



# Contemporary Perspectives on Jane Jacobs

*Reassessing the Impacts of an  
Urban Visionary*

**EDITED BY DIRK SCHUBERT**

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON  
JANE JACOBS

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

# Contemporary Perspectives on Jane Jacobs

Reassessing the Impacts of an Urban Visionary

Edited by

DIRK SCHUBERT

*HafenCity University Hamburg, Germany*

ASHGATE

© Dirk Schubert 2014

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher.

Dirk Schubert has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as the editor of this work.

Published by  
Ashgate Publishing Limited  
Wey Court East  
Union Road  
Farnham  
Surrey, GU9 7PT  
England

Ashgate Publishing Company  
110 Cherry Street  
Suite 3-1  
Burlington, VT 05401-3818  
USA

[www.ashgate.com](http://www.ashgate.com)

#### **British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

#### **The Library of Congress has cataloged the printed edition as follows:**

Schubert, Dirk.

Contemporary perspectives on Jane Jacobs : reassessing the impacts of an urban visionary / by Dirk Schubert.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4724-1004-7 (hbk) -- ISBN 978-1-4724-1005-4 (ebk) -- ISBN 978-1-4724-1006-1 (epub) 1. Jacobs, Jane, 1916-2006. 2. City planning. 3. Urban renewal. I. Title. HT166.S3163 2015

307.1'216--dc23

2013028027

ISBN 978 1 4724 1004 7 (hbk)

ISBN 978 1 4724 1005 4 (ebk – PDF)

ISBN 978 1 4724 1006 1 (ebk – ePUB)

# Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>About the Editor</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>About the Contributors</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>xvii</i>
<i>Timeline</i>	<i>xix</i>

## **PART I INTRODUCTION**

1	50 Years: “The Death and Life of Great American Cities” <i>Dirk Schubert</i>	3
---	---	---

## **PART II JANE JACOBS: ROOTS, BASICS AND IMPACTS**

2	Central Elements of Jane Jacobs’s Philosophy <i>Roberta Brandes Gratz</i>	13
3	Jane Jacobs and the Self-Organizing City <i>Mary Rowe</i>	21
4	Jane Jacobs and the Paradigm Shift: Toronto 1968–1978 <i>Richard White</i>	31

## **PART III JANE JACOBS “A RADICAL THINKER” – “CITIES FIRST”**

5	Visual Order and Perceptual Form: Contrasting Jane Jacobs’s Urban Design Rejection with Kevin Lynch’s Approach <i>Jörg Seifert</i>	57
6	Jane Jacobs and Sharon Zukin: Gentrification and the Jacobs Legacy <i>Madeleine Lyes</i>	71
7	Taking Sides with a Man-eating Shark: Jane Jacobs and the 1960s “Density Turn” in Urban Planning <i>Nikolai Roskamm</i>	83

**PART IV JANE JACOBS AND HER IMPACT ON URBAN  
PLANNING OUTSIDE NORTH AMERICA**

- |    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 8  | More than Building Reeneration: The Shift Towards Gentle Urban<br>Renewal in Vienna<br><i>Christiane Feuerstein</i>                         | 95  |
| 9  | Jane Jacobs, City Planning and its Rationale in Spain<br><i>José Luis Sáinz Guerra</i><br><i>Translation from the Spanish by Alan Hynds</i> | 107 |
| 10 | Beyond Diversity: Jacobs's <i>Death and Life</i> and its Relevance for<br>Dutch Urban Regeneration Policy<br><i>Gert-Jan Hospers</i>        | 125 |
| 11 | Jane Jacobs's Perception and Impact on City Planning and Urban<br>Renewal in Germany<br><i>Dirk Schubert</i>                                | 137 |
| 12 | Jane Jacobs and the Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal<br><i>Christopher Klemek</i>  | 171 |

**PART V "WE ARE ALL JACOBSEANS" – ARE WE?**

- |    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| 13 | Jane Jacobs 2.0 – Old Systems Need New Ideas: New Forces of<br>Decline and Regeneration<br><i>Birgit Dulski and Gerben van Straaten</i>                | 185 |
| 14 | "That is the way the cookie crumbles" – New Paradigm Changes<br>in Times of Globalization and Deregulation<br><i>Friedhelm Fischer and Uwe Altrock</i> | 199 |
| 15 | Urban Ecology as the New Planning Paradigm: Another Legacy<br>of Jane Jacobs<br><i>Stephen A. Goldsmith</i>  | 225 |
| 16 | What Would Jane Jacobs Have Said and Her Relevance for Today<br>and Tomorrow<br><i>Klaus Brake</i>   | 233 |
| 17 | Jane Jacobs's Hamburg Lecture, 1981  | 241 |
|    | <i>Index</i>   | 251 |

# List of Figures

1.1	Bouquet of flowers before Hudson Street 555	3
2.1	Jane Jacobs with the “Order of Canada”-medal at the Vincent Scully Prize celebration 2000 in Washington, DC with Roberta Brandes Gratz	14
3.1	Jane Jacobs chatting	22
3.2	Enabling self-organization	25
3.3	Jacobs’ principles	26
3.4	Continuum of words	26
4.1	Toronto’s regional expressway system, as built and proposed in the 1950s	33
4.2	Map of physical conditions of east downtown Toronto, 1961	37
4.3	Aerial photograph of St. Lawrence neighborhood taking shape, about 1980	40
4.4	Drawing of “Physical Form: The Central Area Pattern,” about 1975	44
5.1	Differences and intersections: <i>The Death and Life of Great American Cities</i> by Jane Jacobs and <i>The Image of the City</i> by Kevin Lynch	58
5.2	Jane Jacobs and Kevin Lynch at the Urban Design Criticism Conference 1958	68
8.1	Urban redevelopment project in Alt-Erdberg, 1956–58	97
8.2	Demonstration of architects and architecture students preventing the demolition of the city rail station designed by Otto Wagner at Karlsplatz, 1969	99
8.3	Festival for All, Spittelberg, 1973	100
9.1	Cover of the first Spanish edition of Jane Jacobs’ book <i>Death and Life of Great American Cities</i> (1967)	109
9.2	The cover of Jane Jacobs’ book <i>The Economy of Cities</i> in its Spanish version (1971)	111
9.3	The cover of the book <i>From Rural to Urban</i> , in its Spanish version, by Henri Lefèbvre (1971)	113
9.4	A patio in the Galaxia residential complex in the centre of Madrid	115
9.5	The cultural “boxes” that contain no culture: The Millennium Dome in Valladolid	121
11.1	Jane Jacobs books published in German: <i>Tod und Leben großer amerikanischer Städte</i> (1963) and <i>Stadt im Untergang – Thesen über den Verfall von Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft</i> (1970)	140
11.2	Cover of German book: <i>Urban Renewal for Whom?</i> (with incorrect spelling: <i>Büro für Stad(t)sanierung und soziale Arbeit</i> ), Berlin 1970	151

11.3	Project of “Alster Zentrum” of housing company Neue Heimat in Hamburg, supported by Victor Gruen, with a planned demolition of a whole urban district	154
13.1	Office stock (dark) and office jobs (light) in the Netherlands during the period 1992–2008	186
13.2	Vacancies of new buildings (dark) and existing buildings (light) in the Netherlands in the period 1995–2009	190
13.3	Illustration of a 100-year bull market: Unused new buildings (dark) and unused existing buildings (light)	191
13.4	Setting Granville Island Vancouver, with view towards downtown	192
13.5	Granville Island Vancouver, activities under the bridge	193
13.6	Blacksmith at work, Tilburg Smederij 013 re-use of industrial area	195
13.7	Public at Spoorzone Tilburg, Netherlands	196
14.1	Image and reality: Capitalist profiteering in the cloak of a non-profit housing association (1986)	201
14.2	Berlin: Bourgeois and punk in church united against urban renewal through demolition (1984)	202
14.3	Protest poster analyzing the interaction of Berlin interest coalitions (1968)	203
14.4	Berlin’s Palazzo Farnese: Aldo Rossi’s icon of postmodern façade mimicry (1993) – How mixed and historic can you get?	207
14.5	Tübingen, Französisches Viertel – an “ideal” Jacobsean neighborhood: Vibrant, socially and functionally mixed, pedestrian-friendly	214
14.6	Berlin Potsdamer Platz	216
14.7	The Coventry City Center Master Plan as an exemplar of hybrid mode development	217

# About the Editor

**Dirk Schubert** is professor for Urban Planning, Comparative Planning History, Housing and Urban Renewal at the HafenCity University Hamburg. His research focuses on urban history, planning history, history of housing and urban renewal, as well as studies on the revitalization of harbor and waterfront areas in seaport regions and on city/port interfaces. His latest books are *History of Urban Renewal in Hamburg and London* (1997), *Changes in Port and Waterfront Areas Worldwide* (3rd edition, 2008), *Housing in Hamburg – A Guidebook* (2005) (with Uwe Altröck) *Hamburg – Growing City*, and (with Axel Schildt) *Cities between Growing and Shrinking* (2008). He has published in English, Turkish, Chinese and French periodicals and journals on housing, urban renewal, planning history, waterfront transformations and transatlantic comparisons of planning ideas.

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

# About the Contributors

**Uwe Altrock** is professor of urban regeneration and planning at the University of Kassel, Germany, and holds a doctorate in urban planning. From 2003 to 2006 he was junior professor of urban structures at Brandenburg University of Technology in Cottbus and from 2002 to 2003 invited professor for neighborhood development at Hamburg University of Technology. Uwe Altrock is co-editor of the *German Yearbook of Urban Regeneration* and of the planning theory book series *Planungsrundschau*. His fields of research are urban governance, mega cities, urban regeneration and planning, planning theory and planning history.

**Klaus Brake** is guest professor of urban and regional development at the Center for Metropolitan Studies (CMS) at Berlin University of Technology. In 1973 he earned a doctorate from the University of Oldenburg, Germany. From 1975 to 2000 he was professor of urban and regional development at the University of Oldenburg. Since 2000 he has been working as a consultant in Berlin. His academic work focuses on urban development and specifically the interaction of economic and spatial aspects, as well as current strategies of knowledge-based development and civil empowerment.

**Birgit Dulski** is a senior researcher at the Center for Sustainability of the Nyenrode Business Universiteit in the Netherlands. She studied architecture and urban planning at the University of Kaiserslautern, Germany, Hamburg University of Technology and Delft University of Technology, Netherlands, where she obtained her diploma (architecture) in 1995. Since April 2008 Birgit has been working at the Center for Sustainability and combines this function with a career as senior consultant at the Dutch Institute for Building Biology and Ecology (NIBE) where she is involved in the research of sustainable cultural heritage. Since 2001 Birgit Dulski has led various projects, initiatives and research projects on the subject of sustainable preservation of historic and characteristic buildings and has participated in architectural competitions where sustainability plays an important role.

**Christiane Feuerstein** is an architect, author and urban researcher in the fields of urban renewal, housing and architecture and urbanism in an ageing society. Since 1999 she has formulated several architectural concepts, competitions, and exhibitions as well as numerous research projects, lectures and publications. Most recent projects include a proposal for a block renewal scheme in Vienna and the exhibitions “The Soft Wilds: The Vienna Model of Soft Urban Renewal” (Vienna 2009) and “Wann begann temporär? Frühe Stadtinterventionen und sanfte

Stadterneuerung” (kunsthau muerz, 2008) together with Angelika Fitz. Her publications include papers in edited volumes as well as the books *Vom Armenhaus zur sozialen Infrastruktur: Altersversorgung in Wien* (Enzyklopädie des Wiener Wissens, 2009), *Altern im Stadtquartier: Formen und Räume im Wandel* (Passagen Verlag, 2008), and together with Angelika Fitz, *Wann begann temporär? Frühe Stadtinterventionen und sanfte Stadterneuerung* (Springer Verlag, 2009). From 1999 to 2003 she was assistant lecturer at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and has been a lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences in Graz since 2005.

**Friedhelm Fischer**, born 1947, studied urban planning in Aachen, Berkeley, Canberra, and Manchester. At the University of Aachen, where he received his doctorate, he took an additional degree in English/American Literature. At HafenCity University in Hamburg, he held the position of Professor for Culture and History of the Metropolis (2007–2008). He is currently a staff member of the department of urban regeneration at the School of Architecture, Urban Planning and Landscape Planning, University of Kassel, and is responsible for the subject planning history. In addition, he has lectured and conducted research in Aachen, Berkeley, and Canberra. He has also performed consultancy work in various cities in Germany and Australia. His research has focused on international comparisons between Germany, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. His current research topics include modern and postmodern development strategies in Canberra, Coventry, and Kassel.

**Stephen A. Goldsmith** is a craftsman, sculptor and the founder of Artspace, a NGO that develops live/work space, childcare, educational facilities, and incubator space for non-profit agencies in Salt Lake City, Utah. His work evolved across disciplines which included being appointed the first artist/planning director for a major US city, a role in which he served during the 2002 Winter Olympic Games. For the 2002 Olympics he produced an international exhibition and symposium titled “The Physical Fitness of Cities: Vision and Ethics in City Building” in collaboration with Moshe Safdie and Samina Queraeshi. He is currently teaching at the University of Utah’s College of Architecture and Planning, and is the University’s Professor for Sustainability. He is Director of The Center for the Living City, an organization founded in 2005 with the support and encouragement of Jane Jacobs, and founder of the Temporary Museum of Permanent Change, a museum without walls in downtown Salt Lake City. His book, *What We See: Advancing the Observations of Jane Jacobs*, co-authored with Lynne Elizabeth, won the Jane Jacobs Urban Communication Prize in 2010.

**Roberta Brandes Gratz** is an award-winning journalist, urban critic and author of *The Battle For Gotham: New York in the Shadow of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs* (2010). Her earlier books have become essential reading for urbanists seeking to understand what works and what doesn’t work in the regeneration of cities. *The Living City: Thinking Small in a Big Way* (1989) is considered a

classic and *Cities Back from the Edge: New Life for Downtown* illustrated the emerging trends now obvious to all. In 2003 she was appointed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg to the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission and to the Sustainability Review Board in 2010. In 2005, in collaboration with Jane Jacobs, Ms. Gratz and a small group of accomplished urbanists founded The Center For the Living City to advance Jacobs's work. She also wrote a report in 2001 for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, "A Frog, A Wooden House, A Stream and A Trail: Ten Years of Community Revitalization in Central Europe."

**Gert-Jan Hospers** teaches economic geography at the University of Twente and is professor of place marketing at the Radboud University Nijmegen, both in the Netherlands. In his research on urban and regional development Hospers builds on the work of Jacobs, whom he visited in her home in Toronto in 2004. Together with Simon Franke he arranged the Dutch translation of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (2009) and co-edited the volume *De Levende Stad: over de Hedendaagse Betekenis van Jane Jacobs* (2009) on Jacobs's relevance for today. In addition, he is chair of Stichting Jane which advances the ideas of Jacobs in the Netherlands by means of publications and seminars.

**Christopher Klemek**, Ph.D., teaches urban history in the District of Columbia for George Washington University, while writing for the journals of the American Planning Association, the Society of Architectural Historians, *Daedalus*, and *Dissent*, among others. His book comparing the fate of older industrial cities in Europe and North America, *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal: Postwar Urbanism from New York to Berlin*, won the 2011 Davidoff prize from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. He has been a visiting scholar at the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, as well as a Schwartz Fellow at the New-York Historical Society. In 2007, he co-curated the exhibition *Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York*, for the Rockefeller Foundation and the New York Municipal Art Society. In 1997, he co-founded Poor Richard's Walking Tours, a public history enterprise in Philadelphia, and has since been featured as a guide to cities on radio, television, and in print media.

**Madeleine Lyes**, Ph.D., is a lecturer in Film Studies at Trinity College Dublin and in American Studies at University College Dublin. Her research focuses on questions of civic engagement in urban spaces, the history of urbanism in the United States and Ireland, and the concept of urbanity. This focus is drawn from her doctoral work (UCD Clinton Institute for American Studies) on the *New Yorker* magazine and its cultural footprint within New York City, 1948–76. Her interest in public urban space also informs her work with DublinIntellectual, a civic initiative in Dublin which seeks to champion the work of Arts and Humanities scholars in the public sphere. She runs an events series called "City Intersections" which provides a forum for cross-platform interdisciplinary approaches to urban challenges in Dublin city today. The project's public and scholarly remit also

supports a research project on contemporary urban discourse in Dublin, fostering collaborations between numerous academic and cultural projects within the city.

**Nikolai Roskamm**, Ph.D., is an urban researcher and urban planner working at the Institute of Urban and Regional Planning at the Technical University Berlin, Germany. He is a member of [www.urbanophil.net](http://www.urbanophil.net). His main fields of interest are urban studies, political theory, bottom-up initiatives and current Berlin urban planning discourses. His doctoral thesis (Bauhaus Universität Weimar) was a critical analysis of the concept of density (published by Transcript-Verlag, 2011: *Dichte. Eine transzdisziplinäre Dekonstruktion*).

