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Urban Marginalities Throughout History

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Abstract
Throughout history, cities have been hubs for the development of new philosophical, cultural, political, economic, and technological ideas, thereby enhancing the quality of life for their inhabitants. However, the concentration of populations and activities in cities coupled with other socio-economic and political factors have engendered significant challenges, affecting vulnerable social groups in particular, and giving rise to urban marginalities. This study explores the historical trajectory of urban marginalities in Western cities. It examines their diverse manifestations from antiquity to the present day. This is carried out using a historical approach and focusing on three pivotal aspects that mark the evolutionary expansion of the Western city. It looks into how the physical drivers for the development of the city can give rise to its physical and social impact, which urban marginalities are part of. The research aims to elucidate the multifaceted mechanisms underlying the emergence of urban marginalities, and the many forms under which they manifested themselves since ancient times. Such research highlights the importance of understanding the historical context of cities when addressing their contemporary urban challenges.
Keywords: Urban marginalities; Western city; Physical drivers; Physical impact; Social impact.

1 Introduction

Throughout history, cities have been places of trade and exchange of ideas where daily life is led through trade, wealth creation cultural exchange and social interactions. Several researchers, including (Concilio et al., 2019; Engel et al., 2018; Moutsios, 2021; Vandecasteele et al., 2019), see cities as hubs for the development of new philosophical, cultural, political, economic, and technological ideas. They have served as centres of invention, ideologies, and socio-political movements, thereby enhancing the quality of life for their inhabitants. While the discussion in this paper relates to the Western city, this is by no means a claim that it is the only form of urban living that informed the development of cities worldwide to get us to where we are today. The choice of the western city is rather informed by the convenience and availability of published research material, as well as the scope of the study at hand. In this respect, Athens stands out as a significant example. It was the home to renowned philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who laid the foundations for Western philosophy (Gilje & Skirbekk, 2001; Lianeri, 2011), making the city the birthplace of Western philosophical thought.

The gravitational pull of urban centres, while fostering creativity and progress, has also precipitated formidable challenges (Amen, 2021; Amen et al., 2023; Jacob, 2023; Moretti, 2023)

. The concentration of populations and activities in cities has given rise to a plethora of issues (Bugliarello, 2006), ranging from managing internal and external migration flows to ensuring sustainable infrastructure development, combating pollution, and navigating the complexities of urban expansion and uncontrolled urbanisation amidst climate change, etc. (Nijkamp & Perrels, 1994; UN-Habitat, 2022; Vandecasteele et al., 2019). A case in point is the role of international migration in driving partly both the current and expected urban growth of developed countries (UN-Habitat, 2022). Moreover, cities grapple with societal dilemmas such as inequality and unaffordable housing, exacerbating challenges for vulnerable social groups and fostering spatial segregation processes that breed urban marginality, even in ostensibly advanced nations.

The genesis of urban marginality prompts inquiry into its origins(Amen & Kuzovic, 2018; Amen & Nia, 2021; Somoye & Akinwande, 2023; Terracciano et al., 2023). Is it an ancient urban quandary ingrained in the fabric of Western civilization since antiquity, or a contemporary phenomenon amplified by the exigencies of the 20th and 21st centuries? Delving into this question requires a nuanced exploration of the historical trajectory of urban marginalities in Western cities, tracing their diverse manifestations across epochs.

This study endeavours to examine the historical evolution of urban marginality, both as a concept and an urban phenomenon, dissecting its multifaceted forms and underlying drivers from antiquity to the contemporary era.

2 Marginality: From a concept to an urban phenomenon

The concept of marginality has been widely used in theoretical discourses and empirical research related to various inter- and transdisciplinary fields concerning urban environments.

Given the urgent necessity to meet the needs of urban dwellers, particularly those living on the margins, understanding marginality in the context of urban living becomes increasingly vital, particularly in the context of sustainable urban development.

In urban, socio-cultural, economic and environmental spheres, marginality is employed to describe and analyse conditions where certain individuals or groups encounter difficulties in accessing societal and spatial resources,

thereby limiting their full participation in social life (Gurung & Kollmair, 2007). Other researchers including; Andersen & Larsen (1998); Brodwin (2001); Davis (1997); Sommers et al., (1999) buy into this perspective. Before delving into the spatial and social dimensions of marginality in the urban context it is pertinent to review the evolution of the concept itself.

