup>14</sup> M. Sorkin (ed.), *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York, 1992).

cities green space offers accessible public space to local communities. Because of its openness, public space of this type is vital for cultural identification and social attachment at the neighbourhood and local level. In this way, with the activity and engagement of urban residents, green space constitutes an important, if neglected part of the public sphere.<sup>15</sup>

Theories and concepts of space do not stand outside of space or time. They ‘travel’ from person to person and from place to place, to other times and situations. ‘Travelling theory’ means that concepts and theories get new meanings when they are put in practice in different contexts. Researchers and other people travel and so do theories and concepts. Both are modified by different contexts and experiences. After travelling, the return to the place of origin is never the same.<sup>16</sup>

This is where geography and history matter in broad terms – and here one finds the particular contextuality that must be reflected especially in comparative studies. Travelling theory has at least two very important outcomes for the analysis of urban space and the development of the urban environment. First, anyone studying different cities in different periods and making comparative analysis in time and space must be very careful when using seemingly similar theories and concepts. Even the basic concepts of ‘urban space’, ‘urban nature’, ‘urban culture’, ‘public space’ or ‘green space’ are not exactly the same in all cities. This is especially evident when the cities are located in different cultural areas, such as St Petersburg, Helsinki, Stockholm or London. We also have to understand in detail how particular urban theories emerged and how they were used and developed further in other cities. As already noted, the theory of Garden Cities, one of the most significant urban theories of the twentieth century, originated in the particular socio-cultural and economic-political context of later nineteenth-century London. Launched by Ebenezer Howard in 1898, the book *To-morrow: a Peaceful Path to a Real Reform* reflected Howard’s own experiences in the United States and Britain as well as ideas from contemporary writers, such as Henry George and Edward Bellamy. The theory quickly attracted the attention of many urban planners, city officials and urban developers around Europe. However, everywhere the theory of Garden Cities was

---

<sup>15</sup> Surprisingly, Jürgen Habermas barely discusses the role of open and green space in his discussion of the public sphere: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by T. Burger (Cambridge, 1992).

<sup>16</sup> E. Said, ‘Traveling theory reconsidered’ in R.M. Polhemus and R.B. Henkle (eds), *Critical Reconstructions: the Relationship of Fiction and Life* (Stanford, CA, 1994).

adapted to particular local economic and political conditions and socio-cultural contexts.<sup>17</sup>

Geographers have written and debated about urban space for decades, while historians have for a long time been interested in urbanisation through time. However, in many cases geographers have neglected time, just as historians have neglected in large measure concepts of space, particularly in an environmental context. If research on the contemporary city has highlighted the complexity of the spatiality of human life, it is not only space that has to be investigated. Case studies of particular cities or parts of the cities, conducted at the micro level have revealed the complexity of issues of time. Urban researchers have started to grasp the problems inscribed in a linear understanding of time in which societies are progressing universally. If time is not linear, what then are the 'ruptures' and 'breaks' that cause changes in the development of cities? How do we study them?

Space, time and society are intertwined in the urban environment. The 'green' (parks, unbuilt environment) must be set beside the 'grey' (built environment, houses) and 'blue' (waterfront, river, sea, lake, etc.) dimensions of urban space, thereby offering an opportunity to put the geographical-historical viewpoint into practice. The contextuality of human activity means that urban space does not just 'exist': it is produced, reproduced and shaped in people's actions. These actions take place always in some context that is specific in time and space. There is a need to understand the complexity of spatiality in all human activities through different conceptual definitions of space.

Historians and geographers need to share and join up their ideas, theories and knowledge of green space. We are not alone in our view of the necessity to approach cities simultaneously and equally from both a geographical and historical viewpoint. Edward Soja has written about geo-history as a method to investigate the development of cities. Geo-history describes an unprioritised inseparability of geography and history in the critical study of cities and urban regions over different periods. Social relations, the environment and human actions are formed especially in towns. According to his view, urban space is constructed socially and symbolically in the built environment. Overall then, there is a good case for arguing at a theoretical level that human spatiality is the product of both human agency and contextual structuring, with city space functioning as a historical as well as a spatial and social phenomenon.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> E. Howard, *Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to a Real Reform* (London, 1898) with a second edition published as *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (London, 1902).

<sup>18</sup> E. Soja, *Postmetropolis* (London, 2000), pp. 6–18; E. Said, 'History, literature and geography' in H. Gindy (ed.), *History in Literature* (Cairo, 1995).

### Comparing cities: London, Stockholm, Helsinki and St Petersburg

In order to understand green space developments in our European cities from this geo-historical perspective we need to track our four cities over the extended period of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to see how they developed in comparative perspective. Arguably, three dimensions are crucial for exploring the contextuality of urban development: population, economic change and governance. All four cities have different demographic trends and economic and administrative trajectories, creating specific urban platforms for environmental innovation and change. Yet, as we have said, in a number of key respects the cities have experienced common challenges and common influences.

Evident at once is the wide variation in demographic and economic scale of the four cities. London in 1850 was the biggest city in the Western world with nearly three million inhabitants and its population continued to grow, up to the Second World War and probably just beyond (see Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1** Population estimates for the four cities

City	Population (in thousands)								
	1851	1871	1891	1911	1931	1951	1971	1991	2001
London	2685	3890	5638	7256	8216	8348	7452	6803	7172
Stockholm	93	136	246	342	502	744	740	679	750
Helsinki	21	26	62	147	241	369	524	491	556
St Petersburg	485	667	1003	1962	1690	—	3513	4437	4628

*Source:* B.R. Mitchell, *International Statistics: Europe 1750–1993* (London, 1998); *Helsingin tilastollinen vuosikirja*; local authority websites for Stockholm, St Petersburg and London.