**Mary W. Rowe** is currently Vice President, Strategy and Partnerships, for the Municipal Art Society of New York City ([www.mas.org](http://www.mas.org)). She recently returned to the northeast United States after several years working in philanthropy, most recently coordinating the New Orleans Institute for Resilience and Innovation, a loose alliance of initiatives that emerged in response to the systemic collapses of 2005. Previous positions include: a fellowship and subsequent staff position as Vice President, Urban Programs with the blue moon fund of Charlottesville, Virginia, to focus on self-organization in cities as the underpinning of urban and regional social, economic and environmental resilience; President of Ideas that Matter, a convening and publishing program based on the work of Jane Jacobs based in Toronto. She is a contributor to several volumes on urban life, with a particular interest in self-organization.

**José Luis Sáinz Guerra**, degree in Architecture from the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid and Ph.D. in Architecture from the Universidad de Valladolid. Professor in City Planning and Land Management in the Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura in Valladolid since 1981. He has published several books on the historic city, such as *La génesis de la plaza en Castilla durante la Edad Media*. He has also worked on other subjects, such as council housing, including the published work *Las sedlungen alemanas de los años veinte*. Frankfurt, Berlín, Hamburgo. He has participated in studies concerning the future city planning of Valladolid, with such publications as *Valladolid en la Encrucijada or La remodelación de la ciudad europea*, and “The real estate tsunami in Spain: the administration of urban growth in the case of Arroyo de la Encomienda and Valladolid, Spain” in *Urban Research & Practice*, March 2010.

**Jörg Seifert**, Dr. Phil., is a senior lecturer at HafenCity University Hamburg and has been working as a freelance author since 2004. He studied architecture in Constance and Lyon and was research fellow at the Institute for Applied Sciences Constance from 2002 to 2006. In 2010 Seifert earned his Ph.D. from the European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder) (Prof. Dr. Christoph Asendorf). Recent publications include *Stadtbild, Wahrnehmung, Design: Kevin Lynch revisited* (Basel/Gütersloh/Berlin 2011) and *urbanRESET: Freilegen immanenter*

*Potenziale städtischer Räume / How to Activate Immanent Potential of Urban Spaces* (edited with Angelus Eisinger, Basel/Boston/Berlin 2011).

**HG (Gerben) van Straaten** was born in 1962 in the Netherlands. He trained at the Faculty of Law, University of Groningen and started his professional career as an urbanist in Canada, working in the spirit of Jane Jacobs. He established his company Walas Concepts Inc in 1992. Since 2000 he has been working in the Netherlands as well as Continental Europe. His specialty is bottom-up urban developments, brownfield regenerations, and the reuse of industrial and urban heritage. His focus is on the programming of mixed-use and multifunctional operations. Place making, people towns and gradual development and finance have all resulted in best practice. HG van Straaten was part of the ‘Creative Cities’ taskforce in the Netherlands, and co-author of *Nieuwe ideeën voor oude gebouwen* (Saris et al., 2008) (New ideas for old buildings). The best practices of 12 Dutch cities were followed up and researched by the taskforce. HG van Straaten and his company Walas have recently worked on several projects in the Netherlands, including De Creatieve Fabriek, Hengelo, Hakagebouw, Rotterdam, and the former CBS complex in Heerlen. He is a guest lecturer on many occasions and author of the Earth Charter Cities Manifesto (2010).

**Richard White** is a Canadian historian and university lecturer currently writing a history of urban and regional planning in Toronto since the Second World War. He received his Ph.D. in Canadian History from the University of Toronto in 1995 with a thesis on the professional careers of two nineteenth-century Canadian civil engineers, subsequently published as *Gentlemen Engineers: The Working Lives of Frank and Walter Shanly* (University of Toronto Press, 1999), and he went on to publish several other works on the social and cultural history of Canadian engineering, including a history of the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Engineering, *The Skule Story: The Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering, 1873–2000* (UTP, 2000). He worked for a time as research director of the Toronto-based Neptis Foundation, a private foundation that supports research in the study of urban growth, and in that capacity he began his own research into the history of Toronto planning, which subsequently served as the basis for several academic papers and public lectures. In 2008 he completed a booklet on the history of Toronto’s regional planning, published by the Foundation in its series on the new Growth Plan for the Toronto region. He has recently published two articles in *Journal of Planning History* – a review essay “Sprawl the View from Toronto,” and “Jane Jacobs and Toronto, 1968–1978.” His comprehensive Toronto planning history is due to be completed this year. Richard White is currently a part-time lecturer at the University of Toronto Mississauga, where he teaches courses in Canadian history, and an active Research Associate of the University of Toronto Cities Centre.

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

# Acknowledgments

The idea of this project came out of a visit to Jane Jacobs house in New York, Greenwich Village Hudson Street 555 in 2010. I saw a bouquet of flowers with a dedication:

From this house a woman changed the world.

Many people helped in the shaping of this book and many colleagues provided support. Thanks go to all those colleagues who were involved for their time, energy, patience, and expertise reflecting Jane Jacobs ideas and her impact on urban planning and urban regeneration.

The project and the publication of the proceedings were generously supported through financial assistance from the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung Köln. The HafenCity University Hamburg, the International Planning History Society (IPHS) as well as the Gesellschaft für Stadt- und Urbanisierungsforschung (GSU), the Hamburg Museum and the Federation of German Architects Hamburg (BDA) also helped to make the project possible.

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

# Timeline

- 1916 Born as Jane Butzner in Scranton, Philadelphia
- 1935 Moved to New York
- 1944 Married the architect Robert H. Jacobs
- 1947 Purchase of house in Greenwich Village, 555 Hudson Street
- 1952–1958 Worked with the Architectural Forum
- 1956 First Harvard Urban Design Conference
- 1957 Conference on Urban Design Criticism
- 1958 Article: “Downtown is for the People”
- 1961 Book: “Death and Life of Great American Cities”
- 1968 Moved to Toronto
- 1969 Book: “The Economy of Cities”  
Article: “Strategy for helping Cities”
- 1980 Attended Great Cities of the World Conference, Boston  
Book: “A Question of Separatism: Quebec and the Struggle over Sovereignty”
- 1984 Book: “Cities and the Wealth of Nations: Principles of Economic Life”
- 1993 Book: “Systems of Survival: A Dialogue on the Moral Foundation of Commerce and Politics“
- 2000 Book: “The Nature of Economics”
- 2004 Book: “Dark Age Ahead“
- 2006 Died aged 89 in Toronto  
New York: Jane Jacobs: A Public Celebration
- 2007 New York: Exhibition: Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

PART I  
Introduction

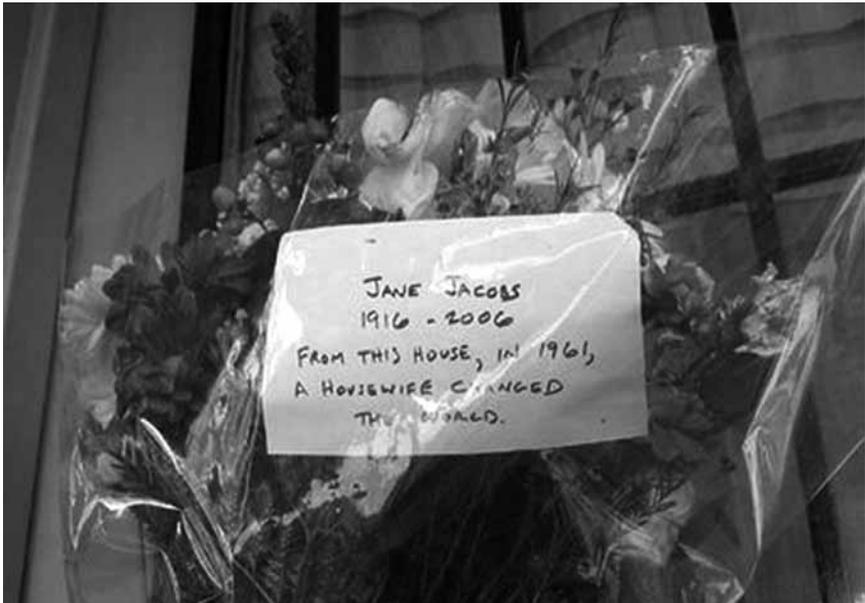
*This page has been left blank intentionally*

# Chapter 1

## 50 Years: “The Death and Life of Great American Cities”

Dirk Schubert

In 1981 the editor of this volume had the pleasure to hear a lecture by Jane Jacobs in Hamburg. At that time the great expectations about radical transformations of historic cities through modernistic principles came to an end. A shift to conservation and rehabilitation was on the agenda not only in German but also in many European cities. Jane Jacobs’s advice “don’t make big plans,” reversing Daniel Burnham’s famous statement for the Chicago Plan of 1909, met exactly the zeitgeist. Nevertheless, the final idea of preparing a publication based on cross-disciplinary approaches came to me during a visit to her house in New York, Greenwich Village, Hudson Street 555, in 2010, where I saw a bouquet of flowers with a dedication: “From this house a woman changed the world.” This was one



**Figure 1.1** Bouquet of flowers before Hudson Street 555

Source: © Dirk Schubert (1998).

of many good reasons for re-reading Jane Jacobs's book. However, it also raised some questions: How can we contextualize her book more than 50 years later, are there relevant lessons to be learned for cities and planners, what kind of impact can we note, why and how should some of her ideas be updated?

Jane Jacobs's famous book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), begins:

This book is an attack on current city planning and rebuilding [...] It is an attack, rather, on the principles and aims that have shaped modern, orthodox city planning.

With this radical approach she challenged the discipline of urban planning. Jane Jacobs developed a critique on the "almighty" planners and undermined their professional competence. She calls planning a "pseudoscience," but how could a layperson like Jane Jacobs, who was not part of any scientific networks, develop new paradigms? Today many theorists and practitioners are thinking about a new paradigm shift in the current period of rapid globalization and neoliberal as well as deregulated approaches to planning. In this context it is useful to reflect on the background and context of paradigm shifts and their chief players and theoreticians.

In 2011 we celebrated this famous book's 50th anniversary. Ever since her first book was published there has been discussion on whether she should be called "urban hero" or "trouble maker." She is variously referred to as "Queen Jane," an "urban visionary," "anti planner" or even "urban guru." We are now in a position to reflect upon her impact on urban planning and urban renewal in both North America and Europe. Within a decade or so after publication most of her ideas had become generally accepted. Probably her most important ideas were those about (higher) densities, pedestrian orientation and mixed-use developments which had not been feasible beforehand in North America because of zoning regulations. The bulldozer approach to old buildings was reversed and transformed into an attitude of conservation which incorporated her idea "older buildings for new ideas."

Meanwhile a flood of publications has appeared about her and her book.<sup>1</sup> Around 100 editions of her book have been published to date and it is still available.

---

1 Jacobs, J. 1992. *Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books, Introduction, especially pp. 4-7. Some of the latest publications are: Brandes Gratz, R., 2010. *The Battle for Gotham, New York in the Shadow of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs*. New York, NY: Nation Books; Klemek, C., 2007. Jane Jacobs' Urban Village: Well Preserved or Cast Adrift? *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 66(1), pp. 20-23; Klemek, C., 2007. Placing Jane Jacobs Within the Transatlantic Urban Conservation. *Journal of American Planning Association*, 1, pp. 1-14; Klemek, C., 2008. From Political Outsider to Power Broker in Two "Great American Cities." Jane Jacobs and the Fall of the Urban Renewal Order in New York and Toronto. *Journal of Urban History*, 34(2), pp. 309-32; Mennel, T., Steffens, J. and Klemek, C., (eds), 2008. *Block by Block, Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York*. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, pp. 7-11; Klemek,

It is included in the list of the most important 100 books of the twentieth century. Many colleagues frequently refer to her book but have not read or understood it completely. Also it is more or less forgotten that she wrote other books on a great variety of topics. While her work was polarizing at the time of publication, nowadays a positive reception outweighs. While most of the publications about Jacobs focus on her work in New York or Toronto and refer to her first three books, this reader takes a broader approach and specifically looks at her work as it is embedded in the transatlantic discourse.

The myth that grew around Jane Jacobs was based on her first book as well as her involvement in the grassroots movements of New York City, where she (and others) fought against slum clearances and Robert Moses' highway construction projects which proposed to cut through urban neighborhoods. In 1968, as this approach to urban renewal was slowly beginning to change in New York City, she and her family moved to Toronto to avoid her two sons being drafted into the Vietnam War. On her arrival in Canada she was celebrated as "our Jane" and soon accepted as *the* expert on urban issues and urban renewal.

Jane Jacobs's approach in all her publications was unusual; she did not work with statistics and maps, but aimed simply to "seek the truth from the facts." A recent article claimed that "she had more enemies than any American woman." In her last book Jane Jacobs referred to a paradigm shift, although not to the one she had influenced. She quoted Thomas Kuhn and his famous book on paradigms:

Most people do not enjoy having their entire worldview discredited; it sets them uncomfortably adrift. [...] If a paradigm is truly obsolete, it must finally give way, discredited by testing of the real world.<sup>2</sup>

---

C., 2009. The Rise and Fall of New Left Urbanism. *Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 138(2), pp. 73–81; Klemek, C., 2011. Dead or Alive at Fifty? Reading Jane Jacobs on Her Golden Anniversary. *Dissent*, Spring Issue, pp. 775–9; Klemek, C., 2011. *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal, Postwar Urbanism from New York to Berlin*. Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press; Lang, G. and Wunsch, M., 2009. *Genius of Common Sense, Jane Jacobs and the Story of Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Boston, MA: David R. Godine; Laurence, P.L., 2006. Contradictions and Complexities. Jane Jacobs's and Robert Venturi's Complexity Theories. *Journal of Architectural Education*, 59(3), pp. 49–60; Laurence, P.L., 2006. The Death and Life of Urban Design: Jane Jacobs, The Rockefeller Foundation and the New Research in Urbanism, 1955–1965. *Journal of Urban Design*, 11(2), pp. 145–72; Laurence, P.L., 2007. Jane Jacobs Before Death and Life. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 66(1); Page, M. and Mennel, T., eds, 2011. *Reconsidering Jane Jacobs*. Chicago, IL and Washington, DC: American Planning Association; Alexiou, A.S., 2006. *Jane Jacobs: Urban Visionary*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press; Flint, A., 2009. *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took Over New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City*. New York, NY: Random House; Hirt, S. and Zahm, D. (eds), 2012. *The Urban Wisdom of Jane Jacobs*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.

2 Jacobs, J., 2005. *Dark Age Ahead*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, p. 70.

Her impact is not limited to the North American perspective. Unaffected by criticism she continued her unconventional thinking, which led to other economic, philosophical, historic and ethical writings. Even though she overstepped the conventional boundaries time and again scientists in planning related disciplines exploited her arguments. Not only did Jane Jacobs' ideas and influence cross the Atlantic to Europe, they also influenced urban planning and urban renewal worldwide. For this reason we want to open up a transnational as well as cross-disciplinary discussion about Jane Jacobs's work. This volume demonstrates a great variety of approaches to the consideration of Jane Jacobs's achievements and impact.

The book starts with a couple of personal assessments based on contacts and interviews with Jane Jacobs. The contributions by Roberta Brandes Gratz and Mary Rowe offer intimate perspectives including descriptions of her way of working and writing. Central elements of her philosophy and the principles of self-organization and formal as well as informal complexity are analyzed. Richard White evaluates her impact on Toronto, after she moved to the Canadian metropolis in 1968. Although her influence was often overestimated, she was highly influential "in the background" and her book became "basic knowledge" in local grassroots movements. Based on interviews with planners and colleagues who worked with her in Toronto he portrays a picture of planning cultures and controversies in Canada.

Most of Jacobs's publications are focussed on cities – she was a "city lover" and influenced by various sociologists, journalists, and architects, but remained critical of "planners." The "master builder Robert Moses" was, in a way, such a typical planner, and he refused even to look at her book. In the beginning she had the support of the famous writer and urbanist Lewis Mumford, but they became antagonists after she criticized his theories based on the Garden City Movement. Mumford subsequently published a critical review of Jacobs's book entitled "Mother Jacobs's Home Remedies." The debate, especially with Lewis Mumford, was highly theoretical and concerned with important questions of planning, decentralization, density, and mixed-use developments; the discussions focused on long-term effects and referred back to a critical interpretation of Ebenezer Howard and his garden city, which was described by Jane Jacobs as "city-destroying ideas."

Jörg Seifert relates her approach to Kevin Lynch's urban design perspective. While Lynch formulated a more objective expert viewpoint illustrated by maps and drawings Jacobs's is a layperson's subjective perception based on descriptions. Madeleine Lyes evaluates her impact on theorists and sociologists like Sharon Zukin and her concept of "authenticity." In her latest book Zukin transfers Jane Jacobs's ideas to the New York of 2010. The famous "side walk ballet" on Hudson Street is now performed by other actors. But are her observations still useful and helpful for explaining trends of gentrification and relocation of displaced people today? Nicolai Roskamm takes up the current discussion on higher densities for more sustainable cities. While planners for a long time insisted on thinning urban

populations through decentralization, lower densities, and the Garden City model, Jane Jacobs proposed higher densities than in the suburbs and a complex, dense, mixed-use urban fabric.