Among the modern thinkers who explored marginality through, a socio-psycho-cultural perspective, are Park and Stonequist who became associated with the Park-Stonequist, framework of marginality (Varghese & Kumar, 2022). In his work *Human Migration and the Marginal Man,* Park (1928) examined marginality from an individual perspective within an intercultural system. Park, in his work "Human Migration and the Marginal Man" (1928), examines marginality on an individual level within intercultural systems. He defines the "marginal man" as someone, often of mixed heritage, navigating life between two distinct cultural groups, resulting in an unstable personality (Park, 1928). Stonequist (1935) similarly views social and cultural conflicts as the root of marginal situations for group members.

Later studies have expanded the Park-Stonequist framework of marginality that relies on 'membership by birth' and 'dominance of culture' (Varghese & Kumar, 2022). Researchers such as Green (1947), Lewin (1948), Kerckhoff & McCormick (1955) and Mann (1958) propose that marginal personality traits stem from the marginal individual's relationship with both their own group and the dominant one, as well as the permeability of barriers between these groups and the marginal status of the group itself.

While these studies approach marginality from various angles (Varghese & Kumar, 2022, p. 25), they all share a focus on the subjective experience, leading to the concept of the 'marginal personality'.

Scholars like Dickie-Clark (1966) and Golovensky (1952) contested the notion of marginality solely as a personal psychological disposition. Instead, they argued that sociological dimensions are more pertinent. This perspective gave rise to the concept of 'marginal situation' as proposed by Antonovsky (1956). This concept prompted further exploration into the interconnected psychological and sociological dimensions of marginality. Bankovskaya (2014) acknowledged both dimensions but suggested that a sociological approach could address psychological aspects through processes of de-socialization and re-socialization. Within the sociological approach, Bankovskaya identified a 'functional' approach, which views marginality from the group's perspective, and an actionist approach, which focuses on the lack of participation. Germani (1980) described marginality as a lack of involvement in economic, political, and symbolic resource distribution decisions, leading to social exclusion. This approach emphasizes the group's isolation and impenetrable barriers rather than individual cultural conflicts. Other researchers, such as Nelkin (1969), supported this perspective. Later studies by von Braun & Gatzweiler (2014) defined marginality as a position where individuals are deprived of access to resources, opportunities, freedom of choice, and personal capabilities.

The 'marginal situation' described above resonates with the position of a number of researchers in the fields relating to urban studies and policy (Andersen & Larsen, 1998; Brodwin, 2001; Davis, 1997; Sommers et al., 1999) who see that marginality of groups causes both ***societal*** and ***spatial*** struggle to access resources and participation in life.

Sommers et al. (1999) propose a contemporary definition of marginality that reflects the concerns of those studying urban dwellers experiencing various forms of deprivation. They define socio-economic marginality as a condition where components of society and space within a territorial unit fall below expected levels of economic, political, and social well-being compared to the overall conditions in the territory. This definition of marginality encompasses two conceptual frameworks: societal marginality and spatial marginality. The former focuses on human dimensions such as social structure, culture, religion, and demographic characteristics (Gurung & Kollmair, 2007). The latter, also known as geographical or physical marginality, considers the physical relationship between the centre and margin, including physical location and distance (Goussal & Udrizar Lezcano, 2000; Leimgruber, 2004; Müller-Böker et al., 2004). This twin aspect framework can help the understanding an otherwise complex and multi-facetted urban phenomenon, particularly if we bear in mind that it is dynamic, scale dependent and often overlapping (of societal and spatial marginality. While indicators of urban marginality may vary, those proposed by Gurung & Kollmair (2007, p. 17) provide a solid starting point for studies related to marginality.

3 Material and Methods

By situating urban marginality within the continuum of Western urbanisation and examining the major configurations and upheavals that have characterized cities, the research aims to gain deeper insights into its origins, drivers, manifestations, and enduring impact on urban landscapes. Furthermore, through a historical lens, the research seeks to elucidate the intricate interplay of socioeconomic, and political factors that have shaped the contours of urban marginality over millennia.