Growth was powered by a combination of traditional industrial activity linked to the port (by 1890 the largest in the world), plus new consumer industries, especially during the inter-war period and including motorcars and electrical appliances (in the 1930s 50 US companies established factories in west London). No less important was the growth of government and the service sector.<sup>19</sup> Demographic expansion was housed in an ever-widening arc of suburbs. As we shall see in Chapter 4,

<sup>19</sup> R. Dennis, 'Modern London' in M. Daunton (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain: III* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 121–9; see also M. Ball and D. Sunderland, *An Economic History of London 1800–1914* (London, 2001).

after the 1960s London suffered growing demographic loss to satellite towns and villages in the south-east region, with workers regularly commuting either by train or road 100 km or more a day to the capital. Pressures here included high property and living costs in the capital and environmental problems. Decentralisation was also encouraged by government policy after the war to relocate government and employment away from the capital. There was by the 1970s a major contraction of manufacturing employment in the capital linked to the decline of the port and later consumer industries. By 1981, 81 per cent of all employment in London was in the service sector with high salary work in the City (59 HQs of international banks already by 1984 and many more now), and low-paid catering and other service employment elsewhere. The imperial port became, in some measure, a global banking city, with a growing share of its office development relocated to the new green-blue space of Docklands.<sup>20</sup>

The demographic expansion of St Petersburg/Leningrad appears more volatile (see Table 1.1). Population growth accelerated in the late nineteenth century as a consequence of rapid industrialisation and the expansion of state activity. There was some growth of upper-and-middle class suburbs and industrial areas on the outskirts, but there was negligible expansion of working-class suburban housing, due in part to the absence of cheap transport before 1917; this created intense occupancy rates in parts of the old city, along with acute sanitation problems and high mortality and morbidity levels.<sup>21</sup> After the Revolution and the loss of capital status to Moscow, the city's population suffered a major decline in the early 1920s (to 0.7 million), but subsequently recovered up to the Second World War, through renewed industrial expansion (with Leningrad the leading industrial city in the Soviet Union). The German siege and the evacuation of population from the city led to a further temporary decline, followed by renewed expansion after the war, linked to new waves of suburbanisation (relying on mass transportation) and economic growth, mainly now in the service sector (particularly education and research, but also tourism).<sup>22</sup>

The two Nordic cities were always much smaller in demographic size but they too experienced considerable increase from the late nineteenth century (see Table 1.1). In the case of Stockholm, growth was the result

---

<sup>20</sup> See below, p. 83 *et seq.*; also A.D. King, *Global Cities: Post-Imperialism and the Internationalization of London* (London, 1990), pp. 26–8, 89, 96, 115, 124; S. Brownhill, *Developing London Docklands* (London, 1990).

<sup>21</sup> See below, p. 252 *et seq.*; also J.H. Bate, *St Petersburg: Industrialization and Change* (London, 1976), p. 213 *passim*.

<sup>22</sup> B.A. Ruble, *Leningrad: Shaping a Soviet City* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 16, 41, 45, 49, 51, 53, 61–2, 78.

of rapid industrialisation, together with strong expansion in trade and transport, and the city's emergence as a central node in national systems. Initially, population growth was concentrated in the outer area of the old inner city, but by the 1890s there was a spread of middle-class villa suburbs and working-class districts on the outskirts (as a result of industrial dispersal). After the turn of the century there was a large-scale expansion of the metropolitan area. The continuing growth of population after the Second World War ran out of steam around 1970.<sup>23</sup> Already after the 1960s there had been a serious exodus of manufacturing companies from greater Stockholm, and economic recession in the 1970s led to general stagnation. From the 1980s economic activity in greater Stockholm revived, fuelled by producer services and telecommunications. At the same time, we find signs of renewed demographic growth in the central city, reflecting Stockholm's vitality as a post-industrial city, and the dynamic role of the inner city in that process. As we shall see in Chapter 9, this has major implications for green space in Stockholm.<sup>24</sup>

For Helsinki, founded initially in 1550 but only established in 1812 as a new capital city, demographic growth came late and was again linked with industrialisation, port improvement and some expansion of administrative and other services before the First World War. Increased population led to large-scale barrack-type building for the working classes (often just outside the municipal border), and the first appearance of middle-class, suburban, villa-type developments, at Eira and on the islands. Renewed population growth after the Second World War was generated by further industrial expansion, with an upsurge of suburban growth from the 1960s.<sup>25</sup> In the late twentieth century the Helsinki region attracted large-scale immigration (with population growth of over 200,000 inhabitants between 1990 and 2000), despite a major decline of traditional industries, many of them linked to the port. The proportion of the national population in the Helsinki metropolitan area expanded from 14.8 per cent in 1970 to 17.2 per cent in 1995 and 18.6 per cent in 2002; by comparison the level in Helsinki fell from 11.1 per cent in 1970 to 9.9 per cent in 1990, though with a recovery to 10.1 per

---

<sup>23</sup> L. Nilsson (ed.), *Staden på vattnet: vol. 2* (Stockholm, 2002), pp. 8–9, 61 *et seq.*; also M. Deland, *The Social City: Stockholm 1900–1945* (Stockholm, 2001), pp. 75–83.

<sup>24</sup> Nilsson (ed.), *Staden på vattnet: vol. 2*, pp. 69 *passim*, 291; see also below, pp. 107–8.

<sup>25</sup> For a recent account of Helsinki's development see M. Bell and M. Hietala, *Helsinki: the Innovative City* (Helsinki, 2002), pp. 21–4, 70–9, 195 *et seq.*; see also on the earlier period M. Kovero, *Helsinki liikekeskuksena in Helsingin kaupungin historia IV. Ajanjakso 1875–1918* (Helsinki, 1955), pp. 214–15.

cent in 1995 and 10.8 per cent in 2002, reflecting re-urbanisation in the city of Helsinki.<sup>26</sup>

Broadly speaking, despite significant variations in size and economic ranking and despite differences in patterns of urban growth (with London an early starter and Helsinki a late one), all four cities have experienced suburbanisation, decentralisation of population and (at the end of the twentieth century) renewed urban growth in their inner areas. What is also striking is that all four centres (like most big European cities) underwent large-scale industrialisation in the nineteenth century, triggering early environmental concern and action, but the late twentieth century saw a crucial transition from declining old-style manufacturing and port activity to new service activities, including a major growth of finance, cultural and tourism industries. These developments have provided the cities with new challenges, especially how to create a continuing flow of employment in the service sector to ease industrial unemployment, but also new opportunities (such as the availability of 'brownfield' sites of old factories or derelict dockyards) for innovative economic, housing, and green space policies.<sup>27</sup>

Urban policy, including green space policy, is, as we have said, framed by political processes and power relationships, and here three institutional issues are of importance: legal and governmental frameworks, the scale of urban territory under municipal or central metropolitan control, and the amount of land directly owned by the municipal/metropolitan authority.

The first issue is of a national character and can be discussed in summary fashion. In Britain up to the Second World War, the national legal and administrative framework saw a balance between a generally diffident central government (in regard to municipal matters) and long-established, autonomous local authorities; since the Second World War the state has pursued an increasingly centralist agenda, particularly from the 1980s, with the undermining of local planning powers.<sup>28</sup> In Sweden and Finland, the relationship between a powerful central government and limited municipal authority in the earlier period has been

---

<sup>26</sup> Bell and Hietala, *Helsinki*, ch. 9; also H. Helin, 'Terveen ja varovaisen talouden linja: Helsingin kaupungin talous 1945–1999', in L. Kolbe and H. Helin (eds), *Helsingin Historia Vuodesta 1945*, Part 3 (Helsinki, 2002), pp. 515–79. *Helsinki Region: Statistical Comparisons* (Helsinki, 2002), p. 26.

