

The Urban **divine** Divide (Cities in Trouble)

Rotterdam:

- Blocks of former warehouses and factories in the city
 - A lot of aimless young people walking around
 - Non- white men hanging around on the streets
- Atmosphere of economic sloth → a lot of people feel uncomfortable with atmosphere in the central city
- Middle class population flees to the suburbs
 - People with the lowest income mostly live in the historic centres (like Amsterdam. Rotterdam)
- Dutch cities have chased away middle- class

Until the 1960s European cities were homogeneous and powerful labour movements. The native class had achieved a relatively high standard of living.

Today many European cities have become increasingly minority. (Rotterdam, Amsterdam: more than 40 % of the population and more than 60% of the young people are non Dutch).

In former times they helped alleviate labour shortages on the factory floor, loading docks, that had developed in the 1960s.

Global competition, automation and shift to an information- based economy hastened to erosion. → unemployment among ethnic minorities runs as high as 20 – 30 %

The violence rate is above average!

The prejudice against foreigners rose to nearly 50 % in Belgium. In Germany it's only about 9 %!

Changing demographic and economic problems lead to large African, American and Latino ghettos. → unbridgeable class and racial division. They are plagued by crime, unemployment and other social pathologies.

Some years ago US- cities were in trouble:

→ NYC was once virtually bankrupt, crime- ridden and seen as hopelessly decaying

→ nowadays: American cities are becoming chic

↔ European cities have become more troubled

- no immigrant- led economic riches because of strict regulations and high tax rates
- immigrants live on welfare → don't take jobs
- many people move from the countryside to the cities → resulting problem: too many people in the cities
- cities are totally depend on the federal government (especially the Dutch)