To achieve this goal, our investigation will focus on three pivotal aspects that delineate the evolutionary expansion of the Western city. The architectural and urban features of the city are considered as physical drivers that have influenced the development of cities across different epochs. This facet delves into the architectural and urban references and characteristics of cities across different epochs by examining the physical drivers that have influenced the development of cities. In doing so, it aims to understand how urban morphology has evolved over time, shaping the emergence of urban marginalities.

When considering the physical impact of urban development, the work will analyse the tangible problems introduced by the development of cities and how they contribute to the formation of urban marginalities. This entails scrutinizing

issues such as overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, environmental degradation, and spatial inequalities that stem from urban expansion.

With regard to the social impact of urban development, the paper focuses on the intangible problems induced by architectural and urban development, alongside other circumstantial factors such as economic dynamics. It will explore how societal structures, cultural norms, economic disparities, and political regimes intersect with urbanisation processes to exacerbate or alleviate urban marginalities.

By examining these three keys described above, the research aims to unravel the intricate dynamics underlying the emergence and persistence of urban marginality throughout Western history.

4 Results

4.1 The emergence of urban marginality: Early beginning

Within the physical environment of the city, an image emerges that expresses the result of the accumulation of facts and phenomena, and each period of history leaves its marks on the urban space, which has become increasingly discontinuous. This discontinuity or fragmentation of space is due to the disaggregation/aggregation of groups and individuals, with each group or class clustering according to different criteria and requirements: economic, social, ethnic, racial, etc., in multiple spaces or neighbourhoods. New solidarities form, creating strong bonds among neighbours while also deepening the disconnect from other neighbourhoods and the wider city (Rojas, 2002). As a result, the sense of a unified city is lost.

During these transformations of the city, certain spaces that make up the city, become on the margins of urban life or excluded. Those spaces accommodate a population referred to as victims of urban marginality, or more bluntly, a marginalized population.

Starting by the analysis of the Greek city to the Renaissance city, this sub-section will analyse the process of embryogenesis of urban marginality from the ancient to the classical city.

Main architectural and urban features

The ancient Greek city is a universal model characterized by multiple elements compared to cities of its time or even other periods. It consists of two parts: The Acropolis, once a defensive hilltop and fortified citadel, evolved into either religious sanctuaries within cities, such as Athens, or were abandoned and left beyond city limits, as exemplified in Miletus (Morris, 1967). With population growth, the settlement expanded to the neighbouring plain, creating the second city, the Asty (Benevelo, 1980). The major urban element characterizing this part of the city was the agora, which was the city's central hub, bustling with daily social, business, and political activities, maintaining its traditional roles despite some specialization, and serving as a unified gathering place for all citizens (Wycherley, 1962). The perimeter of the lower city has an irregular shape due to the integration of the city into its natural environment. During the classical era, cities featured narrow streets primarily intended for pedestrian and pack animal traffic (Harouel, 1981). In new cities or extensions of old cities, streets are laid out at right angles, forming an orthogonal plan consisting of few main roads that run through the city longitudinally, and a very large number of secondary roads that intersect it transversely (Benevelo, 1980).

The Roman city, regardless of its civilian or military origin, has a regular quadrangular plan, longitudinally and transversally intersected by two main axes: the Cardo oriented North-South and the Decumanus oriented East-West, along with secondary axes parallel to these, which together form a regular and orthogonal road network producing a grid of quadrangular blocks as well.

At the intersection of the city's two main axes lies the forum or the praetorium in military camps. Serving as both a market, a meeting place, and the centre of public life, the forum constitutes the heart of the Roman city.

A significant space must be reserved for buildings dedicated to leisure: theatres, circuses, amphitheatres, and baths.

Medieval towns often form spontaneously around the cathedral (ecclesiastical town) or the castle (castellated town). Until the 12th century, these towns were created and grew according to two principles that opposed the Roman grid: linear development along a river or road, or radio centrically around the lord's castle or the church.

They are enclosed by walls for defensive reasons.

By the middle of the 12th century, new towns *"were built in most cases on a grid plan,..."* (LACAZE, 1988, p. 217). Urban space no longer carries higher meanings, and its composition and organization respond to the functional and cultural needs of the medieval community.