<sup>27</sup> For general trends see P. Hall and D. Hay, *Growth Centres in the European Urban System* (London, 1980).

<sup>28</sup> P. Newman and A. Thornley, *Urban Planning in Europe* (London, 1996), p. 113 *et seq.*; T. Brindley et al. (eds), *Remaking Planning: the Politics of Urban Change in the Thatcher Years* (2nd edn, London, 1996).

transformed since the 1970s (in Sweden) and the 1980s (in Finland) by the devolution of greater planning and other powers to cities.<sup>29</sup> In Russia, despite the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary upheavals, weak municipal government and strong central government have been the legal and political reality affecting planning and green space throughout our period.<sup>30</sup>

At the same time, these national institutional frameworks are shaped on the ground by specific factors in our cities related to metropolitan space and landownership. If we look first at London and its metropolitan territory, an important step was taken in 1888 to create an umbrella authority, the London County Council (LCC), responsible for a major part of the built-up area of the capital: 117 sq miles including many of the old suburbs. But this body never had a monopoly of metropolitan control since the City of London Corporation continued unreformed, while government agencies maintained considerable powers (for instance, over royal parks). Furthermore, in 1899, 28 new municipal boroughs were created for the metropolitan area; this generated a rival, second level of administration, leading to tension over planning and environmental regulation. Moreover, even in 1888 a significant part of suburban development was outside LCC control and that division accelerated in the period after the First World War. This meant from early times a pluralistic metropolitan space.<sup>31</sup>

By the 1960s the London County Council was responsible for only a very small amount of the metropolitan administrative region. In 1965 the establishment of the Greater London Council (GLC) was intended to create a strategic authority able to coordinate planning and other policies within the capital. But its powers were inadequate and, as Patricia Garside shows in Chapter 4, there was endless conflict with the government and other municipal and local authorities within the wider London area. Decentralisation of population further undermined the position of the GLC, which was closed down by the Thatcher government in the 1980s. Subsequently, despite the efforts of the London Strategic Authority, political and administrative space grew increasingly fragmented in the metropolitan area. Fragmentation coincided with a major deregulation of planning controls in the metropolis and the

---

<sup>29</sup> Newman and Thornley, *International Planning*, pp. 69, 243; for more on planning changes in Finland see J. Jauhiainen, *Kaupunkisuunnittelu, kaupunki uudistus, kaupunkipolitiikka. Kolme eurooppalaista esimerkkiä* (Turku, 1995), pp. 269–82.

<sup>30</sup> See below, Chapter 14.

<sup>31</sup> Dennis, 'Modern London', pp. 101–4; P. Garside and K. Young, *Metropolitan London: Politics and Urban Change 1837–1981* (London, 1982).

general erosion of the finances and autonomy of local authorities.<sup>32</sup> As we shall see below, this generated major problems but also some opportunities for green space development.

In St Petersburg the period before the Revolution witnessed considerable fragmentation of responsibility for metropolitan space between different players, including the tsar, ministries, the municipal council and voluntary organisations. A growing amount of suburban development was outside municipal control. Even where the council had responsibility, the inertia of St Petersburg's politicians undermined municipal activity. There was also the problem of a small civic budget. After the Revolution all space came under state control, but as we see in Chapter 14, responsibility seems to have remained quite fragmented though with different players. The Leningrad Soviet seems to have had only limited power, with real decision making in the hands of national agencies and enterprises, plus the local party bosses. Even so, attempts were made to clean up the worst areas of the old city and the city plan of 1936 envisioned a new city running south of the old one. Despite sporadic attempts at reform, to strengthen local decision making, as in 1965 and 1973, there seems to have been a continuing problem of coordination up to the end of the Soviet era. City Soviets were too big to function efficiently and effective executive power was wielded by directors of big municipal departments and party representatives. The 1966 plan had an important regional vision including an outer green belt free from all development. However, these zones came under intense pressure because of demographic growth. Moscow interference also remained strong, undermining local autonomy. Since the collapse of the Soviet regime, both inner and outer areas of green space have experienced attack from private developers.<sup>33</sup>

In Stockholm the picture was much clearer. After the turn of the twentieth century, a growing amount of suburban administrative territory was annexed to the city council, including for instance Brännkyrka borough, an extensive area on the south side of the city. In addition, Stockholm City Council showed itself willing to purchase property extensively in the wider area to build housing estates. No less important, it introduced German site leasehold procedures to ensure a high level of continuing control over building development. In 1995 Stockholm owned 65 per cent of the land within its borders, but it

---

<sup>32</sup> See below, p. 83 *et seq.*; also Newman and Thornley, *International Planning*, p. 145 *et seq.*

<sup>33</sup> See below, p. 279 *et seq.*; also J.H. Bater, *The Soviet City* (London, 1980), pp. 41, 43, 44, 53; Ruble, *Leningrad*, pp. 42, 73, 79, 85 *passim*. On the contemporary situation see below, pp. 268–70.

owned nearly three times as much outside them. Of the apartments and houses built that year less than a half were on private land. On the other hand, since the 1980s private and commercial interests have been increasingly influential in forcing the pace of urban development, as we shall see in more detail below.<sup>34</sup>

In Helsinki the picture appears to shadow Stockholm developments, though possibly a generation behind. From the turn of the century, there were small annexations of administrative territory to the city but in 1900 the city controlled only 25 sq. km. However, major expansions occurred in 1946 and 1966, and by 1970 the city area was 177 sq. km. In the inter-war period the city was engaged in developing new villa estates such as Käpylä, but on a modest scale. Political conservatism and a lack of money may have been crucial. But after the war, the renewed growth of Helsinki, economic expansion and a greater openness to external influences led to the adoption of the Swedish model of site leasehold measures. Meanwhile, the city was active in buying up property in the metropolitan area. As a result, the City Council, as in Stockholm, is the principal landowner in the metropolitan area.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, in the Helsinki region administrative control is increasingly fractured, already 41 per cent of the metropolitan population in 1990 living outside the city boundaries, in the autonomous cities of Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen. Cooperation between these municipalities has been problematic. Statutory cooperation was established with the Helsinki Metropolitan Area created in 1970 to coordinate waste management, public transport planning and air pollution. However, the influence of this organisation has been limited in the strategic planning of land-use and housing. During recent years there have more efforts to collaborate, both informally (via the mayors) and formally (through a board of council members from the municipalities) to enhance strategic competitiveness in the metropolitan area. In addition, working cooperation exists in a variety of areas, including health, education and recreation. Even so, continuing tensions are generated by the different tax rates between the metropolitan councils.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> See below, p. 161 *et seq.* German site leasehold rights sought to differentiate between property rights to a piece of land and user rights; the procedure was increasingly used in German cities from the 1890s for planning purposes; legislation was passed in Sweden in 1906 (Deland, *Social City*, p. 199 *et seq.*) *Statistical Yearbook of Stockholm* (Stockholm, 1997), tables 9, 12, 122; Newman and Thornley, *International Planning*, pp. 213–44.