It is important to discuss not only Jane Jacobs's first book, but also to include her later books in order to get a deeper insight into her thinking. "Trust your eyes and instincts" and "eyes on the street" was Jane Jacobs's simple advice. "Most planners are men," she states. In her later books she develops an economic theory of shrinking and growing cities and includes many theoretical, philosophical, and ethical considerations. She challenged what was generally regarded to be good practice and approved methods such as "social engineering" and what she called "the doctrine of salvation by bricks" as well as accepted paradigms. Jane Jacobs supported unplanned, dense, and mixed-use neighborhoods, and was critical of controlling, arraying, regulating or demolishing urban structures.

Her prominence and status in North America is not reflected in European urbanism discussions yet. However, she was influenced by the British Townscape Movement, and later her US-based ideas gained acceptance in Britain as well as in other European countries. Not only did Jane Jacobs's ideas and influences cross the Atlantic, they also had an impact on urban planning and urban renewal in Europe. Of course, Jane Jacobs and her book were not solely responsible for the paradigm shift that extended to Europe. Many European and Asian cities had been bombed and large areas destroyed. The resulting housing shortage lasted much longer than in North America, and older buildings were not demolished during this period. However, with a delay of one or two decades, similar strategies and the "bulldozer approach" were also applied in Europe, until tenants, neighborhood organizations, and grassroots movements began to revolt against them. The methods that were used to reverse the urban renewal strategies were even more radical and included the squatting of buildings. This led, within a relatively short period, to a shift towards the protection and conservation of almost all old buildings and to the participation of local citizens.

The next chapter explores her impact on Europe by looking at references to her book and her work. Christiane Feuerstein analyzes the way in which urban renewal is conducted in Vienna and the shift from demolition towards a gentler approach to regeneration. She explains how the change to maintenance and neighborhood-orientated approaches was enforced by trend-setting projects. Other theorists and urban thinkers from the French and Spanish speaking world had to be included to offer insights into Jane Jacobs's influence there. José Luis Sáinz Guerra discusses this perspective using the example of Spain, not only referring to theoretical debates but also to design problems, examples in the built environment and implemented projects in a strongly market-led context.

Gert-Jan Hospers looks at the Netherlands, a country with a long tradition of state interventions, spatial planning and public housing. How was Jane Jacobs's book received there and what kind of influence did it have on the current debate about urban policies, planning, and urban renewal? Jane Jacobs was exploited as a reference by popular urbanists who sought to improve the image of cities by

instrumentalizing her ideas. Dirk Schubert examines the adoption of her book in Germany, how its translation was made possible and the sort of reviews it received. He demonstrates how the paradigm shift in urban renewal to a more gentle urban regeneration came about, how participation became widespread and where and how practices in cities like Berlin and Hamburg were transformed. In the end there are not only personal correlations but also impacts on urban renewal strategies as well as on the built environment that can be observed. Christopher Klemek puts Jane Jacobs's work into a transatlantic discourse about urban renewal on both sides of the Atlantic. He draws conclusions about procedures, institutional as well as personal networks and their influence on urban renewal, especially in the USA and in Western Germany.

Finally the question is discussed: "Are we all Jacobseans?" Recent decades have seen the development of a great variety of new urban strategies based on local issues, governance structures, and planning cultures. Jane Jacobs had already touched on many concepts including shared space, infill, mixed-use, conservation of old buildings, pedestrian-friendly traffic, and expansion of public transport, although her approach was sometimes relative to a different background. Even the Shared Space, Smart Growth and New Urbanism movements make reference to Jane Jacobs's ideas.

The work of Jane Jacobs cannot be classified into strict disciplines. Her work was always cross-disciplinary, innovative, and unconventional. In this book her lines of argument are not just reflected theoretically but also analyzed with reference to the (non-)realization in the planning practice in North America and Europe. Meanwhile many planners in Europe and North America claim to be working according to the principles she developed without actually doing so; others do so without being familiar with the details of her work.

On paper nearly all planners would now agree with Jane Jacobs's approach to mix-use, higher density, pedestrian-based urban structures. But what about reality and the influence of new actors like developers and the real estate business, which were not that important when Jane Jacobs wrote her book. How can her idea of "old buildings for new uses" be implemented? Within a decade or so of the publication of Jane Jacobs's book, most of her ideas had become generally accepted; probably because they had not been feasible beforehand due to zoning regulations. The bulldozer approach to old buildings was reversed and transformed into a mind-set of conservation which incorporated older buildings. The concept of participation also became widespread, since it was often easier to involve people early on rather than having to alter projects at a later stage, or modify them over and over again. Birgit Dulski and Gerben van Straaten show examples of how Jacobs's ideas became built reality in the Netherlands and also how developers' strategies can include participation, mix-use, and higher densities. They refer to urban politics in the Netherlands (VINEX 1995) which often generated housing in the form of mono-structures in the periphery. They demonstrate how Jane Jacobs's ideas can help to create attractive and more diverse neighborhoods.

Today many theorists and practitioners are thinking about a new paradigm shift in the current period of rapid globalization, peak oil and neoliberal as well as deregulated approaches to planning. In this context it is useful to reflect on the background and circumstances of paradigm shifts and their chief players and theorists. There seem to be some indications that large-scale redevelopment projects are experiencing a renaissance. Many metropolitan areas are now competing in this field seeking to upgrade their image. In a way it seems to be easier for cities to focus on a few spectacular large-scale redevelopment projects rather than to work on a variety of smaller projects. Is it still possible to work in the spirit of Jane Jacobs, by way of participation, inclusion of local (poorer) people, affordable housing and mixed-use development, and a "bottom-up" strategy? Friedhelm Fischer and Uwe Altröck transfer her ideas to a period of globalization and deregulation, and demonstrate why and how they were used and abused. There is a confusing variety of built examples worldwide which allude to Jane Jacobs's ideas. But are they implemented in a way she would have agreed with? Or are the Jacobsean ideas just a fashion to justify any kind of urban (re-)development? Stephen Goldsmith reflects on Jane Jacobs's ideas in a broader context of urban ecology and includes perspectives of cities as organized complexity. She often used biological metaphors to explain her ideas. How can we learn from nature in order to transform our cities and regions in a more sustainable way? Klaus Brake discusses her relevance for today and tomorrow and opens up windows of opportunities for showing how we can learn from her. He underlines that there are many structural changes, new agents of transformation and a new affinity to the city which must be considered before we copy proposals made half a century ago.

Finally a lecture given by Jane Jacobs in Hamburg in 1981 is included, when the shift to more flexible strategies of rehabilitation in urban renewal began in Germany. Her polemic against Daniel Burnham's famous statement "make big plans" includes perspectives of incremental strategies with involvement and participation of local people. The final section of this book includes some information to help readers understand the background of Jacobs's life and work.

All authors in this volume assume that different values, traditions, assumptions, and habits will influence (planning) culture. Within situation-specific contexts and through particular value propositions, rituals, routines, procedures, approaches, and networks a specific planning culture is represented. This book provides the missing link through "cross-national studies" and comparative (e.g. transatlantic) analysis which makes the particular cultural context assessable and ratable. "Turns" have become quite a fashion in many scientific disciplines. The "spatial turn" was followed by the "visual turn" in social and humane sciences. In their development of a comparative cultural dimension of planning, the authors do not follow yet another fashion, but break new scientific ground and develop a more sustainable way for planning and urban rehabilitation for the future.

It is no exaggeration to proclaim that Jacobs's book and ideas were important for a transatlantic (or even global?) paradigm shift in urban planning and urban

renewal. Jane Jacobs herself helped create the myth that arose around her.<sup>3</sup> The authors of this volume go beyond historic aspects, but develop conclusions on how the work of Jane Jacobs could be re-interpreted under other circumstances and employed in the current discourse about density and diversity in the field of urban planning. Jane Jacobs did not deliver recipes and best-practice models for planners like “Jacobsean Urbanism.” This is one of the reasons why many planners misunderstand her book. She analyzed how cities function and how they develop into “organized complexity.” Nowadays many implemented urban projects are referred to as “Jane Jacobs approved” and often the question WWJJHS (“What would Jane Jacobs have said?”) is asked. However, this is a shortened and partial perspective which does not reflect the general position of her thinking.

After the period of the “crisis of the city” in the 1990s a surprising renaissance of the city has taken place since the turn of the millennium. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, stated in 2000 at the *Global Conference on the Urban Future* in Berlin that the future of the world will be found in cities, and proclaimed the “millennium of cities.” Compact, dense, mix-use cities seem to be the most sustainable way to deal with the problems of the manifold world in the future. In 2012 Joan Clos, Director of UN-HABITAT and former Mayor of Barcelona, explained at the World Forum 6 in Naples:

We need to start thinking of cities in a positive light. [...] For too long we have relied on the old model of zoning but this has led to large sprawling cities [...] We need a new approach to planning that is focused on mixed-use and optimum densities.<sup>4</sup>

Are we all Jacobseans?

---

3 Another idea to promote her ideas is Jane’s Walk. Jane’s Walk is a series of free neighborhood walking tours that helps put people in touch with their environment and with each other, by bridging social and geographic gaps and creating a space for cities to discover themselves. Since its inception in 2007, Jane’s Walk has happened in cities across North America, and is growing internationally. See <http://www.janeswalk.net/walk>

4 Clos, J., 2012. Interview with Dr. Joan Clos, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director UN-Habitat. *QUI Napoli*, Special Edition August 2012. World Urban Forum 8, Naples, Italy, 1–7 September 2012, p. 16.

PART II  
Jane Jacobs: Roots, Basics  
and Impacts

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

## Chapter 2

# Central Elements of Jane Jacobs's Philosophy

Roberta Brandes Gratz

Until Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was published 50 years ago, Lewis Mumford was America's leading commentator on all things about cities. Through many books and a much-read column, entitled Skyline, in *The New Yorker* magazine, Mumford was *the* urban critic everyone turned to. Mumford and Jacobs met as participants on a Harvard panel in 1956 about cities. Here, Jacobs first articulated early observations about urban developments of the time, voicing strong criticism of official city policies. Mumford took notice. They corresponded and Mumford encouraged Jane to write *Death and Life*.

It is difficult today to realize what a bombshell *Death and Life* was at the time. Essentially Jacobs was saying that government officials and professional planners had it all wrong – “this is an attack on current city planning and rebuilding,” she wrote in the introduction. From that moment on, Jane Jacobs changed the way we look and think about cities. This must have been quite a threat to the dean of American urban commentary. And while he and Jacobs were in agreement on such things as highways through cities, Mumford was a planning advocate and defender. He was not happy about her critique and wrote a scathing review of the book in *The New Yorker* titled, “Mother Jacobs' Home Remedies.” Well, that was the end of that relationship.

Years later, I asked Jane why she thought he had turned on her. At first she was uncharacteristically reticent but I pressed. Finally, she said, “He was a hypocrite. He expected me to be a sycophant.” To this day, many people unknowingly speak of them both in the same breath, unaware of the differences in their points of view.

So, I recently asked a wise friend of mine, “Why do you suppose there's so many people eager to reassess Jane Jacobs today and no reconsideration of Lewis Mumford?” From a variety of corners in the USA, people are coming forward to question some of her long accepted views. But why not Mumford as well, I asked my friend. Mumford did not have an impact; Jane did, he said. Well, actually, Mumford, more the suburbanist and regionalist than the urbanist, actually did have an impact, advocating the decentralization and de-densification of cities and the spread of the new suburb, like Radburn, NJ.

Nevertheless, my friend does make an interesting point. Jane had an *enormous* impact. And since the appeal of the suburb has been diminishing for a while and

the appeal of cities has risen in its place, Jane's ideas are more relevant now than ever. This can be threatening to those whose long careers were grounded in the post-World War II ideas that devalued old neighborhoods and de-densified cities. Threatening as well to those who think they know best how to plan and design for the future of cities, not the stakeholders that Jane empowered.

The citizen groups fighting to preserve, protect and rebuild cities have never stopped finding Jane relevant and continue to use what they have learned both intuitively and from her writing. Instead, the challenges seem to be mostly coming from professionals and academics who impose on Jane their own standards of measurement, none of which Jane was interested in measuring up to. For their own purposes, as well, they choose to misappropriate and misinterpret her teaching.

Now let me stop here for a moment to say that Jane needs no one to rise to her defense. Her ideas still resonate around the world, strongly enough to continue to make a huge impact. But I feel passionately that attempts to distort those ideas still need to be challenged. Jane would probably admonish me today because I have used many forums to address some of the erroneous ideas being put forth. "Stop swatting at flies," she might say. However, she is not here to admonish me – she had done that, by the way, over the years on different issues – and I feel there is good reason to swat. It is not just that Jane's ideas are being twisted or distorted; it



**Figure 2.1** Jane Jacobs with the “Order of Canada”-medal at the Vincent Scully Prize celebration 2000 in Washington, DC with Roberta Brandes Gratz

*Source:* © Roberta Brandes Gratz.

is that the validity of the ideas are still so relevant to today's urban challenges that their strength should not be allowed to be undermined.

Invoking her name while planning or designing contrary to her precepts undermines the strength of those precepts. Let me address first the idea that Jane said we have to keep old buildings and resist new tall buildings. Well, where did she ever say that? Against tall buildings is not the same as being for them where appropriate and against them where not. And certainly this is not the same as, for good reason, acknowledging that old buildings can be useful and that certainly a mix of old and new within a balanced context is appropriate. In fact, Jane wrote, "Old buildings will still be a necessity when today's new buildings are the old ones" (Jacobs, 1961: p. 190).

The brilliant chapter in *Death and Life*, "The need for aged buildings," is used as a critique of historic preservationists who, it is argued, prevent the new skyscrapers a city needs to make a city affordable. This is a shocking misstatement of fact. This distorted notion is applied to New York City in particular. I served almost eight years on New York's Landmarks Preservation Commission, the group appointed by the mayor to designate and regulate individual landmarks and historic districts. I have observed the reality first hand.

Ironically, Jane discouraged me from accepting this mayoral appointment after Michael Bloomberg's election. I did concede that it was probably going over to the dark side but I had been writing about and advocating preservation as a fundamental building block of good urbanism for so long, I thought it time to try to have influence from the inside. So, after I accepted the appointment, what did Jane do? She urged, let's say ordered, me to make sure that more of New York's Greenwich Village – particularly the most western section – be designated, noting that when Greenwich Village was designated the second historic district in the city, important areas were purposely left out for potential – but undisclosed – urban renewal redevelopment. The commission, I'm pleased to say, did expand the district. And although I had told Jane that it was definitely happening, the actual designation occurred a few days after her death.

But my point here is that the Landmarks Preservation Commission was an interesting place to view incremental change occurring all over the city – new buildings added strategically in historic districts, industrial buildings converted to loft housing, storefronts upgraded for new businesses, modest extensions added to rooftops and backyards. All these seemingly incremental adjustments added up to big change. In fact, (a) some of the most interesting new buildings have been or are being built in historic districts, bigger than older neighboring buildings but not overwhelming them, enthusiastically approved by the commission, (b) many new, ugly, overwhelmingly tall skyscrapers are going up at the edges of those historic districts, cashing in on the historic district's appeal but adding nothing to it, and (c) those new towers are more expensive than any of the old buildings.

Furthermore, until the economic downturn, New York had seen years of tower building around the city and, yet, the city has not ceased becoming increasingly expensive for 20 years at least, even with an endless number of new skyscrapers. The

new skyscrapers are always more expensive than existing buildings; trickle down has never worked, except in a recession. So much for the affordability potential of building more and more skyscrapers. New York has become very expensive for many reasons but none of those reasons relate to historic preservation.

Most importantly, Jane wrote, “Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings.” In light of cities like New York becoming so expensive and in light of the assumption that cities are still the birthplace for new ideas, I’ve pondered this seeming contradiction. The fact is that Jane’s observation is still true but with an interesting variation.

The old buildings now are very often *in* historic districts but they are no longer inexpensive, which they were in the 1950s, when Jane observed them as the vessels of innovations. Increasingly, old buildings are being creatively divided up into smaller spaces. Those smaller spaces, inexpensive like the old buildings Jane was referring to 50 years ago, are today’s birthplaces for new ideas and innovation. So the old buildings are now expensive but still of value in their subdivided format for the very same reasons Jane described.

It is 50 years since *Death and Life*, 42 years since *The Economy of Cities*. Change is a given. Jane’s writings provide insights into how change occurs for the better or worse. What so many commentators miss is that one cannot be totally literal in applying Jane’s ideas to today. Take Greenwich Village as an example.

Too many people make the mistake of defining Jane’s observations of Greenwich Village as advocacy for the replication of its small scale and “quaint” mixtures, or as some would say, “the preservation of the urban village.” This could not be further from the truth. It was not about tall buildings versus short, Modernist versus Federalist, loft versus residential, small business versus large. The Village was her laboratory to observe the larger truths about urban life. Her use of the Village was also her way of stressing that the character of a place – neighborhood or downtown – should be the starting point for thinking about change. Hers was not a prescription of what *should* happen but an observation of what *does* happen when certain genuine urban conditions exist.