Streets in old towns are generally irregular, winding, and narrow, while in new towns, they are often wide and straight. The majority of neighbourhoods are residential. They surround the centre, consisting of tall houses closely clustered together, mostly built of wood.

Renaissance city: In contrast to medieval urban planning, which focuses on functional and cultural aspects in the production of urban space and does not rely on a predetermined or studied plan (we mainly refer to urbanism of the late Middle Ages, although the layouts of early medieval cities result from methodical land divisions), Renaissance urban planning, under the influence of Italy, considers art and aesthetics as the founding elements in the conception of urban spaces. Architects, military engineers, and even painters of this period sought idealism in their reflections to find solutions to urban problems, and they did so in several ways. This city is characterized, in its design, by its

regularity, urban geometric forms, symmetry, and rhythm in its architectural composition, its straight streets, and the connection between all these parts, etc.

Physical impact of urban development

Each ancient Greek city has its individual and specific character compared to others because each is inserted and integrated into its immediate natural environment without modifying it but rather by adapting to it, so that it forms a coherent ensemble between the artificial (the city) and the natural (the environment).

As the city progresses and matures, changes occur that could disrupt its balance. To counteract this, when the population increases, expansion doesn't just mean gradual territorial growth. Rather, it involves adding a new entity of similar or greater significance to the original city, or alternatively, establishing a colony in a distant land (Benevelo, 1980).

Rome, the capital of the Roman empire and a symbol of Roman power and urbanism, faced significant urban challenges despite its grandeur. Due to population growth, the city experienced irregular development, influenced by its rugged topography. This posed physical challenges in construction and urban planning. Real estate speculation led to the construction of multi-storey dwellings, divided into rental apartments called "insulae" in disadvantaged areas to meet the needs of the majority middle or lower class, but these structures were often unsanitary and poorly maintained. This division of space between the popular class and the wealthy class created obvious spatial inequalities. The rapid demographic growth and spatial constraints within the medieval city led to the emergence of new urban nuclei on the outskirts. This expansion resulted in a densification of medieval neighbourhoods with tall buildings and multi-family dwellings, as well as the proliferation of chaotic poor districts. The extension of the city walls became necessary to encompass these suburbs, leading to the irregularity of their curved layout. This swift urbanization brought about hygiene issues, including diseases, waste in the streets, and the absence of sewage systems.

The Renaissance spurred a quest for the ideal city, driven by the multitude of challenges faced in medieval urban centres. This epoch witnessed a remarkable surge in urbanization, marked by the burgeoning expansion of cities both in size and populace. Concurrently, there emerged notable advancements in infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and public buildings (Salzberg, 2023). Yet, amidst this ambitious pursuit, a series of paradoxes unfolded. On one hand, the vision of the ideal city existed alongside frequently disorderly spontaneous growth. On the other hand, aesthetic aspirations clashed with functional necessities concerning security and urban functionality. Despite the yearning for meticulous organization, real estate speculation frequently took precedence in construction endeavours (Delfante, 1997).

Social impact of urban development

In ancient Greece, the city encompassed both urban and rural areas, where all inhabitants were considered citizens and exercised their rights in full. Houses were distinguished by their simplicity, all of the same type and structure but varying in size. They were freely distributed in blocks, without forming distinct neighbourhoods based on social classes or the origins of the residents, thus avoiding any spatial or social segregation. This layout can be explained by the minimal emphasis placed on privacy and the significance of social life that unfolded in public spaces, such as the agora and the theatre. Despite the advent of democracy, power often remained in the hands of a privileged elite, excluding foreigners and slaves from political participation (Mumford, 1961). Furthermore, the economy of Greek city-states heavily relied on slave labour (Morris, 1967).

The expansion of Rome's urban landscape had dual repercussions, affecting both its physical environment and social dynamics. The city's expansion and political prominence caused a surge in population density, giving rise to pressing social challenges including housing shortages, congested streets for both pedestrians and vehicles, challenges in waste disposal, as well as difficulties in ensuring adequate water and food supplies, and even communal leisure opportunities (Benevelo, 1980). Despite substantial human and material resources, the Roman authorities grappled with these issues. Additionally, the evident socio-spatial disparities saw the affluent patrician class enjoying lavish living spaces, sharply contrasting with the lower class enduring impoverished conditions.