<sup>35</sup> See below, p. 183 *et seq.*

<sup>36</sup> Laura Kolbe, 'Pääkaupunkiseudun yhteistyö ja YTV', in Kolbe and Helin (eds), *Helsingin Historia Vuodesta 1945*, p. 269. *Helsinki Region: Statistical Comparisons; OECD Territorial Reviews Helsinki, Finland* (Paris, 2003), pp. 203–219.

Benefiting from national trends in political and planning regimes, we see that the two Nordic cities appear to have secured greater control over their urban territory than London and Leningrad/St Petersburg. On the other hand, all four cities (St Petersburg very recently) have seen a shift from traditional municipal government towards what has been called ‘governance’, with the growing power of non-municipal organisations, including private companies (through the multiplication since the 1980s of private-public partnerships) and through the growing influence of voluntary organisations, not least, as we shall see in this book, environmental associations.<sup>37</sup>

This section has indicated how the four cities shared common structural pressures – both demographic and economic – as they have moved from industrial urbanisation to a post-industrial, service-dominated world. At the same time, we have also seen some of the variations in timing and scale, which alongside different political and administrative regimes, helps us to understand the individual urban contexts and localism of developments. In the final section of this introduction we need to apply this knowledge to understanding some of the questions posed earlier, about the factors shaping green policy development in our cities, the types of green space being created, and the key players in that process. All this should shed further light on the role of internationalism in the making of metropolitan green space, and on the countervailing effect of strong local and communal forces.

### Issues of green space

What have been the urban and other forces shaping the landscape of green space in the modern city? The cycles of urban growth discussed above were obviously influential. In the late nineteenth century there can be no doubt that city densification – linked to the growth of industry and population – had a key part in stimulating the first phases of green space concerns. With London taking the lead, sanitary concerns stimulated the creation of a wave of new parks, which were regarded as essential ‘breathing spaces’ in an increasingly pathological city. In all four cities, parks were also seen as a means of educating and disciplining the new urban masses into a world of respectable cultural values.<sup>38</sup> But parks

---

<sup>37</sup> See below, pp. 94 *et seq.*; 108 *et seq.*; 162 *et seq.*; 226 *et seq.*; 269–70: for the European-wide trend see O.W. Gabriel and V. Hoffmann-Martinot (eds), *Démocraties Urbaines* (Paris, 1999), pp. 18, 50, 65 *passim*.

<sup>38</sup> Conway, *People’s Parks*; see below, pp. 42 *et seq.*; 113 *et seq.*; 177, 256 *et seq.* On parks and social discipline there is a useful summary in H. Cunningham, ‘Leisure and Culture’ in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The*

alone could hardly cover the growing open space deficit in cities – particularly notable in St Petersburg where, as we shall see below, between the 1880s and 1900s the population soared by 30 per cent and the amount of green space by only 8 per cent. From the 1890s there was growing stress on villa estates as a way of accommodating not only the middle but lower classes. However, the intensity of urban development in the inner areas of big cities, compounded by associated problems of traffic congestion, ensured a continuing crisis over open space. The situation was particularly acute in St Petersburg before the First World War. In the case of London the crisis persisted well into the twentieth century as redevelopment proposals put pressure on its open space heritage; by contrast, Helsinki's problems were on a lesser scale.<sup>39</sup>

After the First World War, urban densification generally diminished as a determinant affecting green space. Instead policy-makers were more and more concerned with the provision of open space on a crowded suburban periphery. In the inter-war period open space was not only created for recreation and leisure purposes, but also to channel traffic flows and to regulate sprawling urban growth. Suburbanisation and decentralisation from the 1950s and 1960s generated new problems, as urban sprawl in 'edge communities' threatened green space, as one can see in greater Helsinki.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, reurbanisation since the 1990s has put a new focus on older areas of open space within cities. In London, Helsinki and Stockholm, the blue space of old waterfronts have been increasingly redeveloped; in St Petersburg the extensive military harbour spaces near the city remain largely derelict.<sup>41</sup>

However, there can be no doubt that while the cycles of urban growth have had an important impact on the evolution of green space, this is

---

*Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750–1950: II* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 322–4.

<sup>39</sup> D. Olsen, *The Growth of Victorian London* (London, 1976), ch. 5; D. Olsen, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna* (London, 1986); J.W.R. Whitehand and C.H. Carr, *Twentieth-Century Suburbs* (London, 2001), p. 8 *et seq.* For St Petersburg and Helsinki see below p. 177 *et seq.*; 256.

<sup>40</sup> Whitehand and Carr, *Twentieth-Century Suburbs*, p. 22 *et seq.* For 'edge communities' in Helsinki see H. Schulman and V. Kanninen, 'Aspects of Sprawl in the Helsinki Metropolitan Region', paper at the Nessling Foundation Environment Symposium, Espoo, 2003.

<sup>41</sup> R. Bruttomesso (ed.), *Waterfronts – A New Frontier for Cities on Water* (Venice, 1993); D. Gordon, 'Planning, design and managing change in urban waterfront development', *Town Planning Review*, 67 (1996), 261–90. For the importance of North American influences (particularly Baltimore port development), see J. Hannigan, *Fantasy City* (London, 1998), p. 52 *et seq.*; J. Jauhiainen, 'Waterfront redevelopment and urban policy: The case of Barcelona, Cardiff, and Genoa', *European Planning Studies*, 3 (1995), 3–20.