In all her writing, she used specific examples to illustrate observable truths, never intending them to be prescriptive for other places. The specific truth she illustrated was always found only in the context of that specific place. And, of course, she offered observations from many other places, such as Harlem, Upper West Side, St. Louis, Detroit, Boston, Philadelphia, and others. She might in particular be referring to Greenwich Village but she applies those ideas to many urban areas that look nothing like the Village. The real essence of the Village’s success in Jane’s view was its emergence from community input. She made the same point to me when, in 1977, she first took me to see the beginning of Toronto’s St. Lawrence neighborhood. Instead of seeking a detailed plan, the then Mayor John Sewell sent planners out to ask people what they wanted, to study nearby streets and the buildings on them, to learn what made them flexible and workable. Then the city established a development *strategy* – as distinguished from a plan – with guidelines but few rules. What eventually emerged is as close

to a neighborhood as a whole new place can be. The same "strategy" was followed years later in the 1990s in Toronto's Kings District, a SoHo-like former garment district now quite diversified although being undermined by overwhelmingly tall, all-residential towers.

In using the Village in *Death and Life*, she revealed lessons that are applicable to authentic urban neighborhoods everywhere. But more than supposedly advocating small scale, Jacobs's critics say that Greenwich Village is now just an expensive, gentrified outpost without the diverse population and mixture of businesses she observed. This is myopia on steroids. Well, yes, dockworkers who were once Jane's neighbors no longer live there. There are no docks. But here are two missing points.

Almost all of New York City today is expensive and gentrified; the Village is no exception. The real challenge is to understand why. New York has committed the cardinal sin that Jane wrote about; we are increasingly less and less a diversified economy. New York is all about real estate, Wall Street, tourism with a small surviving garment industry stubbornly resistant to the upzoning that is pricing out other industry around the city. I have devoted a whole chapter to this phenomenon in my latest book (Brandes Gratz, 2010), a serious issue.

The other missing point is the phenomenon of the West Village Houses, developed in the 1960s and 1970s by the West Village Committee led by Jane which successfully fought off the Robert Moses Urban Renewal Plan that would have wiped out 14 blocks of mixed uses. The Committee's architect designed a modest-scale apartment-house configuration to fill the scattered vacant lots and avoid demolishing anything, the true definition of infill development.

The planning establishment hated this proposal because it was initiated by the community and left intact the organically evolved mixture of residential and commercial uses. The city's head of housing did everything he could to sabotage it, causing endless delays and imposing cost-cutting measures that stripped all manner of design elements. The result after 12 years was bare bones architecture, five stories of plain red brick housing without elevators. This was a limited-income complex built under a state program meant to address a shortage of low and middle-income apartments. And here is the best part, missed by everyone; West Village Houses still retains that affordable character. When the city and state in recent years allowed thousands of apartments built under this program to go market rate and lose their affordable status, the tenants of West Village Houses fought the owner and won the right to buy the buildings from him. They converted the complex to a cooperative and rental mix and guaranteed that no tenant would be evicted. They won a 12-year period of rent restraints and the right of tenants to buy their apartment at the insider price. The owner gained the right to sell ten vacant units at market rate out of the 420 total, and he guaranteed that new buyers would meet the federal middle-income standard. Other sensible terms were provided but suffice it to say, the owner made a reasonable profit and at least 420 Village apartments were secure for middle-income tenants.

The reason I offer these details is twofold. Firstly, this is one of the few such long term affordable apartment complexes built under the state program surviving in Manhattan; so much for Greenwich Village only being for the rich.

Secondly, about 4,000 such units around the city have been converted to strictly market rate, losing their affordable character. Instead, the city could have used the West Village model to retain the affordable status of a large portion of them. In particular, this model could have been applied to the 9,000 units in Stuyvesant Town at East 14th and First Avenue when it was privatized a few years ago. Yet another example of Jane's relevance today.

Of course, for the city to use this model, officials would need to be aware of it and imply that the city administration considered keeping New York affordable a priority. It doesn't. I noted in the beginning that current critiques of Jane seem to come from varying groups of professionals.

Many academics, for instance, refer to her "lack of rigor, her reliance on anecdotal examples, her inconsistency in citing sources, and her apparently cavalier approach to research." But they ignore the fact that she was not one of them and didn't follow their rules. Jane was a journalist, an on-the-ground observer, a commentator. She frustrates academics who abide by different rules. It may be true that she was "ill-equipped, as well as disinclined, to construct a fully documented narrative" but, above all, Jane wanted the reader/observer to determine that proof. Her documentation was the best kind, observation of what works and what doesn't.

I get a little defensive on this point because I, too, am a journalist, often challenged with the question: "What are your credentials?" I enjoy offering the observation that it has most often been the outsider, and often indeed the journalist, who has changed a profession: Rachel Carson, the environment, Betty Friedan, the women's movement, Jessica Mitford, the funeral business, Ralph Nader, the automobile industry and, of course, William Holly Whyte who with Jane turned urban planning upside down.

But in a real sense, it seems to be the planners who have the biggest problem. This is something of a conundrum. On the one hand, they acknowledge the value of Jane's urban principles and want to claim to apply them. At the same time, however, they argue that her advocacy of community engagement has degenerated into NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard), is out of control and has undermined the authority of their profession.

This, indeed, is a problem because community engagement was a cornerstone of Jacobs's philosophy. The control by planners was the disease she was targeting. Of course, she meant engagement *before* plans are drafted by the professionals, not after. The former gives stakeholders the chance – no guarantee – to influence, not control, the outcome; the latter almost guarantees community resistance. Jacobs's way is not usually the professional planner's way.

The planners' lament is well articulated in a recent book, *Reconsidering Jane Jacobs*, by one of its varied contributors, Planning Professor Thomas J. Campanella. He wrote that because of Jane, "the planning baby was thrown out with the urban-

renewal bathwater” and the profession became “fragmented and balkanized” with a “chronic identity crisis.” If planners want to understand their reputation for arrogance, this article is a must. “And there are times when citizens’ self-interest and the greater social good do overlap” (2011: pp. 145–7), he conceded.

What a slap in the face of citizens that statement is, yet, ironically, he proceeds to tell the most interesting story: a “group of citizens – most with no training whatsoever in architecture, planning, or design – came up with a very good idea *that planners should have had?*” (emphasis his). The idea, hatched over a cup of coffee in a local gathering place in Hillsborough, North Carolina? The town should build a train station and persuade Amtrak to stop there, which it did until 1964. One thing led to another. Local officials, other citizens, the newspaper, all agreed. Campanella’s students did conceptual plans. The town proceeded to buy the land for a station and “Amtrak, unprompted, produced a study showing that a Hillsborough stop would be profitable” (Campanella, 2011: p. 148).

This might not have come from “visionary” planners but it is, in fact, exactly the kind of grass-roots, citizen-based planning that Jane was all about. So in the reconsideration of Jane Jacobs, maybe there is room for reconsideration by planners of the value of this bottom-up process that she celebrated, a process that considers both the local and the “greater social good” and lets good ideas emerge from citizens.

Jane never said that citizens should “rule,” just that they should be engaged in the planning process early, listened to and, like in this very revealing tale, respected. More often than planners would like to acknowledge, the best ideas for positive change emerge from citizen engagement. It is so logical that those who live or work in a place understand it best, understand its needs and flaws. In the process, those local ideas, just like the above example, improve the larger world.

Few planners and architects really fully understand Jane’s idea of urbanism. They pick and choose elements to include in their designs and plans but neglect to understand the organic nature of the whole. Jacobs’s urbanism cannot be “designed,” “planned,” or “codified.” Authentic urbanism is a process that unfolds over time within a framework of principles and not developed at one time.

The challenge to the profession is to shift away from having to be controllers and prescriptive experts and toward being better listeners, observers and enablers of authentic urbanism; that is the true legacy of Jane Jacobs.

## Bibliography

- Brandes Gratz, R., 2010. *The Battle For Gotham: New York in the Shadow Of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs*. New York, NY: Nation Books.
- Campanella, T.C., 2011. Jane Jacobs and the Death and Life of American Planning. In: M. Page and T. Mennel (eds), *Reconsidering Jane Jacobs*. Chicago, IL and Washington, DC: American Planning Association.
- Jacobs, J., 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Random House.

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

## Chapter 3

# Jane Jacobs and the Self-Organizing City

Mary Rowe

My name is Mary Rowe and I am not an academic. I am a practitioner of sorts, but really more of a “facilitator”: I support the efforts of others – and the processes in which they engage – to build cities. Building a city is not a proscribed or fixed process, but, to some, “city-building” may only mean the physical creation of a city’s features – its streets and buildings and parks and shops. The focus of this book is on the work of Jane Jacobs, and it is her work that makes clear that it is the infinite workings of a city’s ongoing processes – its structures, its economies, its ethics, all of which she called its “ecology” – that build it.

My two colleagues, Christopher Klemek and Richard White, have written in more detail about Jane’s impact in her two chosen cities: New York<sup>1</sup> and Toronto. My comments are more general, focused on my experience of Jane’s ideas now in the world as I encounter them, day to day. I divide my time between those two cities, and I just finished an extended stint of working and living in post-Katrina New Orleans, where I observed a Jacobsean pattern of self-organization.

This, of course, is Jane Jacobs, as I knew her, which was only in the last decade of her life. That is my arm at the edge of the picture, with a tea towel over it, which reflects what I often did in Jane’s house: I made tea. I show this image to set my comments in context and to illustrate one of the key ideas of her work: adjacency. I detail in a moment a number of Jacobsean concepts – prime among them are the two “d’s”: diversity and density. A result of them both together is adjacency. I happened to spend a lot of time in close proximity to Jane, was exposed to her thinking and ideas, and, lucky for me, they had an impact on my own thinking and understanding of how things actually work in the world. I am a beneficiary of adjacency.

My experience of Jane’s ideas having an impact on my world view is far from unique, as the ideas are contained in all her books, which have been read by

---

1 Roberta Brandes Gratz, who has chronicled Jane’s extended engagement with her city in a recent and deeply personal book called *The Battle for Gotham: Living in the Shadow of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs*, together with another contributor to this book, Stephen Goldsmith, are the co-founders of the Center for the Living City, an organization created to further the understanding of Jacobs’s main precepts of urban systems. The Center recently published, with New Village Press, a collection of essays entitled *What We See: Advancing the Observations of Jane Jacobs* (Goldsmith, S. and Elizabeth, L. (eds), 2010. Oakland, CA: New Village Press). Both Brandes Gratz and Goldsmith have chapters in this volume.



**Figure 3.1 Jane Jacobs chatting**

*Source:* © Maryann Thomas.

millions of people in dozens of languages and countries around the world. But I did benefit from repeated periods of adjacency. With tea.

There is a tendency among some academics and city “pundits” in the USA to focus on narrow aspects of Jane’s writing and bicker about them:

Was she really in favor of this?

Look at how she criticized that!

The other side of this coin is equally troublesome, a kind of context-free boosterism:

Jane Jacobs advocated this, therefore we should too.

On the one hand these kinds of debates reduce Jane’s work to a kind of “hair splitting,” extracting ideas out of context to overdraw conclusions from phrases she had written to illustrate particular circumstances. (The ideas are often used by a commenter to shore up his or her own point of view.) On the other, they lead to a rigid ideology – the Jacobs way – which is truly silly and wrong because, of all the things Jane was, ideologue was not one of them. Her thinking was much too flexible and shrewd; her conclusions were hard to predict because her thought processes were wide and varied, resulting in generally nuanced views. Further, her thinking never stopped. Her observations continued to inform; her ideas evolved.

Jane often said to me that she realized she had been writing the same book, over and over, through her writing career. There are consistent threads in her work, but that requires reading it all, again and over time, to piece it together, something few people have done. I tease my American friends and colleagues that they seem to have not read a book after 1961 (the year *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was published). Some earnest readers have read the two books on economics that followed: *The Economy of Cities* and *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*. But those numbers dwindle, of my acquaintances, when it comes to *The Nature of Economies* or *Dark Age Ahead* (and are entirely absent for *A Question of Separatism*, which focuses on Quebec's quest for national sovereignty and is, at face value, of interest only to a subset of Canadians, but in fact is a great primer of Jacobs's understanding of the role of the city in defining a society's culture and economy and its need to be unfettered to ensure its own survival).

Years ago I was organizing a series of events in Toronto to celebrate Jane's work. We brought academics and practitioners from around the world under the banner "Ideas that Matter." Part of my job involved calling all sorts of people familiar with Jane and her work. One of these calls was to famed New York City newspaperman Jimmy Breslin, who was no longer in public life. I managed to track him down, and called to invite him to speak. I remember our conversation this way:

Hello Mister Breslin, my name is Mary Rowe and I am calling about Jane Jacobs. We are hosting an event in the fall and I wonder ...

Breslin interrupted me thus:

Jane Jacobs! She moved to Toronto! Who cares?! ...

At which point he hung up.

Jane's ideas were rolled out in several books, and I challenge us to develop our understanding of her method and conclusions by reading them all and seeing how those ideas developed over time. Just as she suggested in the title of the lecture she delivered when she received the Vincent Scully Prize from the National Building Museum in Washington, "Time is an Ally to Neighborhoods," Jane's books are about long ideas that evolve over time, and we can afford her that: she wrote for over 60 years.

When Jane was still alive there were two tendencies I saw in how her work – and her person – were treated by others. She was appropriated then – something at which she bridled. People would approach her endlessly: by telephone, in writing, at events, and want to recruit her to their particular cause. From time to time she would engage in the substance of their inquiry, but more often than not she would rebuke them, urging them to do their own homework and not simply attach her name to their effort. Since her death, this tack has become more sinister, in my view, with well- and not-too-well-intentioned groups and individuals claiming that their

initiatives are in sync with Jane Jacobs. Again this is a problem on several levels: her work emphasized context, so I think it is very tricky to know if a particular initiative is consistent with what she might have thought or done; she's dead, so there is no way to know for sure, save to rely on her texts. Then it relegates her ideas to "proof-texting," making it just as repugnant as the consonant-identical acronym perpetuated within certain evangelical circles: WWJD.

Jane was not interested in attracting acolytes and, further, her work does not lend itself to having any. The other practice that was evidenced in her later years and lives on since her death is one of sentimentalization, or even sanctification, as some journalists and scholars suggested. Jane taught me the true meaning of the word sentimental, I had for years wrongly used it to mean a kind of saccharine attachment to the past. She corrected that to include its much richer sensibility of hearkening back to an idealized, incorrectly remembered time and forming a kind of frozen-in-time opinion. (Much of Jane's critique of rural life was pushing back on contemporary culture's sentimentalization of past life on the farm of bucolic pastures and abundance. Rural life in the mean was hard-scrabble and meager; the potential for health and wealth for most was, is, and certainly will be, in the city.)

But that same kind of sentimentalization is creeping into the critique of Jane's work since her death. I notice it in how people describe her admiration for the Greenwich Village neighborhood in New York City, the setting for some of her more lyrical prose in *Death and Life*. Just because those sections of the book wax lyrical they do not mean that Jane did not see the perils of quaintness, that she was not aware of the troubles an over-popular neighborhood would pose (especially when there are so few others of equal, but different, appeal on offer). Of course she did see, and was aware, and again my proximity to her assures me of this. In her own neighborhood in Toronto, we watched together the struggles small business owners were having resisting the arrival of larger chain stores, the escalating house prices, and the challenges in providing a range of housing, and accompanying services and amenities. There are no magic bullets to stop the negative effects of gentrification, but there are measures that can slow it, including ensuring zoning codes that permit densities of different types of housing (small and large, cheaper and not-so-cheap) and uses (work/live spaces, small retail, light industrial). Jane was hunting down those smart ways, wanting to see where it was working well, just like the rest of us do. A "hot" neighborhood is in many ways just as imperiled as a desolate one: both deserve careful observation to see how the best can be nurtured and supported and the "mix" of uses and users kept diverse and lively.

The other thing I noticed as Jane aged was the way the media and other worthy combatants would sentimentalize her as a person. I am hoping that out there somewhere is a feminist historian waiting to tackle this one, because Jane was and is still described in ways that I do not think would happen had she been a man. Late in her life there were media comments about her "apple doll" cheeks and her donning of hand-knit ponchos. Of course, in her early notoriety, she was dismissed by her critics as "mother" and "housewife." Her gender is critically important, both to the perspective she brought to her work on the city – which she experienced at

# Enabling self-organization



as the underpinning of  
city resilience and  
innovation

**Figure 3.2 Enabling self-organization**

Source: © Mary Rowe.

the unit of individual, household, neighborhood, district and city – and in how she was received.<sup>2</sup> But it also contributed to her being, at worst, trivialized and, only slightly less offensively, coddled. Late in her life, which is only when I knew her, I watched as potential interlocutors shied away from debating with her. (Perhaps this was more about a kind of ageism, or impatience even, as Jane did speak slowly, but her commentary was always well worth waiting for.) But she never shrank from challenge, and as we know from the writing style of her later books, she relished the process of conversation for working ideas out. Now as her legacy is unfolding, she needs no protection from her critics. Her work is extensive and remains in print, accessible through bookstores and public libraries around the world. (Alas, her work has yet to be made available in digital formats, as her literary executors are cautious about the stability of the technology and making it any easier for careless, out-of-context proof-texting.)

I suggest that underpinning all of Jane’s work is the concept of self-organization. This was pointed out to me several years ago by Toronto businessman and philanthropist Alan Broadbent, who hired me to produce the “Ideas that Matter” programs. “Do it based on Jane’s thinking of self-organization” was what he instructed. I hadn’t a clue what he was talking about, and set off to read *Death and Life* again, which I had only skimmed as an undergraduate 20 years before. Self-organization is one of those things that once you start watching for, you see all the time. Jane was an early observer to write about what is now a common term celebrated in the life sciences, organizational development, computer software design, social network analysis, theoretical physics and quantum mechanics, public health, social work and community development, and theology even!