The medieval city was the centre of social, economic, and intellectual exchanges, while the countryside, focused on agriculture, evolved more slowly. Despite its development, the city still depended on the countryside for its food supply. Thus, the city-state controlled both the city, the countryside, and the intermediate space, but without granting equal rights to the inhabitants of the countryside. It continued to function as a "closed city," where its economic and political dealings may reach a national or global scale, but its policies remain primarily driven by the narrow interests of the urban populace (Benevelo, 1980). This inequality also persisted within the city, between the bourgeois who became capitalists and the inhabitants of the surrounding countryside or other regions. Even in the occupation of space, there was inequality. The wealthy classes occupied the city centre, while the poorer ones were relegated to the periphery, in less desirable neighbourhoods.

The Renaissance cities were hubs of cultural exchange, facilitating the free flow of ideas, art, and knowledge among individuals from diverse backgrounds (Salzberg, 2023). This cultural interaction contributed to the flourishing of arts, sciences, and humanism during this epoch, alongside a notable surge in urbanization. However, this rapid urban development of the time wielded significant social ramifications that shaped the fabric of the society. One of the most pronounced negative impacts was the emergence of social stratification (Ruggiero, 2008). The urban landscape often

reflected this social hierarchy, with the wealthy residing in the centre, close to important institutions, while the lower classes lived in the outskirts or poorer areas. This spatial segregation not only underscored the glaring disparities in wealth and privilege but also perpetuated social divisions within Renaissance society.

4.2 From socio-spatial segregation to urban marginality: the industrial city

The industrial revolution, which began in England in the 18th century and then spread throughout Europe and the United States, radically transformed cities (O'Brien & Quinault, 1993; Roberts, 2015), not only in their structure and size but also in their underlying logics. This section seeks to highlight how socio-spatial disparities became a salient and formed urban marginalities. The forthcoming sections will describe the main urban features of the industrial city and the physical as well as social impact of its urban development.

Main urban features of the industrial city

The 19th century marked a transition between traditional urban systems and new conceptions of the city (Delfante, 1997), where economic and demographic demands introduced factories into residential neighbourhoods and necessitated the removal of fortifications, which had become obstacles to urban development and infrastructure.
Cities expanded with grid plans supplemented by diagonals to break the monotony of the checkerboard road network. A new formula, the "linear city" advocated by the Spanish engineer Soria y Mata, emerged towards the end of the 19th century, characterized by a ribbon-like structure stretching through the countryside (Harouel, 1981).
With technological and scientific advancements, cities, especially capitals, became dynamic and grandiose ensembles, characterized by rigid blocks of real estate and a multitude of secondary and tertiary facilities and services made available to industrial businesses and workers. This proliferation also extended to urban and neighbourhood services for the entire population (Blumin, 2006).

Physical impact of urban development

The industrial revolution and urban growth in the 19th century had profound impacts on both rural (Roberts, 2015) and urban landscapes. The main consequences of these changes include the reconfiguration of central neighbourhoods through the creation of straight avenues and boulevards, as seen in Paris under Haussmann's influence, but also in Rome, Barcelona, Vienna, etc. (Angélil & Siress, 2012; Hall, 2003; Harouel, 1981). Other consequences include the rapid growth and rise of cities, often linked to economic or transportation factors (Blumin, 2006). The widespread use of building materials such as cement and steel played a decisive role in the creation of large urban areas, often lacking sensitivity, with uniform and monotonous urban spaces, devoid of local or regional peculiarities specific to each city, as well as pollution generated by industries. Concurrently, the development of transportation infrastructure facilitated the movement of goods and people, encouraging rural exodus to urban areas. These changes contribute to the emergence of the suburbs (Dennis, 1984) with improved means of transportation.
In summary, these changes resulted in major urban upheavals, with both positive and negative consequences, but mainly fostering the increased emergence of urban marginalities.