also very much a product of urban politics. In the late nineteenth century the growth of municipal administration, and of fiscal resources to pay for it, fuelled new civic ambitions, as cities sought to compete with one another. In the Finnish capital, for instance, Katri Lento notes how it was felt that ‘if Paris, London and Berlin had parks and green boulevards, so should Helsinki.’ There were large-scale infrastructure improvements, which created new open spaces. Parks and later sports grounds were also generated by the expansion of city park departments, as we see in Stockholm and Helsinki.<sup>42</sup> In the twentieth century the slow but steady growth of city planning departments, staffed by architects and engineers, gave a powerful bureaucratic momentum to the process of green space development. In London, the first self-styled planning body for the metropolis was the Greater London Regional Committee 1927–36, but metropolitan planning was largely in the hands of the LCC and later GLC, until the latter was abolished.<sup>43</sup> For Stockholm the Town Planning Board was started in 1909 as a commission and became permanent in 1922, taking over at that time responsibility for both the old city and outer areas. Early planning activity in Helsinki was carried out by various bodies, and the City Planning Department was not established until 1964. The number of personnel grew very rapidly during the 1960s and 1970s, reaching a peak in 1985 before tailing off.<sup>44</sup> In Leningrad, from the 1920s, plans for the reconstruction and redesign of the city employed large numbers of planners, initially including some foreigners. In the last part of the twentieth century the power of planning departments may have waned, but the decentralisation of some state powers to city authorities, and the new stress on global challenges and the sustainable city has again given a boost to municipal consciousness and policy initiatives on green space.<sup>45</sup>

This brings us to a third factor influencing the development of green space in our cities: ideology and the diffusion of international ideas. International influences are evident in the design of green space, particularly parks, already from the seventeenth century, and after 1850

---

<sup>42</sup> See below, p. 188; M. Hietala, *Services and Urbanization at the Turn of the Century* (Helsinki, 1987). See below, pp. 143–4, 177 *et seq.*

<sup>43</sup> For the growth of urban bureaucracies generally see in Germany: S. Ogilvie and R. Overy (eds), *Germany: A New Social and Economic History: III* (London, 2003), p. 213. For London planning see below, p. 61 *et seq.*

<sup>44</sup> Deland, *Social City*, p. 87 *et seq.* We are grateful for details on Helsinki planning personnel to Mr D. Gordon of the Planning Department, Helsinki City.

<sup>45</sup> See below, p. 261 *et seq.*; see also S.F. Starr, ‘Visionary Town Planning during the Cultural Revolution’, in S. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Cultural Revolution in Russia 1928–31* (London, 1978), p. 207 *et seq.*

English garden styles, Haussmann's Parisian boulevards, and growing fashions for exotic plants and natural landscapes affected many European cities, as the chapters by Catharina Nolin and Konstantin Semenov describe. By the early twentieth century the impact of the international planning movement is obvious. As already noted, Howard's concept of the Garden City spread rapidly across Northern Europe to all our Baltic cities, fanned by the work of the London Town and Country Planning Association, international conferences and exhibitions, foreign visits to Britain, publications and other activity. In Russia Howard's ideas were supported and adapted by a local society before the Revolution but even in the 1920s they continued to be influential in the Soviet city, as Boris Anan'ich and Alexander Kobak explain in Chapter 14.<sup>46</sup> At the same time, as many of the following chapters indicate, Howardite ideas were adapted locally: in almost all places the idea of an independent planned town was replaced by garden villa suburbs, while in Helsinki the emphasis was on agriculture rather than gardening.<sup>47</sup> The spread of allotment gardens also owed much to international ideas and organisational activity, including the holding of conferences: one international gardening conference was held in St Petersburg in 1914.<sup>48</sup> If German ideas on allotment gardens were influential in the Baltic cities, Stockholm too had a significant impact on planning and green space ideas during the first wave of Functionalist developments, with flocks of admirers from Finland (about 18,000 visitors), Britain and Germany coming to the International Exhibition in 1930, and also to the Town Planning Congress in 1939 (100 British delegates); while other foreigners in the post-war era toured and praised the new housing areas around Stockholm, as Lars Nilsson discusses in Chapter 8.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> See below, p. 112 *et seq.*; 273 *et seq.* A. Sutcliffe, 'Urban planning in Europe and North America before 1914', in H.J. Teuteberg (ed.), *Urbanisierung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 1983), pp. 441–73; for the spread of the Garden City movement in central Europe see M. Gee et al. (eds), *The City in Central Europe from 1800 to the Present* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 28–32. For international collaboration, see the *Town Planning Review*, 5 (1914), 245–6; 10 (1929), 248, 250; also *Annual Reports* of the Town and Country Planning Association. See below, pp. 261–2.

<sup>47</sup> See below, p. 191. For similar developments in France and Belgium, see H. Meller, *European Cities 1890–1930s* (Chichester, 2001), p. 121.

<sup>48</sup> D. Crouch and C. Ward, *The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture* (London, 1988); also Rotenberg, *Landscape*, ch. 8; see below, p. 259.

<sup>49</sup> E. Rudberg, *Stockholmsutställningen 1930* (Stockholm, 1999), pp. 191, 193; *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 25 (1939), 337. See below, p. 153.

In the later twentieth century ideology has remained influential in shaping green space development. The grand rhetoric and the more debatable economic reality of globalisation have given a sharp impetus to the long-standing competition and emulation between cities. Striving to attract the international finance sector and its high-flying executives, city leaders have sought to stress the green qualities of their communities, their open spaces and parks totemic of health and leisure. Factored into the same discourse (and urban marketing) are ideas about the urban environment. Though such ideas have been increasingly promoted in cities since the 1960s, they have gained added international impetus since the early 1990s.<sup>50</sup> Important here was the UN Conference on Environment and Development at Rio in 1992; its Agenda 21 programme was soon adopted by 30 per cent of Swedish municipalities. No less influential has been the European Union. Its Fifth Environment Action Programme in 1992 and other financial and policy initiatives (such as the reports *Europe 2000+* and *Sustainable Urban Development: a Framework for Action*) have stressed the need for sustainable cities, green belts and environmental impact policies. As Peter Schantz shows in Chapter 9, a number of these ideas have been important for the creation of the National Urban Park in Stockholm and for related environmental legislation.<sup>51</sup>

New ideas about organised leisure and competitive sport, many of them spreading from Britain to the rest of Europe towards the end of the nineteenth century, have also been influential in the configuring of urban open space. Organised and spectator sports were already important in British towns during the eighteenth century, mainly under elite sponsorship, but the late nineteenth century saw the rise in London (and other British towns) of growing popular interest in sports of all types. In London before the First World War, as David Reeder argues in Chapter 3, parks and commons saw competing claims between devotees of gardening and nature and sport enthusiasts. Helsinki's main development of open space for sports clubs and enthusiasts came during the inter-war period, linked, as Peter Clark and Marjatta Hietala show in Chapter 10, to a growing sense of national identity: here the movement culminated in various stadia and other open spaces created for the abortive 1940 Olympic Games. Likewise in Leningrad, the Central Park

---

<sup>50</sup> For the debate on globalisation and the city, see R.A. Beauregard and S. Body-Gendrot (eds), *The Urban Moment: Cosmopolitan Essays on the Late-Twentieth-Century City* (London, 1999); B. Wijkmark, 'Stockholm' in C. Jensen-Butler (ed.), *European Cities in Competition* (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 337, 351. See below, p. 222.