---

<sup>2</sup> The aforementioned Stephen Goldsmith, contributor to this volume, and Director of the Center for the Living City, always introduces himself as a “homemaker,” pointing directly to the gender role that I think significantly informed Jane’s “lens.”

### Jacobs' Principles

- Density
- Social capital
- Patterns of interaction: Networks
- Particularities and differentiation
- Feedback loops
- Self-regulating
- Generative
- Diversity
- Non-proscriptive
- Autonomy
- Bottom-up
- Informal
- Organized complexity
- Fractals

### Figure 3.3 Jacobs' principles

Source: © Mary Rowe.

Jane proposed her observations in the context of a deeply and widely held misanthropic world view that cities – where large numbers of people worked, lived, and visited – were inherently bad, evil even. You can see at the upper left of the illustration the sources for this pejorative understanding of the city: it is unnatural (misanthropy), uncontrollable (patriarchy), sick (pathology), sinful (theology), bad (morality), and a pariah (morphology). I'm sure I've left off a few others! I've inserted into this picture all the words that we hear that commonly describe various kinds of work in the city – city-building – which are always prefaced with the prefix “re,” as if the city needs to be “taken back” from the clutches of iniquity. Enter Jane Jacobs, with her fresh, fundamentally positive and hopeful observations of how people make their neighborhoods work, and how the city actually works. Jane, we know, was fundamentally interested in how things work. She was a scientist looking at experiments all around her – hence, the life sciences of biology, and the applied social sciences that observe practical behavior, are the more comfortable wheelhouse for her observations.

*Misanthropy: un-natural*

*Patriarchy: uncontrollable*

*Pathology: sick, a problem*

*Theology: sinful*

*Morality: bad*

*Morphology: pariah*

Re-birth

Re-deem

Re-mediate

Re-generate

Re-habilitate

Re-claim

Re-vitalize

Re-store

Re-build

Re-new

*Science: lab*

*Biology: hive*

*Physics: combustion*

*Ecology: ecosystem*

### Figure 3.4 Continuum of words

Source: © Mary Rowe.

My former spouse used to frequently suggest to me that the world needed a Jane Jacobs for Dummies book, a brand of publication known to university students who, more than others, often urgently need an immersion in a classic text. This would be a fool's errand, of course, as it goes against the complexity of Jacobs's thinking and the rigor of her own process. But a starter list of concepts, which Jane explains in great detail across her writing, would include these terms, provided below simply as illustration that her legacy as a non-fiction writer and public intellectual is far-reaching and likely to endure.

Density and diversity, of all kinds – these are the aforementioned two “d’s,” which go hand in hand and deliver the benefits of adjacency. Jane identified those environments where there are lots of different things going on, all the time, by different kinds of people. This has translated into mixed land uses, zoning that permits a variety of activities, public spaces that support different kinds of activities, policies and programs that support immigrants to settle and thrive, investments in culture, support for conditions that foster small business, and local currency movements.

Particularity, differentiation, resilience, and “bottom-up” – these reflect Jane's ecological understanding that systems evolve and adapt according to the specific contexts in which they are situated. Thriving businesses introduce new products as they see new markets and opportunities. They adapt if they are allowed to do so; much of her critique addresses this being prevented by poorly conceived rules that force an arbitrary uniformity. She was also dead set against many forms of standardization, because it stifled innovation. As the particularity of a certain situation is accommodated, the system becomes more differentiated: things are done differently depending on the context, and the system as a result becomes more resilient because it can adapt. She observed how economies grow by adding new work to old, and adapting to contemporary needs. Interestingly, Jane never wanted to lose the old work as new work overtook it, knowing that over time the old work would be reconsidered and adapted, again and again depending on the circumstance, adding to the diversity of the economy. This applied to economies, but also to her approach to governance and regulation. One size never fit all for Jane, and that was her problem with the many forms of that kind of thinking, whether large-scale public housing schemes or nationally financed expressway plans or certain across-the-board regulatory frameworks. It is also part of what leads people to think she was against anything “big”: what she was resistant to were things that could not easily adapt to the particularities that might manifest locally. A system is at its most diverse, and differentiated, at its extremities – where it is most local. That is its strength – the dense weave of interdependencies. Hence, her world view was one where the bottom – the edges, the “bottom” – were privileged, not the center or “top.”

Patterns of interaction: networks, feedback loops, and self-regulation – these build upon the notions above and emphasize that everything is connected; from use to need to impact to use. Jane urged her readers to pay attention to what

was actually happening in their neighborhoods and cities: were there patterns of behavior and use from which city-builders could learn? Part of that learning is dependent on the capacity to see interactions: how are decisions being arrived at? Where is the money flowing? Are there routes for feedback to influence the decision makers? If the environmental impacts of certain land use decisions are not visible and included in the decision making – if they are not internalized – wrong decisions, decisions whose impact will have to be absorbed down the road, are made. One of Jane’s great legacies is the importance of local knowledge to inform land use and planning decisions, not only because of the “rightness” of this but also because of the soundness of the information. Without that “feedback loop,” decisions are made without the benefit of critical information that only locals know.

Another crucial application of these ideas is in her fierce resistance to currency amalgamation. Without a unique currency attached to an economy, how can we know how it is functioning, as currencies measure in a timely and stark way where things are going. Similarly, Jane resisted subsidies of all kinds: for unproductive regions, for public housing schemes, for resource extraction, for agriculture. The reason is, again, because they obscured the economic realities and stymied real efforts to address those challenges in authentic, sustainable ways. This is where her ideas find resonance with libertarians, although, again, she would resist their dogmatism and have rationales for her exceptions. A critical example where we see this concept challenged would be self-regulation, which is totally dependent on visible feedback loops. If the feedback is obscured, either by economic subsidies, or by lax regulatory enforcement, or clandestine activities, then the self-regulating capacity of a system is compromised.

Society is generative – Jane was a fundamentally hopeful person, who believed that generally people, as a species, would do the right thing. She used to say she enjoyed living a long life because she was “curious to see how things turned out.” This optimism, coupled with her ecological understanding of patterns, as described above, led her to see the world as life-affirming. Her focus was not on eradicating poverty but rather on wealth-generation, which she saw as natural, and finding the obstacles to that generative activity. She famously described being cold as the absence of heat; therefore the task is to focus on how to generate heat rather than take away the cold. This idea has found a home with the asset-based, community-wealth, economic development community.

Autonomy and non-proscriptive – consistent with her views of how things evolve in ways particular to specific conditions and circumstance, Jane’s approach to governance was to favor more autonomy for local authorities with both the resources and responsibilities that entailed and a less proscriptive approach to laws and regulations. Her engagement, later in her life, with the city autonomy movement in Canada advocated that the federal and provincial governments cease their paternalistic relationships with cities that had as a result adopted a pattern of “learned helplessness.” Her views about the role of governments to zone and regulate reflected a similar view: it was more effective to create

fewer rules that prohibited only the most heinous of uses, joined with creating incentives to encourage innovations of all kinds. Don't tell a polluter to what level he is permitted to pollute, instead harshly tax him the more he does or reward him, the less he does. And similarly, just tell cities the few things they can't do because another level of government will and then let them work out what else they choose to do.

The informal as organized complexity – Jane popularized an early understanding of cities, and their economies, as evidence of “organized complexity.” In what to others was chaos and confusion, Jane noticed, over time, subtle patterns that reassured her that fundamentally the city was all right, and it did not need to be redeemed through massive clearance and cleansing. The study of complex adaptive systems, “complexity,” is now rampant, but Jane was an early describer of it. Her observations of the qualities of her immediate block, street, neighborhood, district and city identified a pattern of interconnectedness that she could see replicated between cities and their regions, and their countries. These fractals – repeated interactions seen at all scales – were spotted by Jane in 1961, when physicist Fritjof Capra, who later popularized them, was just out of his teens.

Today, 50 years since the publication of her first book and seven years since the last, the world is a Jane Jacobs world. Social networks proliferate, as they always have, but are now aided by technologies that put news about threats, hints about opportunities, contacts, tips, public data, voting records, stock market results, at almost everyone's fingertips. Feedback loops are exposed. Differentiations of every kind are for sale or borrowing. The forces at work that connect us are made more visible now: communities with their natural environments, people with their governments, design with its users, media with its consumers and generators This is a Jacobsean world, and we too now have our own tools to see what Jane so clearly pointed us to, decades ago.

To a practitioner like me, a practical way to see the Jacobs “way” was in New Orleans following the collapse of the levee protection system that flooded New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Dispatched there by a US grant-maker called blue moon fund, my initial several months were spent listening to the locals: what were their priorities, aspirations, needs? Deluged not only by floodwaters but also “experts” of every persuasion telling them what they must do, New Orleanians gradually coalesced at the most granular level. Corner by corner and block by block, forming various kinds of “hubs” unique to the most local circumstance, the most rudimentary needs of a city were improvised and resourcefully contrived, while fly-in planners and bureaucrats of every stripe strived to come up with “The Plan.”

Supporting this kind of organic “emergence” is subject to challenge from a funding world that is preoccupied with “measurable outcomes” and “scalability” (results that can be replicated to have greater “impact”). But the New Orleans dilemma is at the heart of the Jacobs contribution, and makes plain the contradiction of this event's masthead crowning Jane as Queen. Jane was a champion of the particular, the exception, the stirrings of people and their communities, and their innate resourcefulness, as evidenced in her multiple observations of streets that

work, parks that don't, business areas that thrive, shopping malls that fail, and so on. When I was first in New Orleans Jane chided me to not seek any "grand solution," but rather to pay attention to the local, organic initiatives that would emerge. She was right. They did. We'd be better to call her Ant [sic] Jane rather than Queen: her views are the antithesis of hierarchy.<sup>3</sup> This is her great legacy, which poses a tremendous challenge to the planning and urban design professions who seek to codify and formalize their trades. I had the same difficulty in selling a patient, hyper-local investment strategy for New Orleans post-Katrina to eager and well-meaning funders who needed results and impact to justify their selections.

Jacobs embraces the risk and uncertainty of aspects of urban life, like public space, shared streets, preferring to trust local vendors, and the self-correction of the market and people's behavior, privileging serendipity over control. But it takes sensible, smart infrastructures and investment supports to enable self-organization, and many planners, architects, and urban designers know this. Just as there are biologists, artists, tinkerers, and entrepreneurs who know this also.

In New Orleans many of the most creative and effective initiatives came not from downtown boardrooms, but from kitchen tables, neighborhood barbecues, local data gathering, rebuild-the-levee campaigns, and social media meet-ups and blogs. New Orleanians became the ones they'd been waiting for, developing their own ways to support new entrepreneurs, hold elected officials and government bureaucracies accountable, support the re-emergence of their indigenous culture, reinvent their media, and find new ways to address their systemic dysfunctions around public education and local governance.

Were Jane writing *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* now, perhaps she would draw her examples from the least likely places – the "high-functioning" neighborhoods in cities that top the world's livability indices, like Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Vancouver. Or would she turn her attention to the unlikely suspects: those parts of mega-cities that showcase tremendous ingenuity and improvisation: in Mumbai, Rio, and Kibera. Or also to "under-the-radar" communities, perhaps even in the suburbs of Toronto, New York, Paris, and Berlin? I think we can at least guess: Jane was infinitely curious to see what was actually working, and then to find out why. To carefully observe first what is working well in a city, its local economies and neighborhoods, then figure out what the conditions are that are making those processes possible, and what is inhibiting their flourishing: that is the Jacobs mantle.

---

3 For a clear synopsis of Jane's ideas on self-organization and how they connect to other manifestations of it, please read Stephen Johnson's *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software* (New York, NY: Scribner, 2001).

## Chapter 4

# Jane Jacobs and the Paradigm Shift: Toronto 1968–1978

*Richard White*

There can be no doubt that Jane Jacobs contributed substantially to the celebrated paradigm shift in urban thinking that began in the late 1960s. Her observations about the importance of diversity in urban activities, her adamant opposition to publicly-initiated urban renewal, her recognition of how streets function as public space, and her faith in self-directed solutions to urban problems – not to mention smaller insights like the benefits of short blocks and the disbenefits of catastrophic investment – have become standard ideas. As Robert Fishman (1996; also 1980) put it some years ago, Jacobs prompted America to “recover the true meaning of urbanism,” to which one might add not just America but much of the world – though perhaps there was more recovering to do in America than elsewhere.

At the same time, however, enough years have passed since Jacobs wrote, and enough research has been done into the history of cities and their planning since the 1960s, that her contributions might now be put into a broader perspective. We know that the transformation to which Jacobs contributed so much was a multi-dimensional phenomenon, and that voices other than hers were calling for, and effecting, change, so where does she fit in this bigger picture. How and to what extent did Jane Jacobs actually contribute to the paradigm shift?

Toronto, Canada, where Jacobs lived from 1968 until her death in 2006 – essentially the second half of her life – provides an excellent opportunity for such a study. Her life and work there have so far escaped comprehensive analysis, with the focus instead being on her earlier years in New York. This is understandable if one is examining the origins of her thinking, for New York undoubtedly shaped *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, or if one wants to understand her move into civic activism. But if one wants to examine her broader impact Toronto may be a better place to look. It allows one to observe her ideas diffusing beyond New York, for one thing. But also since Toronto planning went through a well-known paradigm shift in the early 1970s the city offers a good case for studying the anatomy of that shift. Toronto also provides an opportunity to see how much Jacobs herself took part for it is where she lived while the transformation was occurring; she is well known for her activism in New York but was she similarly active in Toronto?

It should be noted at the outset that this subject has not been completely ignored by other commentators. Her followers in Toronto, of which there are many, are

quite convinced that Jane Jacobs has substantially affected their city. As the Toronto journalist Lisa Rochon (2007: p. 40) put it, in an American publication, “It’s impossible to separate Jane from Toronto and Toronto from Jane.” Moreover, such commentators tend to see Jacobs’s influence as being a direct result of her presence: “I contend that we live and work in a different city today than would have been the case had Jane Jacobs not been here with us these last 30 years,” wrote Ken Greenberg (n.d.), an influential Toronto urban design consultant and one-time employee of the City Planning Department (and, interestingly, prior to 1970 also a *New Yorker*) (Jacobs, 1997; Greenberg, 2010; Fulford, 1995: pp. 73–90). Jacobs’s death brought forth a number of local commentaries expressing similar views about her close personal connection to Toronto; the city’s former Mayor, David Miller, even went so far as to proclaim her birthday, May 4, to be “Jane Jacobs Day” in Toronto (Wellman, 2006; *Torontopedia*, 2007). Such thinking seems to have influenced the one American scholar who has ventured into Jacobs’s Toronto period, Christopher Klemek, who wrote in his 2004 dissertation that Toronto’s adoption of a new planning paradigm represents “Jane Jacobs’s victory in exile” (Klemek, 2004: p. 248).

It is my contention that these observations are based on an insufficient understanding of Toronto and its history, both before and after Jane Jacobs arrived, and that they reflect, in the case of the Toronto commentators, a degree of local boosterism. Surely having Jane Jacobs stop your expressway or shape your neighborhoods makes one’s city a little bit special. The fact is the Toronto metropolitan area, like all growing North American metropolises, has great swaths of single-use, auto-dependent suburban development that show not the slightest influence of Jane Jacobs or her ideas; to characterize the city as inextricably interwoven with “Jane” is thus to overlook an important reality. Furthermore, many of the city’s “Jacobsean” aspects, such as the health of its older mixed-use neighborhoods, long pre-date her arrival, and their existence says more about why she liked Toronto than how she affected it – a point that can be confusing for outsiders (Brandes Gratz, 2003; Macdonald and Jacobs, 2010). Of course the focus of this study is Jane Jacobs’s impact on Toronto’s urban paradigm change, not her impact on Toronto per se, so these points, while they may inform the following analysis, will not be further argued here. But it is worth bearing in mind that any exaggeration of her general impact on the city tends to exaggerate her impact on the paradigm shift as well.

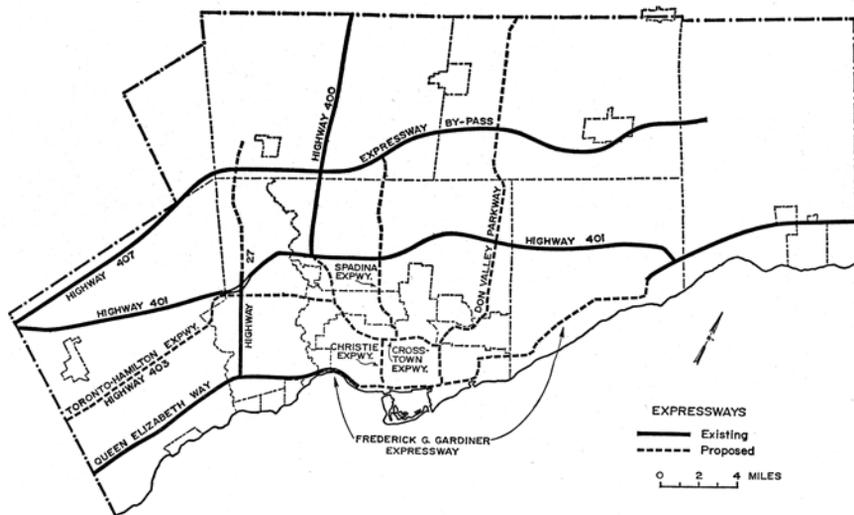
This study takes four transformative episodes in the city’s planning history between about 1968 and 1978 – Jacobs’s first decade in Toronto, and the time over which the paradigm shift is generally thought to have occurred – and assesses her role in them. The episodes are the cancellation of the Spadina Expressway, cessation of large-scale urban renewal, design of the inner-city St. Lawrence neighborhood, and a substantial revision of the city’s official plan known as the Central Area Plan; all four are considered, locally at least, to be events or developments in which Jacobs played a key part. The analysis uncovers clear evidence of her ideas influencing events in Toronto – confirming her role in

the celebrated paradigm shift – but so too does it reveal other forces at work. Moreover, her personal influence as an activist seems to have been less significant than the Toronto commentators have claimed.