Social impact of urban development

The development of the industrial city had significant economic and social impacts, exacerbating existing physical problems (O'Brien & Quinault, 1993). During the second industrialization, rapid population growth, driven by technological and scientific advances, particularly in infrastructure, led to massive urbanisation and urban modernisation (Martínez & Mirás, 2009; Roberts, 2015). According to Roberts (2015), this period witnessed increasing level of class segregation, worsened by urban planning policies such as those implemented by Haussmann in Paris, which pushed lower-income populations to the outskirts (the *banlieue*) (Angélil & Siress, 2012). New economic conditions transformed professional activities, with the best example being peasants who were landowners becoming wage labourers or industrial workers, while housing shortages led to the proliferation of slums and deplorable workers' housing estates. This phenomenon was particularly evident in London city and all large industrial towns, where rapid urbanization and industrialization created a pressing need for affordable housing for the growing workforce (O'Brien & Quinault, 1993). This situation created socio-spatial segregation between a privileged bourgeois class and a deprived working class.
Living conditions were marked by hygiene and sanitation problems, with insufficient access to clean water and waste disposal issues, fostering the spread of diseases. Moreover, inadequate transportation further complicated movement in rapidly expanding cities.

4.3 Proliferation of Urban Marginalities: From the modern to the contemporary city

The transformations introduced by the Industrial Revolution gave rise to various phenomena in the 19th century, but their impact was only fully understood later, contributing to the emergence of urban marginality. From this perspective, we will explore how these new forms of urban marginality have manifested themselves in the late 20th and 21st centuries, in diverse yet predominantly Western national contexts.

Main urban features of modern-day cities

Modern urban planning has seen the emergence of various movements such as progressive, naturalistic, humanistic, and anthropological urbanism, aiming to reform existing cities and create new ones like Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities or Raymond Unwin's Hampstead Garden Suburb, which function as separate entity attached to London (Swenarton, 1983). These initiatives were part of a broader international effort, exemplified by organizations like CIAM (1928), which promoted modern urban planning through manifestos like the Athens Charter of 1933 (Pinder, 2005).

The hallmark of the modern city lies in its rationalist aesthetics and technological advancement. Figures like Le Corbusier advocated for functional zoning (Gans, 2006), while individuals such as Ford and Taylor championed rationalization to boost efficiency and output across industries, thereby benefiting consumers, manufacturers, and workers alike (Swenarton, 1983). This resulted in the development of advanced transportation infrastructure, reinforced concrete skyscrapers, green spaces, and upgraded road networks (Le Corbusier, 1987).

In the contemporary urban landscape, Western megacities have surpassed mere metropolitan status, reaching remarkable gigantism. This demographic and spatial growth is accompanied by strong economic development, particularly with the advent of globalization (Moonen et al., 2018). These contemporary cities have expanded beyond their traditional limits, with peripheral urban agglomerations now rivalling historic centres in size. Thanks to the evolution of urbanization, infrastructure development, and the predominant role of transportation, these new centres have emerged as significant centralities, sometimes even surpassing the old centres.

Physical impact of urban development

The modern city, shaped by architectural and urban planning advancements, has brought significant changes. Advocates of this movement envisioned urban utopias to transform social behaviours, address inequalities, and reshape urban environments.

Pinder (2005) extensively analyses utopian urbanism in Western Europe, where modern materials like concrete enabled construction of large urban complexes on the outskirts, such as France's “grand ensemble” to tackle housing shortages. However, these new neighbourhoods, predominantly inhabited by foreigners, faced criticism for their lack of character due to the standardization and later became marginalized zones.

Transportation, notably the automobile, fuelled urban sprawl and the development of suburbs. Initially located near railway stations, suburbs now extend into rural areas, attracting affluent families. Yet, they have been criticized for inefficiency and lack of authentic urban living. Efforts in the latter 20th century focused on revitalizing older neighbourhoods amidst uncontrolled urban development.

The urbanization process in 19th and 20th-century Europe and the United States differs significantly from current trends, as highlighted by Batisse & Brun (2008). Today, cities are witnessing densification within their cores and rapid expansion into peripheral areas, resulting in phenomena like peri-urbanization and conurbation. The modern city lacks a clearly defined boundary due to ongoing growth and expansion, leading to fragmentation and the formation of vast urban regions. This expansion strains transportation routes and contributes to various environmental issues, including increased CO2 emissions, climate change, deforestation, soil erosion, and pollution, as noted by Haughton & Hunter (2003).