<sup>51</sup> Newman and Thornley, *International Planning*, pp. 7–8, 19–20. See below, p. 159 *et seq.*

of Culture and Rest was created in the 1930s with sports tracks, areas for gymnastics and the like. In the late twentieth century mounting popular demand for sports facilities has powered a great deal of new green and blue space development.<sup>52</sup>

Two further factors impacting on green space need to be stressed: the land-market and transportation. As already noted, green space was (and remains) a vital commodity of the land-market. While green space since the nineteenth century has suffered from the pressures and depredations of developers, whether in the attack on London's commons or square-gardens, the building-over of natural green areas, the infilling of private gardens, or the attempted erosion of Stockholm's National Urban Park, several of the following chapters show the preservation of green space can also be used to promote economic interests. Thus businessmen and landowners in St Petersburg and other cities gave land for parks to enhance the value of their estates and commercial interests; and London's Green Belt has been fiercely defended by local middle-class residents keen to maintain the high house prices created by its proximity.<sup>53</sup>

The rise of private transport posed a serious threat to inner-city open spaces in London already before the First World War; by the 1930s it was an increasingly widespread urban problem, although less so in Soviet cities until the collapse of Communism. Attempts to deal with the urban motor-car through ring-roads led to new ideas (imported from the United States) about urban parkways, with roadways edged by trees and gardens. No less significant, as several chapters show, the growth of public and private transport was an important catalyst in the promotion of a wider use of open spaces. As well as people having a greater choice of spaces to visit across the city, there was a growing consumption of the adjoining countryside by day-trippers, cyclists, rambles and others.<sup>54</sup>

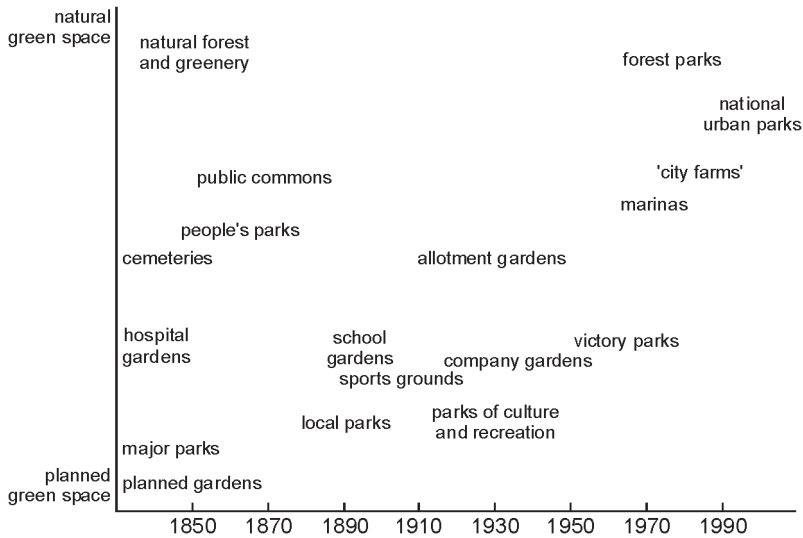
All these factors encouraged the production of a multivariety of green spaces in the modern city. Figure 1.1 sets out an attempt to create a preliminary typology of urban green spaces. Of course it is important to recognise that at the start of our period cities still often had significant areas of natural green space within their jurisdictions, mostly towards the periphery, and subsequent extensions of city territory often expanded

---

<sup>52</sup> H. Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1980); R.F. Wheeler, 'Organized sport and organized labour', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 13 (1978), 194–201; H. Meinander, *Towards a Bourgeois Manhood* (Helsinki, 1994), p. 181 *et seq.* See below, pp. 59, 180–81, 302.

<sup>53</sup> See below, pp. 88–9.

<sup>54</sup> For low land prices fuelling suburbanisation, see Olsen, *The City*, p. 22; J.W.R. Whitehand, 'Urban fringe belts – development of an idea', *Planning Perspectives*, 3 (1988), 49. See below, pp. 85–6, 110, 187.



**Figure 1.1 Preliminary typology of green spaces in the four cities**

these natural areas, at least for a while. But planned or artificial open spaces had a long urban history. Planned tree-lined walks or boulevards appear in the seventeenth century, as do royal parks, though these were only slowly opened to the public. In the period after 1700 new fashionable squares proliferated in London's West End, usually with small gardens at the centre, which were only open to residents. From the mid-nineteenth century, royal parks, increasingly accessible to ordinary people, were joined by a growing number of state or municipal parks and these became a major feature of all European cities.<sup>55</sup> Later more specialist parks proliferated: small local parks often linked to a railway station or public buildings, memorial gardens, and in Soviet Leningrad, as Alexei Kitaev shows in Chapter 16, impressive Parks of Culture and Rest and Victory Parks created to celebrate and promote Communist achievements and to offer recreation and relaxation to local people.<sup>56</sup>

After the 1890s the range of green space was enlarged by the spread of villa estates, which usually combined areas of private house gardens with planned public space, often by the roadside. At the same time, as

<sup>55</sup> P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660–1770* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 162–72; J. Summerson, *Georgian London* (London, 1945), pp. 41 *passim*. Conway, *People's Parks*, p. 16 *passim*.