## Spadina Expressway

The Spadina Expressway, or at least something comparable to it, had been envisioned since the 1940s, but it first formally appeared on paper in the 1959 plan for Metropolitan Toronto (MTPB, 1959; Nowlan, 1970; Metropolitan Toronto, 1961). It was to be a roughly ten-kilometer stretch of controlled-access highway connecting the new northern and north-western suburbs with the city core. Its northern terminus would be at Highway 401, an inter-city expressway built by the provincial government in the early 1950s across the entire metropolitan area, so the Spadina was intended to serve intercity travelers going in and out of Toronto as well as metropolitan commuters coming in and out of downtown. It was, in short, one component of a standard post-war urban expressway network. Like most big North American cities, Toronto had its inner and outer expressway loops, connectors, and by-passes all designed, conceptually at least, by the 1950s.

An important but often overlooked aspect of Toronto that distinguishes it from many American cities is that its inner city never suffered from a serious



**Figure 4.1** Toronto's regional expressway system, as built and proposed in the 1950s

Source: © Albert Rose, *Governing Metropolitan Toronto: A Social and Political Analysis* (University of California Press, 1972), p. 95.

decline after the Second World War. Its suburbs sprawled, as they did nearly everywhere, and some pockets of inner-city “blight” did exist, but overall Toronto experienced little of the notorious emptying out that characterizes so much of the post-war North American urban experience (Lemon, 1985: pp. 81–150). As a result the neighborhoods through which the expressways were to be built were often reasonably healthy, and in some cases even quite affluent, so not surprisingly neighborhood associations were quick to object when the expressway plans appeared. The main target of the initial opposition was the Crosstown Expressway, a short connector joining the two major north-south expressways just above the core area. Public opposition to this expressway was so unequivocal that Metropolitan Toronto Council voted it out the Planning Board’s plan in December 1961. It remained in the metropolitan plan for several more years – the Planning Board had a certain amount of autonomy – but there was little political will behind it.

Opposition to the Spadina came to life at that time as well. The Metropolitan Planning Board received dozens of citizens’ briefs opposing the Spadina Expressway through late 1961 (Nowlan, 1970: pp. 68–9; MTPB, 1962). Council was not prepared to give up on it, however, and approved construction of its northern portion at the same meeting that it voted to remove the Crosstown from the plan. Public opposition remained strong and a few months later, when council’s roads committee met to consider the next steps, the Council Chamber was overrun with placard-waving opponents (Leo, 1977: p. 34; *The Globe and Mail*, 1962; *Toronto Daily Star*, 1962). The expressway as originally planned was bad enough, but without the Crosstown as a connector the situation looked even worse because all inbound traffic would have nowhere to go but onto the existing streets of the Annex neighborhood – a fine old nineteenth century mixed-use neighborhood already in the early stages of gentrification – where the expressway now would end. Still no changes were made. The Planning Board did review its entire transportation plan in 1964, and this led to a few changes in the Spadina’s route and design, but the expressway was still deemed necessary. A new release of the overall metropolitan plan in 1966 included the Spadina (MTPB, 1964, 1966).

Before long, however, the tide did turn. A new technical study in 1967–68 came out supporting the Spadina Expressway but firmly opposing the Crosstown, and this recommendation seems to have unsettled the whole expressway scheme (Read Voorhees Associates, 1968; Ontario Municipal Board, 1971). Public opposition was also gaining steam. A small group of Annex neighborhood “professional people and housewives” formed what they called the Committee of Concerned Citizens in 1968 to oppose the road, and they attracted media attention and bigger local names. They were even able to garner enough political support, with the expressway’s initial funds about to run out, to have construction temporarily halted pending a further commitment of capital. A radical student protest group opposing the road (Stop Spadina Save Our City Co-ordinating Committee, abbreviated as SSSOCCC) was formed soon after, in 1969. All this was happening in the midst of a municipal election campaign in which the Spadina had become a political topic (*Toronto Daily Star*, 1969; Leo, 1977: p. 36; Nowlan, 1970: pp. 77–80;

*The Globe and Mail*, 1969b, 1970; Speck interview). The expressway had been approved by the Metropolitan Toronto Council but not by Toronto City Council, and debate arose among those running for City Council whether or not to support the Metropolitan Council's position.

It was at this time, in mid-1968, with public opposition to the expressway already well developed, that Jane Jacobs arrived in Toronto (Alexiou, 2006, Chapter 9; Allen, 1997: pp. 114–19). As fate would have it, she settled in the Annex, the neighborhood directly in the path of the expressway. Jacobs had publicly opposed the Lower Manhattan Expressway earlier in the 1960s while living in Greenwich Village, and had actively protested the Viet Nam War, so it is no surprise that as soon as she grasped the situation she began to speak out.

In February 1969, while admitting that she was perhaps a little “nervy” to do so after just six months in town, she declared the Spadina the “single greatest menace to this city” in a public speech sponsored by the local YMCA and covered in the local papers (*The Globe and Mail*, 1969a). Why and by whom she was invited to speak was not reported. Members of the Committee of Concerned Citizens recall her coming to a local meeting at about that time, early 1969, and participating in strategy discussions, though she did not announce her identity and was not recognized by the group, most of whom had not heard of her or her book (Speck interview). As the movement grew through 1969 she became more part of it, and some of the leaders began consulting her one on one, though she allowed such disturbances only at certain hours of the day (Speck, Nowlan, Jaffary interviews). Then in November 1969, in the midst of the municipal election campaign, Jacobs wrote a powerful op.-ed piece for *The Globe and Mail* in which she set forth a string of arguments against the expressway: it will cost more than expected, its construction will lead to a decline in public transit investment, one expressway will inevitably lead to another, it will not reduce commute times, and other arguments now quite familiar (Jacobs, 1969).

The expressway opponents won. The Spadina Expressway went no further than where it had been stopped in 1969 (though a lower speed “arterial road” was later put on the already-graded roadbed, extending it another two kilometers south). Metropolitan Council and its planning board never changed their position, and the Ontario Municipal Board, to which the opponents appealed in an effort to permanently halt it, dismissed the challenge and supported the Metropolitan Council's plan to build it. The expressway was killed by the Province of Ontario. In June 1971, provincial cabinet overruled the Ontario Municipal Board's decision and stopped the expressway. It was a most unusual intervention, but so thoroughly had public opinion shifted that the provincial government, which announced the cancellation just prior to an election, paid no political price.

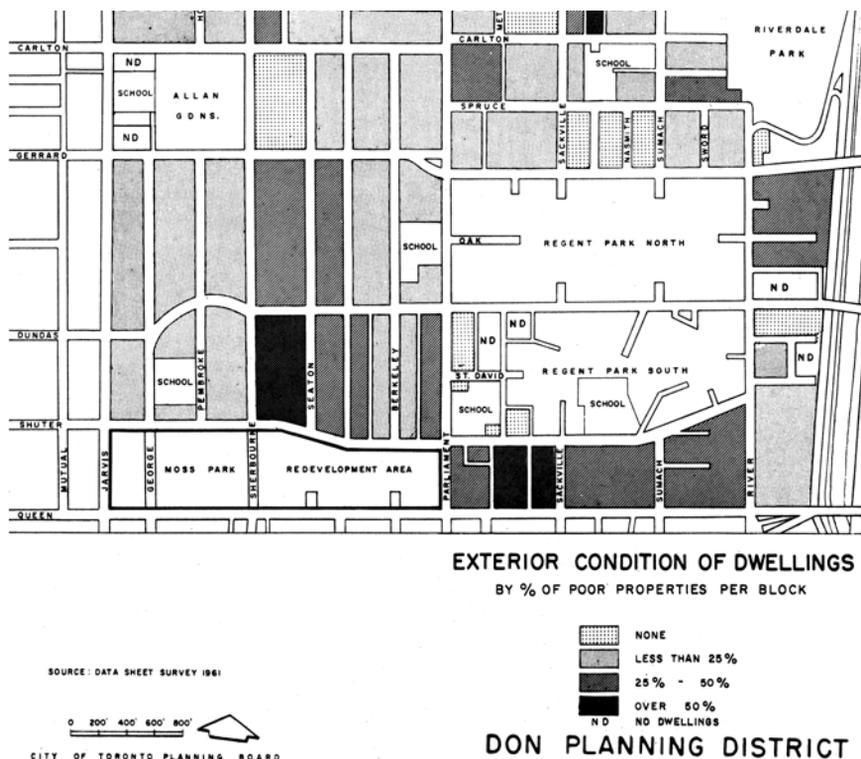
Jane Jacobs certainly played a part. Her persuasive “expressway drug” article must have won over some whose minds were not yet made up – though one might note that *The Globe and Mail* was evidently already on her side for it gave the piece a prominent placement and published a supportive editorial that same day (the other major local paper, *The Star*, was not onside – Nowlan interview). She made

other statements and public appearances, which no doubt helped the cause and gave the opponents a big boost of confidence. She spoke at the Ontario Municipal Board hearing, and was acknowledged for having “movingly painted a picture of the necessity to abandon the expressway to preserve what Toronto so uniquely has” (Ontario Municipal Board, 1971). These words came from board member W. Shub, whose opinion she did not sway – this board, as noted, voted to allow the expressway – but they show Jacobs playing a prominent part in the debate.

Yet just as certainly she was not responsible for “leading the crusade against Spadina,” as a recent book by a Toronto journalist (Falconer, 2008: p. 6) put it. As much as one wants to respect Jacobs for her contribution, one is hard pressed to say that her presence made much difference. Counter-factual positions are notoriously un-provable in history, but surely the Spadina Expressway would have been cancelled without her participation. The opposition movement, fuelled by local anger and led by local activists, already had plenty of steam up when she arrived, and public opinion had begun to turn before she became involved. One might note the many other North American cities canceling their expressways at this same time – cities where Jacobs did not live – to put the matter into perspective (Mohl, 2004). This was, after all, the tail end of the 1960s. Environmentalism had made automobiles into enemies. The Stop Spadina movement was riding an enormous cultural wave. It would have been anomalous for the expressway not to be cancelled. Admittedly, this cultural wave had been partly fuelled by Jacobs’s earlier writing, so in a sense she might be seen as having had some background influence. But since most of the initial leaders of the resistance, insofar as can be determined, knew nothing of Jacobs or her writing (Speck and Nowlan interviews), her local impact, even as an author, must be considered fairly indirect.

### **Urban Renewal in Toronto**

Jane Jacobs is also often associated with resistance to urban renewal in Toronto, and has been given credit, locally, for protecting some of the city’s older housing from demolition and inspiring a humane new style of inner-city development. In his popular 1995 book on Toronto, the journalist Robert Fulford advances this idea (Fulford, 1995, Chapter 5), and the American scholar Chris Klemek has offered a similar view, apparently drawing much of his evidence from Fulford (Klemek, 2008). There can be no doubt about Jacobs’s strong opposition to urban renewal. She announces her position in the first sentence of *Death and Life*, and then goes on to offer a book full of reasons why she thinks as she does. Nor can there be any doubt about the international significance of her ideas. But her personal impact on urban renewal in Toronto is another matter. As with the Spadina Expressway, assessing her role calls for a close look at the chronology, and when one does this one sees that indigenous factors and local agents, at work several years before Jacobs arrived, go a long way towards explaining events.



**Figure 4.2** Map of physical conditions of east downtown Toronto, 1961

Source: © City of Toronto Planning Board, "Don Planning District Appraisal" 1963, Figure 3.

Large-scale urban renewal arrived in Toronto just after the Second World War with the construction of Regent Park, an extensive public housing project built just east of the urban core from 1947 to 1957. The project comprised several dozen low-rise apartment buildings on three large city blocks – 42.5 acres in all – and housed more than 5,000 people at completion (Lemon, 1985: pp. 96–8; Rose, 1958; Brushett, 2001). The original Regent Park was quickly followed by a southward expansion of the project, generally called Regent Park South (CTPB, 1955) – a superblock of high-rise housing – which was largely completed by 1959. In the meantime, in 1956, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, an agency of the government of Canada, paid for a comprehensive study of the city's urban renewal needs, and that study's report, which identified several priority areas, became the blueprint for a modest city renewal program (CTPB, 1956). Work began promptly on the first priority area identified by that study, which soon became another superblock of high-rise public housing east of downtown called Moss Park, and rather more slowly on a second, an area west of downtown known as Alexandra Park (CTPB, 1957a and 1957b). There is no sign of resistance to

these initial projects. One is tempted to think that opposition voices were just not being allowed to speak, which might be partly true. But there are reasons to believe that resistance truly was minimal – the housing being replaced was undeniably very poor, and since the whole renewal program was new there was not yet much dissatisfaction with the redevelopment experience.

This began to change in the mid-1960s, for several reasons. The most obvious is that the city's program was expanding and affecting more people, the prime cause of which was a greater commitment, beginning in 1964, from the governments of both Canada and the Province of Ontario to fund urban renewal (CTPB, 1965; Bacher, 1993: p. 212). Among the neighborhoods selected for this new thrust was "Don Vale," a charming old area already in the early stages of gentrification, and here urban renewal ran headlong into a highly articulate middle-class local population and a solid front of resistance arose. A further stimulus to opposition, especially in the lower-income neighborhoods, was the emergence of disheartening stories from the earlier redevelopment areas about the city not paying enough for the houses it was expropriating to permit their owners to buy replacement homes (Fraser, 1972: p. 106; Sewell, 1972: pp. 23–4; Repo interview). Then came the "community organizers" – young, educated political activists of the New Left, inspired by American radicals like Saul Alinsky and Tom Hayden – on a mission to empower the low-income, marginalized people of the city (Fraser, 1972: pp. 81–4; Spinks, 1967; Daly, 1970: pp. 16–17 and pp. 33–4; Harris, 1988: pp. 6–8 and pp. 54–8; Repo and Sewell interviews). They began knocking on doors in neighborhoods slated for redevelopment in the mid to late 1960s, sometimes as volunteers and sometimes as employees of existing social service agencies, encouraging the residents to create citizens' committees and challenge city hall. The strategy was remarkably successful, and a wariness of the renewal program soon stiffened into resistance.

The first area of Toronto to experience the community organizers was Trefann Court, a small neighborhood of some 1,000 low-income residents adjacent to the already redeveloped areas of Regent Park and Moss Park (Sewell, 1972, Chapter 2; Fraser, 1972; Repo, 1977). The city had brought forward a renewal scheme in 1966 (CTPB, 1966), and community organizers moved in soon after. By 1968 the locals and their organizers had managed to get the renewal scheme officially withdrawn. Not only that, but one of those organizers, a young lawyer named John Sewell, gained such profile doing his work that he was elected city councillor for that ward in 1969, largely on the prominence gained through this activism. Together with other like-minded aldermen elected that year, and a new young planner hired for just this purpose, they devised an entirely new citizen-driven planning process for the neighborhood (CTPB, 1972a). Urban renewal, as originally conceived, was dead in Trefann Court by 1970, as it would soon be elsewhere.

Jane Jacobs is nowhere to be seen. As with the Spadina Expressway, a combination of local circumstances – in this case early gentrification – and international cultural developments – 1960s political radicalism – had considerable impact well before Jacobs arrived in Toronto. In fact, in this case

even after she arrived she took no part; unlike her involvement in stopping the Spadina Expressway, which though not critical was significant, Jacobs seems to have made no contributions to opposing urban renewal in 1969–70. She did take part several years later in a protest against the demolition of a row of old houses at Dundas and Sherbourne streets, north-west of Trefann Court – a veteran local journalist (Fulford, 1995: p. 83) has suggested a Jacobs memorial at this site – but she was certainly not the force behind it. Newspaper accounts make no mention of her, and several other participants barely recall her being there. It was the radical alderman John Sewell who orchestrated the Dundas-Sherbourne resistance, and the city's newly-elected Mayor, David Crombie, who mediated the necessary political compromise (*The Globe and Mail*, 1973; Jacobs, 1997: pp. 124–5; Sewell interview).