Social impact of urban development

The transition from the modern to the contemporary urban era saw the emergence of new social trends that exacerbated existing urban societal imbalances and transformed city landscapes. Following World War II, immigration from Third World and war-torn regions, along with rural exodus due to agricultural mechanization, deepened social divisions within cities. These migrations led to housing crises characterized by overcrowding, the deterioration of old housing stock, and the emergence of shantytowns, symbolizing urban marginalization. Rising housing prices in urban centres prompted many residents to seek refuge in more affordable suburban areas, contributing to the decline of city centres’ prosperity and vibrancy.

The deterioration of central neighbourhoods and the proliferation of slums drove affluent families to relocate to suburban enclaves, further fragmenting the modern city and worsening urban marginalization, posing significant challenges for urban planners. This phenomenon is particularly evident in certain American cities, where marginalized urban areas, known as "ghettos," are characterized by spatial and social confinement, primarily inhabited by low-income African American populations. In several major metropolitan areas, Black populations gravitated towards city centres while Whites increasingly moved to the suburbs, exacerbating the impoverishment of city centres and their inhabitants, as seen in the case of Chicago between 1930 and 1960 (Besson, 1970).

5 Discussions

This article delves into the evolution of the Western city from ancient times to the contemporary urban landscape, encompassing its various forms of urban growth. Examining Western urban evolution from Antiquity to the Classical era reveals a recurring motif: the segregation among different layers of urban society and the relegation of certain social categories, influenced by various contextual factors specific to each era. Even in the Greek city, often associated with democracy and where rural inhabitants were considered full-fledged members of the city with equal rights as

urban dwellers, segregation, exclusion, and xenophobia persisted within this organized space. Ostracism was a reality in all democratically governed Greek cities (Fustel de Coulanges in: Rangeon, 1997).

Transitioning to the Roman city, urban marginalities become evident, characterized by the concentration of the poor population, mainly from small plebeian farmers, in the least valued quarters of the city. They resided in collective building complexes called "insulae" under deplorable conditions and at high risk of collapse and fire, deprived of the same rights enjoyed by the patricians. This form of socio-spatial segregation and marginality stemmed from several factors, including the policies of the Roman state, the continuous expansion of the city of Rome with a high population density, private entrepreneurs' land speculation, and the limitations of Roman means and techniques in addressing urban issues despite the empire's development.

Even during the medieval period, urban marginality persisted, with social disparities and inequalities in the rights and duties imposed on inhabitants. The affluent classes centralized in the heart of the city, while the poorest classes accumulated on the periphery in disorderly neighbourhoods, creating peripheral marginality. Rural exodus to the city, combined with urban space constraints and significant social gaps among inhabitants, contributed to this phenomenon, with bourgeois interests dominating urban politics and management.

Transitioning further, in the Classical Age city, despite a new economic and cultural context, new forms of urban marginalization emerged. The gaps between different social statuses widened, with increased threats to low-income groups during crises. State decision-makers often based their urban planning decisions on residents' social status, thus reinforcing socio-spatial divisions.

The Industrial Revolution profoundly altered cities, leading to a clear functional and spatial division between two types of neighbourhoods. The massive influx of rural migrants to cities in search of employment caused an unprecedented population surge. The initial rural migrants settled in the central districts, occupying attic apartments in bourgeois buildings, creating a "vertical segregation" (Merlin, 2012), while those without means were forced to live in barracks near factories, hindering urban development. Workers were later relocated to the periphery, where worker cities were built, reflecting their social status and resulting in "horizontal segregation" (Merlin, 2012). These increasingly dense cities facilitated population management and control while perpetuating existing social disparities. This division of urban space exacerbated urban margins, fostering land speculation and enriching the ruling classes at the expense of the increasingly marginalized working class. Distinctions in the type of housing offered to different categories of workers, as well as their spatial distribution in the new cities, reinforced socio-spatial inequalities. Workers were doubly marginalized, excluded both from the city and situated on the periphery of the new cities.

In the 20th century, modern urban planning emerged as a response to the challenges posed by industrialization, offering innovative solutions to improve urban life in a utopian context. However, these utopian visions led to the creation of new urban margins such as colonies, industrial towns, and suburbs, serving as experimental grounds. Additionally, the phenomena of metropolization and globalization contributed to a significant increase in the urban population, particularly favouring larger cities and towns. This demographic growth continues, with projections indicating that around 90% of Europe will be urbanized by 2080 (Moonen et al., 2018).