<sup>56</sup> See below, pp. 299–305.

we shall see, the exact configuration of these villa estates varied between cities. London had only limited areas at Hampstead and Ealing before 1914, although many LCC council estates (and private suburban estates) of the inter-war years reflected a watered-down version of the principles of the Garden Suburb.<sup>57</sup> Stockholm too had both middle-and-lower class villa estates as Mats Deland describes in Chapter 7; in St Petersburg/Leningrad ideas failed to turn into reality, while in Helsinki there were various private and association estates, though on a modest scale, up to 1940. After the Second World War the planned suburb of Tapiola to the west of Helsinki was seen by British visitors as a replica of Welwyn Garden City, albeit a Welwyn set in heavy Finnish woodland. By the 1960s the provision of areas of green space in housing developments had become the norm.<sup>58</sup>

In the 1930s the surge of suburbanisation in London led to the first piecemeal attempts to create green belt zones to contain urban sprawl and provide leisure opportunities for residents. The creation of the Green Belt around the British capital only came after 1945 through the interventionist policies of the LCC.<sup>59</sup>

In addition to these larger-scale developments, the early twentieth century witnessed a major expansion of other types of open space: institutional, commercial and communal. Already in the nineteenth century gardens and green spaces were associated with churches and cemeteries, as we see in detail in St Petersburg (Chapter 14). No less important were hospitals, often in the twentieth century built in the suburbs with quite extensive gardens and grounds. Schools from the 1930s had playing fields to support the new competitive sports progressively in fashion. By this time private, commercial activity was significant, with companies supporting sports grounds for their workers and providing gardens and small parks beside the factory. In Stockholm several companies such as Marabou created sculpture and other parks for the edification and relaxation of their workers.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Olsen, *City*; Whitehand and Carr, *Twentieth-Century Suburbs*, p. 43. For nineteenth-century private gardens, see T. Longstaffe-Gowan, *The London Town Garden 1740–1840* (London, 2001).

<sup>58</sup> See below, p. 127 *et seq.* For St Petersburg, see below, p. 260 *et seq.*; for an early villa estate in Helsinki see L. Kolbe, *Kulosaari – Unelma paremmasta tulevaisuudesta* (Helsinki, 1988); T. Tuomi (ed.), *Tapiola: Life and Architecture* (Espoo, 2003); Royal Institute of British Architects, Library, X. (0.79) H. Report by M. Welbank, 1963.

<sup>59</sup> See below, p. 64 *et passim*.

<sup>60</sup> See below, pp. 251–2; for company sports grounds and gardens in London, see *London Society, Journal*, 138 (1929), 12; 184 (1933), 95; for Stockholm see below, pp. 149–51.

Among communal spaces probably the most numerous and ubiquitous were public sports grounds with football pitches, tennis courts, golf-courses and the like; some had been converted from areas of public parks, other were purpose-made. London already had a lot of sports ground by 1914 and other types including golf-courses proliferated in the inter-war years. Recent work by ecologists would suggest that golf-courses at least are major reservoirs of biodiversity.<sup>61</sup> Allotment gardens formed another important type of communal green space. In London they were usually limited to vegetable gardens and their numbers were boosted by government policy during the two world wars. In Stockholm areas of allotments emerged before 1914; influenced by German models they quite often had cabins and mixed vegetables growing with flowers. Helsinki followed the Swedish pattern but the main development here came during and after the Second World War. St Petersburg's dachas ringing the city outskirts followed a more individualistic Russian pattern.<sup>62</sup>

As we argued earlier, the transformation of urban space is never linear, always multidirectional. Not only have parks often turned into sports grounds, but inner-city parks, particularly small ones, have (in British cities at least) lost status and funding since the Second World War, as public usage has turned more to the urban periphery. Company sports grounds and gardens have declined in the later twentieth century, in part due to deindustrialisation and the changing leisure pattern of workers. Meanwhile London's allotments and school playing grounds have suffered from the pressure of rising land prices, municipal deficits and the demands of private developers. On the other hand, waterfront and brownfield developments, particularly imaginative in recent years, have given a new accession of green or blue-green space to central urban areas, including boating marinas and 'city farms'. Overall, there has been a constant flux of open space development in our cities.<sup>63</sup>

The expansion of planned space has almost always been at the expense

---

<sup>61</sup> The subject of sports grounds needs further research. On London, see below, pp. 32 *passim*; for golf-courses and biodiversity, see R.A. Tanner and A.C. Grange, 'Effects of golf courses on local biodiversity', *Landscape and Planning* (2005).

<sup>62</sup> Crouch and Ward, *Allotment*, pp. 71 *et seq.*, 135 *et seq.* See below for Helsinki and Stockholm, pp. 121–2, 197–8. For Russian dachas see below, pp. 249–50; also S. Lovell, 'Soviet exurbia: dachas in postwar Russia' in D. Crowley and S.E. Reid (eds), *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (Oxford, 2002), ch. 6.

<sup>63</sup> *Urban Parks and Urban Spaces*, pp. 59, 61; Crouch and Ward, *Allotment*, pp. 232, 260 (though the authors note in some London districts there has been

of the natural or unmastered land in our towns, that is, open fields, common lands, orchards, woods and forestland, and the like. In mid- and late Victorian London the threatened development of Wimbledon, Hackney Downs and other common lands was defeated by the Commons Preservation Society and other groups. But other battles over smaller pieces of land attracted less attention. Even so, it seems likely that natural spaces, especially on the outskirts of towns, have played a continuing part in the social and leisure activity of many ordinary inhabitants, as places to go to for picnics, games and drinking, away from the more regulated open spaces of the official city. Some quasi-natural spaces could be created fortuitously: as Garside shows, wartime bombing in London left for a while large unofficial open areas – bomb sites – which were used by young people in particular.<sup>64</sup>

The variety and fluidity of green space developments reflect, as we have stressed, the vital importance of the political process. Earlier we noted the institutional, governmental factors framing that process. But we also need to focus on the large cast of players engaged in formulating and implementing ideas and policy: the third major issue dealt with in the following chapters. Landscape gardeners, architects and planners have already been mentioned and figure prominently below. Thus in the case of pre- and post-war London, individual planners like Patrick Abercrombie had a crucial impact on open space patterning through his County of London and Greater London Plans (see Chapter 4). The role of these experts was underpinned not only by the growth of municipal bureaucracies and the spread of professionalisation, but by the heavy networking in which they engaged. Repeatedly we see how they worked closely together, and often, as in early twentieth-century Helsinki, they formed a small closed group. Women might be influential figures in Stockholm, as Catharina Nolin suggests in Chapter 6, but in general they were in a minority. Power came from links to international networks which enabled planners and other experts to appear as prophets of modernity; even in Finland they were regarded as heroic figures, pushing ideas which they had picked up at international conferences and exhibitions or foreign visits. Professionals often dominated the planning discourse up to the 1960s, with cosy links to politicians, but thereafter the debate in Western cities was increasingly politicised and more open, with politicians (in principle at least) needing to take more account of public opinion. In Soviet Leningrad local politicians and planners may have been able to maintain their private or internal dialogue somewhat

---

an increase of allotments). D. Nicholson-Lord, *The Greening of Cities* (London, 1987), pp. 150 *et seq.* See below, pp. 95–6.