Yet this case introduces a new and very important dimension to the story. Though Jacobs herself played no part in these events the same is not true of her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Repo, Sewell, Jaffary, Crombie interviews). The first community organizer in Trefann Court, a University of Toronto sociology graduate named Marjaleena Repo, had read it (and in fact recalls carrying it around with her as she knocked on doors in the community), as had several other activists. Not everyone knew the book. John Sewell had not read it when he first began to organize in Trefann, though he had heard it spoken of and read it soon after. Sewell's radicalism is more rooted in New Left politics; the community group he and others organized in Trefann Court, the Trefann Community Union Project, abbreviated TCUP, was clearly inspired by Tom Hayden's NCUP in Newark, New Jersey (Fraser, 1972: p. 82). Sewell's fellow alderman in Ward 7, Karl Jaffary, recalls reading it around the time he was first elected, in 1969, though he did not meet Jacobs for several years. David Crombie had read it much earlier, in 1964, while preparing lectures on city politics at Ryerson University. Evidently *Death and Life*, with its powerful arguments against urban renewal and its underlying theme that the experts might be wrong and people should be able to decide for themselves what is best, was an inspiration for several of the people who led Toronto's opposition to urban renewal, well before Jacobs herself arrived.

## **St. Lawrence Neighborhood**

The St. Lawrence neighborhood was a fairly radical idea from the start: a large downtown public housing project for low and moderate income earners to be built on nearly derelict industrial land right against a railway/expressway corridor – not everyone's idea of an ideal residential location. It was conceived in 1974, primarily by senior staff in the city's new Housing Department. Toronto had gone through a major political transformation in late 1972 with the election of a new reform council and mayor, and in the year following that election, City Council had implemented several far-reaching reforms, one of them being the creation of

a Housing Department tasked with building a substantial amount of new public, but mixed-income, housing in the inner city. St. Lawrence was its first major step towards accomplishing this, and can thus best be understood as a manifestation



**Figure 4.3** Aerial photograph of St. Lawrence neighborhood taking shape, about 1980

*Source:* © *The Canadian Architect*, June 1981.

of the social and political goals of the city's reform movement (Caulfield, 1974, 1988; Magnusson, 1983; Goldrick, 1978; Harris, 1987; Time [Canada], 1975). Jane Jacobs played no part in the neighborhood's initial conception – in fact she had no personal involvement in the genesis or success of the entire reform movement – though she did play a part in the neighborhood's subsequent evolution.

Conceptual plans for St. Lawrence called for some 3,000 units of housing, many suitable for families, with a population of from 7,000 to 9,000. It was to be an entirely public undertaking; the city would acquire all the land, at an expected cost of over \$20 million, and control all planning and development. A little later in the process the city agreed that to avoid the uniform look of government housing there should be a multiplicity of landlords, so ownership was dispersed among a number of non-profit housing co-operatives that would engage their own architects and set their own rental policies (City of Toronto, 1979: p. 29; Sewell interview). Detailed site planning was to be overseen by a committee of non-professionals, headed by Alderman John Sewell, which included local business interests, representatives from non-profit housing, some elected politicians, and even some private developers. Initially they engaged the Toronto architectural firm of Eb Zeidler to prepare design guidelines for the project (Zeidler Partnership, 1975). Zeidler's work, however, met with a cool response from the working committee, especially chairman Sewell. With some dead-end cul-de-sacs, some grade-separated pedestrian ways, and some non-street-related housing, Zeidler's scheme had a bit too much modernism for the planners and politicians of the day, who had all espoused an anti-modern neo-traditionalism in residential design (Fong and Gordon, 1990: pp. 4–10; Sewell, Littlewood, Lewinberg interviews). So design was brought back in-house, and given to city staff in the housing and the planning departments.

By this time Jane Jacobs was playing a part, but it was through personal rather than professional connections (Littlewood, Zeidler, Schiller interviews). The head of the city's Housing Department, Michael Dennis, was her neighbor, and the architect he hired to lead the project, Alan Littlewood, was her friend. Littlewood had been working under Jacobs's husband Robert at the Zeidler architecture firm, and he had become friendly with the two of them. He let them know he wanted a new job, and Jane Jacobs recommended him to Michael Dennis, who she knew needed design staff for his new department. Littlewood has never known exactly why Jacobs recommended him. It was certainly not because he subscribed to her principles of urbanism. Littlewood had been trained in conventional architecture at the Architectural Association in London and had had minimal exposure to anything called urban design. While doing post-graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1960s he heard of Jane Jacobs, but did not read her book. He recalls that once he got to know her they conversed many times but never about urban design. In placing Littlewood in his job it appears that Jane Jacobs was helping a friend, not advancing her idea about how cities should work – a small but not insignificant point.

By mid-1975 Littlewood had been given the job of revising the unsatisfactory Zeidler scheme. Neither he nor Robert Jacobs had played any part in devising that scheme, as they had been doing unrelated work, primarily hospital design (Littlewood interview). His ideas developed in England, he recalls, while visiting the post-war New Towns around London. He found them lifeless places, and resolved to do what he could to make St. Lawrence unlike them. Back in Toronto he realized that *Death and Life*, which he had by now read and become conversant with under the tutelage of his co-worker Frank Lewinberg – a South African-trained architect who headed the project in the Planning Department – rather than Jacobs herself, offered many valuable insights, and he wanted to make use of them in the neighborhood. Littlewood and Lewinberg together devised a new site plan (City of Toronto, 1975), with some assistance from the Toronto architectural firm Baird and Sampson, whose main urban design partner, George Baird, was then a junior member of the University of Toronto Architecture faculty.

Their plan set the neighborhood on a small grid of streets, all open to the surrounding area – there would be no superblocks – on the assumption that this would counter any sense of the neighborhood being a separate public housing “project.” All the pedestrian walkways were on the ground, and all the housing was street-oriented. There would be a linear park running the length of the site, a notion that Zeidler had raised as a possibility but which Baird and Sampson had strongly supported and further developed (Fong and Gordon, 1990; Lewinberg, 1990; Baird interview). The plan was completed and approved by late 1975, and architects were soon at work on the individual buildings. Construction took place over a few years, and by 1981 the first phase was completed and occupied by several thousand people. Although it has its critics, it is frequently held up as an exemplary urban neighborhood, both in its physical form and in the process by which it was planned (Hulchanski, 1990; Fulford, 1995: pp. 73–90; Baraness, 1992: pp. 76–9; Murray, 1981; City of Toronto, 1981).

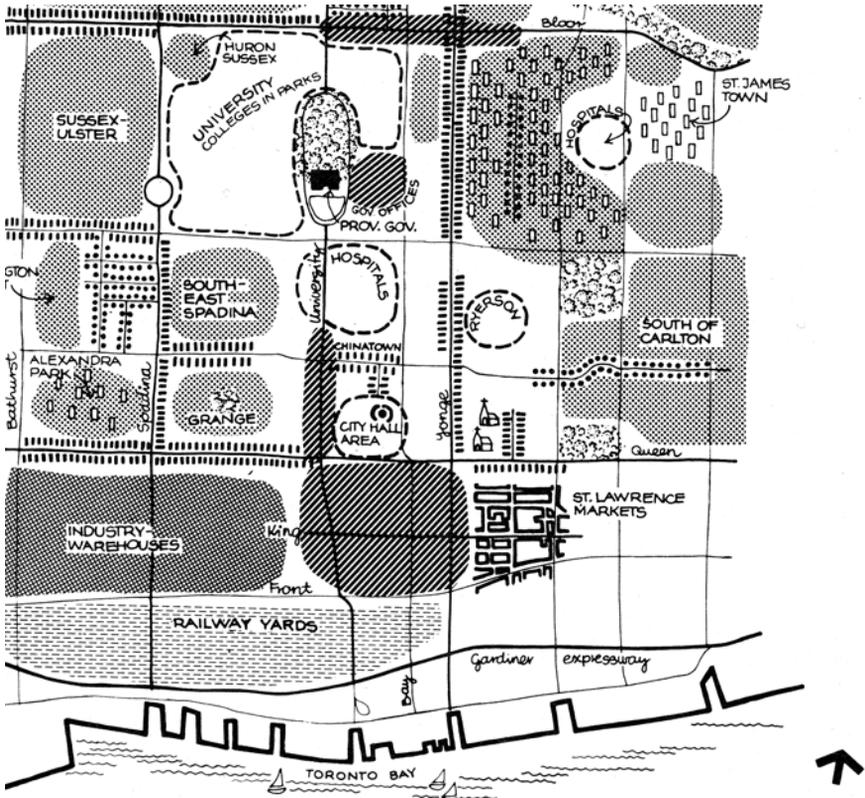
Jane Jacobs clearly plays a part, although her personal influence may be less than has been assumed. Klemek asserts that Jacobs “coached Littlewood to adhere to traditional principles of density and street lines that blended in with the existing cityscape,” and that Jacobs “worked closely with architects and officials to design and implement the project” (Klemek, 2008: pp. 310, 325). But these appear to be overstatements. It is true that several of the design details are consistent with Jacobs’s prescriptions in *Death and Life* – such as avoiding superblocks – but in interviews for this study Littlewood downplayed Jacobs’s direct influence on the design, acknowledging her as an inspiration but not as a “coach” – though admittedly he may have been a little inconsistent on this himself (Littlewood interview; Littlewood, 1997). Perhaps more definitive are the recollections of John Sewell who, as chair of the project working committee, attended almost every one of its meetings, and who watched the designs develop and mature. He has no recollection of Jacobs ever attending a meeting, or of her views ever being sought or considered (Sewell interview). Her direct personal involvement in the design – presumed on account of her personal connections – may have been overdrawn.

But *Death and Life* is another matter. It is everywhere (Littlewood, Lewinberg, Zeidler, and Baird interviews). Littlewood, though a late reader of the book, tells of being inspired by it. Frank Lewinberg, Littlewood's counterpart in the Planning Department, had read it in the late 1960s while an architecture student in South Africa. Eb Zeidler had read it and he recalls it deeply altering his ideas about urban design. The architect George Baird had read it, and recalls its relevance to public debates at this time. Of course Jacobs was neither the only author these designers read nor the only source of their ideas. Lewinberg soaked up Marxist economics and community organizing at MIT. Baird was well schooled in international urban design. Zeidler found inspiration in his childhood memories of German street life, as perhaps did Littlewood in the compact streets of Dublin (Fong and Gordon, 1990: pp. 4–14). And the “Low Rise High Density” architectural movement was already in the air (Museum of Modern Art, 1973). But Jacobs's ideas are certainly a critical part of the mix.

### Central Area Plan Review

The last case to consider is Toronto's Central Area Plan Review of 1974–78 (Friskin, 1988). Work toward reforming the city's planning and development practices began scarcely a month after the watershed election of 1972. The issue of Toronto's apparently uncontrolled development had been at the heart of the election, and Crombie felt his victory gave him a mandate, even an obligation, to act promptly (Crombie, 1973a and 1973b; Caulfield, 1974, Chapter 1; Crombie interview). The heart of the problem was the central area, which many believed was being re-built too fast. It was not only the citizenry who were dissatisfied. The city's planning staff was concerned as well. Yet the existing Official Plan and Zoning By-Law did not give public authorities the powers they needed to control this over-development (Crombie, 1973b; CTPB, 1972b; Cohen, Lewinberg and Dean interviews).

The ultimate solution was a complete revision to the city's Official Plan. But this would take time, perhaps several years, and action was needed now. So Crombie and his advisors proposed that the city impose immediate restrictions on the height of all inner-city developments for a fixed period, on the understanding that this would give the planners time to prepare the necessary comprehensive amendments, and in December 1973 City Council did just that, passing a by-law that limited development in the central area to a height of 45 feet and a gross floor area of 40,000 square feet (Caulfield, 1974, Chapter 6; Ontario Municipal Board, 1976; Crombie interview). The development industry was incensed. As they saw it, the city was drastically, and quite unjustifiably, devaluing their landholdings, and they launched a legal counter attack. Initially they succeeded in having the by-laws struck down, but that decision was quickly overturned and the by-laws re-instated, but on the strict condition that the city complete its comprehensive planning amendments, as it had promised to do by the end of September that year,



**Figure 4.4** Drawing of “Physical Form: The Central Area Pattern,” about 1975

Source: © City of Toronto Planning Board, “Central Area Plan Review, “Proposals” (October 1975, B6.1).

later extended to the end of January 1976 (CTPB, 1977). The planners met their revised deadline, completing a hefty set of “Proposals” for amending the Official Plan in October that year, after which it was debated and ultimately passed, as required, by January 1976 (CTPB, 1975a and 1975b).

The CAPR “Proposals” is one of the key documents in Toronto’s post-war planning history. It called for a fundamental re-conceptualization of the inner city from an area of large office buildings, parking lots, and shopping centers to a place where people actually lived. It proposed limiting downtown office development by some 50 percent by diverting office growth to suburban locations, and called for some 30,000 new central area households over ten years – which would be achieved by, among other things, compelling developers to include a residential component in new commercial buildings. It also sought to maintain the current

population of the central area by protecting existing residential areas adjacent to the core and by curtailing the expansion of inner-city hospitals and universities, with much of the land designated for institutional expansion to be converted to residential. And it proposed a set of new urban design guidelines to preserve historic buildings and open spaces and to minimize unpleasant wind, shadow, and noise in the public realm. These were fundamental, almost revolutionary, changes in downtown land use, and they were vehemently opposed by the development industry (Urban Development Institute, 1975), but after a marathon hearing that ran for more than a year the Ontario Municipal Board declared them acceptable. The “Central Area Plan” as it is often called – though it was just a set of amendments, not a complete plan – became part of the city’s Official Plan in 1978 (Coombes, Soskolne, Stewart, Gad, and Dean interviews; Ontario Municipal Board, 1978).

Gradually, over the years, several parts of central Toronto, even areas quite close to the financial core, became inhabited. The number of central area households did not rise as dramatically as the proposals had envisioned (30,000 in ten years) but did rise by about 15,000 in the first ten years and has continued to rise ever since (Taylor, 2008). The extent to which the new plan was responsible for this change of course can be questioned. Central area population was already rising when the amendments were developed, and one can now see that the move toward a more European style of downtown living began to occur in several North American cities in the 1970s (Bruegmann, 2005: pp. 54–8). Nevertheless, the new plan undoubtedly had some impact. At the very least it brought changes to Toronto’s inner city sooner and more fully than would have been the case without it.

The question of where the ideas came from is the critical matter in this context. They sound remarkably like the ideas of Jane Jacobs, but one must be cautious for again there are important local details to consider. The planner probably most responsible for this new vision was an Englishman named Raymond Spaxman, a man who took no part in the actual plan review but who hired all the people who did. Spaxman had been recruited directly from England as a senior planner for the City of Toronto in 1966, and he ended up essentially in charge until leaving to take a job in Vancouver in 1973 (Spaxman interview). He was trained initially as an architect at the University of Nottingham in the mid-1950s, then as a planner, but with a keen interest in Gordon Cullen and the English townscape movement, he moved quite decisively into the new realm of urban design, and when he came to Toronto he brought this inclination and expertise with him. Not long after arriving, Spaxman created a separate Central Area Division of the planning department and he staffed it not with planners but with urban designers like him – architects, most of them from elsewhere, trained in and sensitive to urban design. In doing so, Spaxman almost single-handedly brought the latest urban design ideas into the planning offices of the City of Toronto. And it was these “planners” who led the Central Area Plan Review. Toronto’s Central Area Plan should therefore be seen, above all, as a manifestation of the new architectural sub-profession of urban design taking shape in the 1960s.

Jacobs personally played no part in the plan's development. Interviews with participants reveal this unequivocally. Nobody brought her into working groups, or used her even informally as a sounding board. Two participants recall being a little wary of even approaching her because of her legendary disdain for planning (Lewinberg and Stewart interviews). It would be interesting to know what Jacobs thought about it all, especially the preliminary 45-foot height by-law – a highly aggressive intervention into the free market that might not have sat well with her libertarian principles. But there is no known record of her views on this. Quite likely she had her own work on her mind.

But *Death and Life* is, yet again, another matter. By the early 1970s that book seems to have become incorporated right into the urban design canon, so attributing the reforms to the growing field of urban design certainly does not exclude the ideas of Jane Jacobs. At least such is the impression one gets from the urban designers who came to Toronto. One of the two men who led the Central Area Plan Review, Anthony Coombes, came from Australia via Columbia University, where he had studied urban design in the mid-1960s with, among others, Charles Abrams; the other, Ron Soskolne, came from South Africa via the University of Toronto's new urban design program a few years later. Both recall reading and being strongly influenced by *Death and Life* in their urban design training (Coombes and Soskolne interviews). In fact nearly all the urban designers who worked on the review recall reading the book in their university or early working years, and being moved and influenced by it. The same can be said for a host of elected politicians, not a secondary point in this case because politicians played an essential role in the Central Area Plan Review. It is important to note, however, that Spaxman knew nothing of Jane Jacobs or the book when he arrived from England in 1966 – his new ideas on urbanism were rooted entirely in English townscapes and urban design – although he soon heard of her from the planning staff he hired and was quickly won over when he read her book. But he recalls being introduced at about the same time to the work of another important American urbanist Kevin Lynch – whose work predates Jane Jacobs – and of being inspired as much by Lynch as by Jacobs in the years that followed (Spaxman interview).