In post-World War II Europe, particularly in France, urban marginalization became a pressing issue. Shantytowns emerged on the outskirts of major cities in response to economic hardships and the influx of migrant workers, predominantly foreigners, who faced both ethnic and spatial marginalization. Although shantytowns persisted until the 1970s, large social housing projects were introduced. However, Immigrant families were initially housed in transit estates, perceived as inadequate and requiring adaptation before integration into social neighbourhoods. Later, the relocation of this population to suburban social housing, known as the Banlieue, resulted in neighbourhoods lacking essential infrastructure and services, exacerbating social disparities, segregation, and tensions. This gave rise to new forms of urban marginalities referred to by Wacquant (2007)as "advanced marginalities", representing the new regime of urban poverty and inequality emerging in advanced societies at the turn of the 21st century.

Wacquant (2007) emphasizes the French urban marginality's openness to its surrounding environment and its heterogeneous nature, shaped by factors such as class, ethnicity, or national origin, while also being sustained by a relatively strong presence of public institutions. This crisis extends beyond France, evidenced by similar phenomena in other European countries, like the "black" neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, which foster suboptimal living conditions and various forms of discrimination, especially affecting young people.

In the United States, ghettos represent products of social and spatial marginalization stemming from economic instability, persistent racial segregation, and governmental policies of social and urban segregation. Wacquant (2007) asserts that they exhibit distinct physical and social boundaries, with their own social hierarchies and concerns, often overlooked by the state.

All the previous points ensure the ghetto an internal ethical and social homogeneity, as well as an institutional duplication that does not exist in Europe, in other words, the constitution of a parallel society within the broader society (Wacquant, 2007) . Conversely, others like Lapeyronnie (2008) view ghettos as protective cocoons shielding residents from external threats while reinforcing a sense of alienation from the broader society.

6 Conclusions

Studies on urban marginality highlight the need to address issues of inequality, social exclusion, and spatial segregation that impact vulnerable social groups in urban areas. By delving into the historical trajectory of urban marginalities in Western cities, tracing its origins from ancient civilizations to the contemporary urban landscape, this paper seeks to shed light on the complexities of urban development and the challenges faced by marginalized communities. This endeavour contributes to a deeper understanding of urban dynamics, contemporary urban challenges and informs strategies for creating more inclusive and sustainable cities. The holistic approach adopted helps elucidate the complex interplay between physical urban form, social structures, and historical processes, leading to the evolving, multifaceted phenomenon that bis urban marginality in Western cities.

From ancient times to the contemporary era, cities have been both catalysts for progress and sites of deep-seated social and spatial disparities. The concept of marginality has evolved over time, from early socio-cultural perspectives to more nuanced sociological understandings encompassing societal and spatial dimensions.

Over time, marginalized groups have encountered obstacles in accessing resources and fully participating in urban life, perpetuating cycles of exclusion and segregation. From the Greek *polis* to the modern metropolis, the dynamics of urban marginality have shifted, yet the underlying issues persist. The advent of the Industrial Revolution, modern urban planning, and other catalysts ushered in new forms of marginalization, giving rise to slums, ghettos and banlieues, etc., where social and spatial boundaries reinforced inequalities.

In the contemporary era, globalization and urbanization continue to shape the landscape of marginality, presenting advanced forms of urban poverty and discrimination challenging conventional notions of inclusion and belonging. Understanding the historical trajectory of urban marginality is crucial for informing policies and interventions aimed at creating more equitable and inclusive cities.

In conclusion, the study of urban marginality underscores the need for holistic approaches that address both societal and spatial dimensions of inequality, while acknowledging its historical antecedents and contemporary manifestations. Sustainable urban development must prioritize the equitable distribution of resources, access to essential services, and the empowerment of marginalized communities. Furthermore, combating urban marginality necessitates concerted efforts at the local, national, and global levels, encompassing policy interventions, community engagement, and interdisciplinary research. By fostering inclusive urban environments that celebrate diversity and promote social cohesion, we can strive towards cities that serve as not only hubs of innovation and progress but also beacons of equity and opportunity for all inhabitants.

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Conflict of Interests

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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