<sup>64</sup> See below, p. 80.

longer, although here they had to contend with tight controls and interventions from Moscow.<sup>65</sup>

City politicians and professionals have often had a close relationship with commercial interests. In the late nineteenth century we find entrepreneurs and landowners having an impact on open spaces, as in imperial St Petersburg (see Chapter 15). In general, however, the fingerprints of private developers are not easy to track down, partly because of the growth of large national construction corporations in the late twentieth century. In the later twentieth century the civic relationship with developers has been formally recognised through the establishment of private-public partnerships for urban renewal in all our cities. In Stockholm in the 1990s developers joined with local councils to attempt to undermine plans for the National Urban Park. In present-day St Petersburg there are widespread complaints that developers have seized control of the planning process and are using it to sweep away areas of green space in the central city.<sup>66</sup>

Not just in recent decades but for much of the twentieth century a fourth player – voluntary associations or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – has frequently contested the efforts of private developers and their allies. Important in Britain since the eighteenth century, voluntary organisations played a vital role in opposing the development of London's squares and commons. In Stockholm and St Petersburg associations were heavily engaged in promoting recreation facilities and grounds before the First World War.<sup>67</sup> However, there can be no doubt, as several chapters below indicate, that associational activity has grown since the 1970s with the rise of explicitly environmental organisations and the general tendency noted earlier for NGOs to become part of the new regime of urban governance. In Stockholm the green movement had a major victory over politicians and experts in 1971 in the preservation of trees in a park in the central area.

---

<sup>65</sup> For the importance of Abercrombie as a planner, see Gerald Dix, 'Patrick Abercrombie 1879–1957' in G. Cherry (ed.), *Pioneers in British Planning* (London, 1981), pp. 103–130; M. Dehaene, 'Urban lessons for the modern planner: Patrick Abercrombie and the study of urban development', *Town Planning Review*, 75 (2004), 1–30. For networking by experts generally, see Hietala, *Services and Urbanization*, ch. 14. See below on women, pp. 121–3, 125; S. Graham and S. Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition* (London, 2001), p. 111 *et seq.*

<sup>66</sup> See below, pp. 281–2; Whitehand and Carr, *Twentieth-Century Suburbs*, p. 149; for Helsinki see below, pp. 170, 268–70; also pp. 212–13 (Helsinki).

<sup>67</sup> For the earlier history of voluntary organisations, see P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580–1800* (Oxford, 2000); see below, pp. 45–8, 61, 117, 118, 283–6.

The influence of the London Ecology Unit is noted by Garside, whilst environmental NGOs have resurfaced as a noisy lobby group in contemporary St Petersburg.<sup>68</sup>

Associations frequently mobilise and articulate the views of ordinary city-dwellers, but high levels of internal networking, professional vested interests and links with local authorities mean that they cannot be regarded as proxies of public opinion. Already in inter-war Stockholm grass-roots organisations were ‘slowly integrated into the domains both of government power ... and of market logic’. In the Nordic capitals since the 1990s the relationship of the city authorities with environmental organisations has become increasingly formalised with their incorporation into the planning process. But as Marjaana Niemi explains below in Chapter 12, formal procedures in Helsinki for recognising public opinion have remained problematic.<sup>69</sup>

One reason is that local residents may have different perspectives on open space than the NGOs or the other players mentioned above. As well, perhaps, as having private financial interests in the preservation of green space, there are indications that ordinary citizens and their families want to use open space in more informal and traditional ways; both to use planned space as natural space and to maintain access to what remains of natural space. At the same time, it is difficult to talk of ordinary residents as a group. A survey of Londoners’ use of open space in the 1960s showed marked variations between social and other groups: the heaviest users of public space were parents with children and older people going to watch sports. Gender is important in the way space is used and the range of usage also varies according to access to a motor-car. Ethnicity may be another significant variable in European cities. The complex range of contemporary uses of and attitudes to open space are explored in detail in Niko Lipsanen’s chapter on Helsinki (Chapter 13), which also brings to light the seasonal differences in open space activity in the city and the limited uses that people make of green space.<sup>70</sup>

Lurking in the background when we discuss the interplay of green space actors is a class dimension. In the early period, much of

---

<sup>68</sup> Nicholson-Lord, *Greening*, p. 100 *et seq.* For the radical green movement in Amsterdam, see E. Soja, ‘On Spuisstraat: the contested streetscape in Amsterdam’ in I. Borden et al. (eds), *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), pp. 292 *et seq.*

<sup>69</sup> See below, p. 225 *et seq.*

<sup>70</sup> In 1923 there were complaints in London of ‘the wanton disregard shown by many ... of the users of public open space’ with the destruction of plants and shrubs and the playing of games (*London Society, Journal*, 67 (1923), 1). K.K. Sillitoe, *Government Social Survey Planning for Leisure* (London, 1969), pp. 20, 21, 71, 90. See below, pp. 229–46.

green space, particularly parks, was designed by the elite for the elite classes; only slowly was there greater awareness of the needs of the lower-middle and working classes, leading to growing civic provision in most of our cities by the 1880s. Even so the political and planning process up to the 1960s, at least in Western cities, was dominated by an alliance of politicians, architects, planners and developers, drawn from the better-off middle classes; only in the 1960s and 1970s has there been a greater official openness to wider class representation. But still much of the green space developed at the end of the twentieth century – whether boating marinas, golf-courses or even nature parks – privilege the access of those better-off and mobile classes who reside in the suburbs, compared to poorer, inner-city residents.<sup>71</sup>

Overall then, the outline we have presented would argue that our North European cities have converged in many aspects of green space development, reflecting the effect of international ideas, shared structural problems and administrative trends. Even Soviet Leningrad followed many of the broad trends of our Western cities. At the same time, as we shall see in more detail below, local contexts and local agendas remain of paramount significance. Indeed, despite the pressures of international homogenisation at the start of the new millenium, the local dimension seems to have become of ever more critical significance.

There is no claim that the analysis in this book can be exhaustive, nor that our studies are necessarily typical of European cities in general. In terms of an agenda for the future, there is a need for more research on cities in Southern Europe which may have had different experiences of green space from their Northern cousins (in the Mediterranean city formal city parks and gardens appear the predominant form of green space). More study is required on smaller types of urban community, where trends may also be different. There is much more to be gained from examining in detail the many lesser-known types of green space, that is, cemeteries, hospital grounds, golf-courses and sports grounds. Greater dialogue with the growing body of urban ecologists clearly would be profitable. There is a great deal then still to be done, but the discussion in the following chapters – with detailed studies for each city, in turn, preceded by an introductory overview – may start to unravel the complexity of the subject and its central importance for understanding the modern and contemporary city.

---

<sup>71</sup> The contemporary development of leisure services for the better-off fits into the general argument of splintering and segmenting cities in Graham and Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism*.