## Conclusions

What these four Toronto case studies reveal is, first, that there are indeed limits to Jane Jacobs's influence on the paradigm shift in urban thought and planning. Such an assertion sounds rather trivial, put so plainly. Would anyone actually think otherwise, and claim that Jacobs was the only cause of the transformation? Probably not, but so saintly is Jacobs's reputation among present-day urbanists that one cannot be so sure. In any case, it seems useful to offer some empirical evidence of those limits, in one city at least.

What also seems worthy of note is just how many forces were at work in these transformative episodes. Some were local factors or circumstances, such

as the non-decline of inner-city residential areas, the election of a reform mayor and council in 1972, and the strategy of staffing the city planning department with internationally trained urban designers. But others were broad international forces: anti-automobile environmentalism, 1960s political radicalism and citizen empowerment (perhaps the most striking, but under-recognized factor), the growing appeal of inner-city life, low-rise high-density architecture, the maturing of the urban design profession. Jane Jacobs was herself wrapped up in many of these, as both cause and effect, so this is not simply a list of “non-Jacobs” forces. But this detailed recounting of events in Toronto shows just how multi-faceted the paradigm shift in urban thought was, leaving one to think it might be more aptly labeled, as Peter Hall puts it in his insightful encapsulation of twentieth century planning history, a “great shift in zeitgeist” (Hall, 2000: p. 29).

We also clearly see the impact of Jacobs’s published ideas, at least those in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. The only one of the four episodes for which this is not true is the cancellation of the Spadina Expressway, as there is no sign of her book directly influencing the opposition to that road, at first anyway. For the other three, however, her ideas had an unmistakable effect. The book had been published in 1961 and drawn considerable attention, so not surprisingly it had made its way to Toronto, well in advance of Jacobs herself, through transnational professional and academic connections. And there it is in the curriculum of David Crombie’s urban politics course, in the handbag of a young community organizer in Trefann Court, and later, after Jacobs did arrive, in the minds of several internationally trained urban designers.

What also seems clear, however, is that her influence on Toronto was more a result of these published ideas than of her own activism, a finding somewhat at odds with the local commentators. Perhaps, as suggested in the introduction, these local commentators have been inclined to overdraw her personal influence on account of her international prominence; that would appear to be the case with the Spadina cancellation, where the significance of her contribution seems to have grown in step with her fame. Or perhaps over-emphasis of her activism comes directly from over-concentrating on her time in New York, probably the only city where her activism was as important as her writing. It is important to note, however, that this finding is fully consistent with the recollections of those in Toronto who knew her well. They remember Jacobs as an observer much more than a prescriber, someone who turned down far more calls for public intervention than she accepted, and who unfailingly directed her own energy into writing rather than protesting. These colleagues tend to recall her more as an inspiration than a practical leader (Crombie, Littlewood, Zeidler, Nowlan interviews). But the fact that her impact resulted more from ideas than actions does not make her any less important. One need not turn Jane Jacobs into an activist to establish her significance.

Turning briefly, in conclusion, to the larger picture: is this to say that her presence in Toronto was irrelevant? Though she herself might not have actively promoted her ideas, is it not possible that Toronto was more inclined to adopt them

because she lived there? Without a comparative study one cannot say definitively, but it does seem plausible that the local circumstances mentioned above – notably the ascendancy of the reform movement and the influx of internationally trained urban designers – helped bring her ideas into the mainstream in Toronto. As well, one should not overlook the possibility that her presence in the city did, in subtle ways, encourage the discovery of her ideas by working professionals, politicians, or even citizens at large, especially later, after she became better known. Such a proposition is probably too elusive to prove or disprove through research, but enough key Toronto people recall being “inspired” by her presence that it should not be disregarded (Zeidler interview; Greenberg, 2010: p. 117). At the same time, though, when one considers the pervasive and penetrating influence of *Death and Life* and the strength of the other factors at work – especially Toronto’s already existing urban form, and 1960s political radicalism – one wonders if Toronto might have followed the course it did even with Jane Jacobs living in Cincinnati.

### Acknowledgment

This chapter is based substantially on the author’s earlier publication “Jane Jacobs and Toronto, 1968–1978,” *Journal of Planning History*, 10(2), May 2011.

### Bibliography

- Alexiou, A.S., 2006. *Jane Jacobs: Urban Visionary*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Allen, M. (ed.), 1997. *Ideas that Matter: The Worlds of Jane Jacobs*. Owen Sound: Ginger Press.
- Bacher, J., 1993. *Keeping to the Marketplace: The Evolution of Canadian Housing Policy*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill Queens University Press.
- Baraness, M. (ed.), 1992. *Toronto Places: A Context for Urban Design*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Brandes Gratz, R., 2003. Authentic Urbanism and the Jane Jacobs Legacy. In: P. Neal (ed.), *Urban Villages and the Making of Communities*. London and New York, NY: Spon Press, pp. 19–23.
- Bruegmann, R., 2005. *Sprawl: A Compact History*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Brushett, K., 2001. *Blots on the Face of the City: The Politics of Slum Housing and Urban Renewal in Toronto, 1940–1970*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Queen’s University.
- Caulfield, J., 1974. *The Tiny Perfect Mayor*. Toronto: Lorimer.
- Caulfield, J., 1988. “Reform” as a Chaotic Concept: The Case of Toronto. *Urban History Review*, 17(2), pp. 107–11.
- City of Toronto, Housing Department, 1975. *The Block Study*, October 1975.

- City of Toronto, Commissioner of Housing (Michael Dennis), 1979. *St. Lawrence 1974–1979*.
- City of Toronto, Housing Department, 1981. *A Resident Survey in St. Lawrence Neighborhood Phase A*, January 1981.
- Crombie, D., 1973a. Memorandum, 30 January 1973, Crombie to Members of Council. CTPB Minutes, meeting of 13 February 1973, City of Toronto Archives.
- Crombie, D., 1973b. Memorandum, 26 February 1973, Crombie to Buildings and Development Committee, CTPB Minutes, meeting of 8 March 1973. City of Toronto Archives.
- City of Toronto, Planning Board (CTPB), 1955. *Report of the Joint Advisory Committee on Regent Park South*, 31 January 1955.
- CTPB, 1956. Advisory Committee on the Urban Renewal Study, *Urban Renewal: A Study of the City of Toronto*, 1956.
- CTPB, 1957a. *Redevelopment Study Area No. 1* (July 1957).
- CTPB, 1957b. *Redevelopment Study Area No. 2* (July 1957).
- CTPB, 1965. *Improvement Program for Residential Areas*, January 1965.
- CTPB, 1966. *Trefann Court Urban Renewal Scheme Redevelopment Plan*, October 1966.
- CTPB, 1972a. *The Trefann Court Urban Renewal Scheme*, January 1972.
- CTPB, 1972b. *Towards a Part II Plan for South-East Spadina* (1972).
- CTPB, 1975a. *Central Area Plan Review: Principles* (March 1975).
- CTPB, 1975b. *Central Area Plan Review: Proposals* (October 1975).
- CTPB, 1977. *The Central Area Plan: History of Events from June 1972*, 7 January 1977.
- Daly, M., 1970. *The Revolution Game: The Short, Unhappy Life of the Company of Young Canadians*. Toronto: New Press.
- Falconer, T., 2008. *Drive: A Road Trip Through our Complicated Affair with the Automobile*. Toronto: Viking Canada.
- Fishman, R., 1996. The Mumford-Jacobs Debate. *Planning History Studies*, 10(1–2), pp. 3–11.
- Fishman, R., 1980. The Anti-Planners: The Contemporary Revolt Against Planning and its Significance for Planning History. In: G.E. Cherry (ed.), *Shaping an Urban World*. London: Mansell, pp. 243–52.
- Fong, S., and Gordon, D.L.A., 1990. Designing St Lawrence. In: D.L.A. Gordon (ed.), *Learning from St Lawrence*. Toronto: School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, pp. 4–10.
- Gordon, D.L.A. (ed.), 1990. *Learning from St Lawrence: Conference Proceedings*. Toronto: School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute.
- Fraser, G., 1972. *Fighting Back: Urban Renewal in Trefann Court*. Toronto: Hakkert.
- Freeman, A., 1997. Jane Jacobs. *The Globe and Mail*, 9 June 1984. In: M. Allen (ed.), *Ideas that Matter*. Owen Sound: Ginger Press.

- Freestone, R. (ed.), 2000. *Urban Planning in a Changing World: The Twentieth Century Experience*. London: E&FN Spon.
- Frisken, F., 1988. *City Policy-Making in Theory and Practice: The Case of Toronto's Downtown Plan*. London, ON: University of Western Ontario Department of Political Science.
- Fulford, R., 1995. *Accidental City: The Transformation of Toronto*. Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross.
- Goldrick, M., 1978. The Anatomy of Urban Reform in Toronto. *City Magazine*, May/June 1978, 3(4/5), pp. 29–39.
- Goldsmith, S.A. and Elizabeth, L. (eds), 2010. *What We See: Advancing the Observations of Jane Jacobs*. Oakland, CA: New Village Press.
- Greenberg, K., n.d. Uncommon Sense: A Focus on the Real and the Particular in Cities. *Ideas that Matter The Quarterly*, 1(3). Available at: <http://www.ideasthatmatter.com> [accessed 8 May 2008].
- Greenberg, K., 2010. The Interconnectedness of Things. In: S.A. Goldsmith and L. Elizabeth (eds), *What We See*. Oakland, CA: New Village Press, pp. 116–24.
- Hall, P., 2000. The Centenary of Modern Planning. In: R. Freestone (ed.), *Urban Planning in a Changing World*. London: Routledge, pp. 20–39.
- Harris, R., 1987. A Social Movement in Urban Politics: A Reinterpretation of Urban Reform in Canada. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 11(3), pp. 363–81.
- Harris, R., 1988. *Democracy in Kingston: A Social Movement in Urban Politics 1965–1970*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Hulchanski, J.D., 1990. Planning New Neighborhoods: Lessons from Toronto's St Lawrence Neighborhood. In: D.L.A. Gordon (ed.), *Learning from St Lawrence*. Toronto: School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, p. 3.2–3.10.
- Jacobs, J., 1969. A City Getting Hooked on the Expressway Drug. *The Globe and Mail*, 1 November 1969, p. 7.
- Jacobs, J., 1997. Big Plans and Little Plans. In: M. Allen (ed.), *Ideas that Matter*. Owen Sound: Ginger Press, pp. 124–5.
- Klemek, C., 2004. Urbanism as Reform: Modernist Planning and the Crisis of Urban Liberalism in Europe and North America, 1945–1975. Unpublished Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, 2004.
- Klemek, C., 2008. From Political Outsider to Power Broker in Two “Great American Cities”: Jane Jacobs and the Fall of the Urban Renewal Order. *Journal of Urban History*, January 2008, 34(2), pp. 309–32.
- Kostash, M., 1980. *Long Way From Home: The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada*. Toronto: Lorimer.
- Lemon, J., 1985. *Toronto Since 1918: An Illustrated History*. Toronto: Lorimer.
- Leo, C., 1977. *The Politics of Urban Development: Canadian Urban Expressway Disputes*. Toronto: The Institute of Public Administration of Canada.
- Lewinberg, F., 1990. Comments on St Lawrence. In: D.L.A. Gordon (ed.), *Learning from St Lawrence*. Owen Sound, ON: Ginger Press, pp. 3.11–3.17.

- Littlewood, A., 1997. Alan Littlewood, Architect. In: M. Allen (ed.), *Ideas that Matter*. Owen Sound: Ginger Press, pp. 202–4.
- Macdonald, E. and Jacobs, A., 2010. Queen Street. In: S.A. Goldsmith and L. Elizabeth (eds), *What We See*. Oakland, CA: New Village Press, pp. 108–15.
- Magnusson, W., 1983. Toronto. In: W. Magnusson and A. Sancton (eds), *City Politics in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Mennel, T., Steffens, J. and Klemek, C. (eds), 2007. *Block by Block: Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York*. New York, NY: Municipal Art Society of New York.
- Metropolitan Toronto, 1961. Roads and Traffic Committee, Report No. 24, Metropolitan Toronto Council Minutes, 2606–2611.
- Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board (MTPB), 1959. Official Plan of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area.
- MTPB, 1962. Report on the Spadina Expressway Briefs and Ratepayer Presentations, February 1962.
- MTPB, 1964. Report on the Metropolitan Toronto Transportation Plan. Toronto, 1964.
- MTPB, 1966. Metropolitan Plan for the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area. Toronto, 1966.
- Mohl, R.A., 2004. Stop the Road: Freeway Revolts in American Cities. *Journal of Urban History*, 30(5), pp. 674–706.
- Museum of Modern Art, 1973. *Another Chance for Housing: Low Rise Alternatives*. New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art.
- Murray, J.A., 1981. Progress Report: St. Lawrence Neighborhood. *Canadian Architect*, 26(6), pp. 14–28.
- Nowlan, D. and Nowlan, N., 1970. *The Bad Trip: The Untold Story of the Spadina Expressway*. Toronto: House of Anansi.
- Ontario Municipal Board, 1971. Decision on the Spadina Expressway Prepared by the Spadina Review Corporation. Toronto, 1971.
- Ontario Municipal Board, 1976. The Ontario Municipal Board Decision on the City of Toronto's 45 foot By-law. In: L.D. Feldman and M.D. Goldrick (eds), *Politics and Government of Urban Canada: Selected Readings*, Third Edition. Toronto: Methuen, pp. 235–54.
- Ontario Municipal Board, 1978. Central Area Plan: Decision of the OMB Re. Pt. 1 Official Plan, City of Toronto, 30 June 1978.
- Read Voorhees Associates, 1968. Central Area Transportation Study: Metropolitan Toronto.
- Repo, M., 1977. Organizing 'the Poor' – Against the Working Class. In: J. Cowley (ed.), *Community or Class Struggle?* London: Stage 1.
- Rochon, L., 2007. New Ideas Require Old Buildings. In: T. Mennel, J. Steffens and C. Klemek, (eds), *Block by Block: Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York*. New York, NY: Municipal Art Society of New York, pp. 40–42.
- Rose, A., 1958. *Regent Park: A Study in Slum Clearance*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

- Sewell, J., 1972. *Up Against City Hall*, Chapter 2. Toronto: Lorimer.
- Spinks, S., 1967. Urban Renewal in Canadian Cities. *Our Generation*, 5(2), pp. 102–5.
- Taylor, Z., 2008. Unpublished Memorandum on Central Area population, based on census data.
- Time* [Canada], 1975. 23 July.
- The Globe and Mail*, 1962. 20 February, p. 5.
- The Globe and Mail*, 1969a. Author says Spadina Expressway is City's Single Greatest Menace. 5 February, p. 9.
- The Globe and Mail*, 1969b. 250 Ask Spadina Halt. 17 December.
- The Globe and Mail*, 1970. Expressway Committee Plans to SSSOCCC it to Toronto. 17 January.
- The Globe and Mail*, 1973. Crombie Wins Stay of Demolition on Sherbourne. 2 April.
- Toronto Daily Star*, 1962. Metro Road Committee OKs Spadina Expressway, Transit. 20 February, p. 25.
- Toronto Daily Star*, 1969. Election War Breaks Out Over Spadina Expressway. 1 November, p. 9.
- Torontonian, 2007. Proclamation, Jane Jacobs Day May 4, 2007. Available at: [http://www.torontopedia.ca/Jane\\_Jacobs\\_Day](http://www.torontopedia.ca/Jane_Jacobs_Day) [accessed 20 April 2012].
- Urban Development Institute, 1975. Brief to the CTPB on the CAPR, December 1975.
- Wellman, B., 2006. Jane Jacobs, the Torontonians. *University of Toronto Centre for Urban and Community Studies*. Research Bulletin #30, July 2006.
- Zeidler Partnership Architects, 1975. *Design Guidelines for the Proposed St Lawrence Neighborhood Site*, April 1975.

## Appendix of Interviews

- Tony Coombes, 26 November 2007, 27 February 2008.
- Howard Cohen, 29 November 2007.
- Raymond Spaxman, 5 December 2007, 14 April 2008.
- Frank Lewinberg, 14 December 2007.
- Karl Jaffary, 21 December 2007.
- Susan Schiller, 14 January 2008.
- Greg Stewart, 5 February, 14 February 2008.
- Marjaleena Repo, 13 February 2008.
- Alan Dean, 14 February 2008.
- Gunter Gad, 19 February 2008.
- George Baird, 19 February 2008.
- Ken Greenberg, 6 March 2008.
- Dennis Hefferon, 14 March 2008.
- David Weinberg, 18 March 2008.

Ron Soskolne, 27 March 2008.

Ken Whitwell, 1 April 2008.

Alan Littlewood, 16 May 2008.

Eb Zeidler, 9 June 2008.

David Crombie, 18 June 2008, 21 July 2008.

John Sewell, 20 June 2008, 15 September 2008.

David and Nadine Nowlan, 23 September 2008.

Bobbi Speck, 23 September 2008.

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

PART III  
Jane Jacobs “A Radical Thinker” –  
“Cities First”

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

## Chapter 5

# Visual Order and Perceptual Form: Contrasting Jane Jacobs's Urban Design Rejection with Kevin Lynch's Approach

Jörg Seifert

The following chapter deals with Jane Jacobs and her stance on the visual configuration of the built environment, which she set out in 1961 in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. For a variety of reasons, her views must be considered against the background of Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City*, which appeared just before her book and today counts as the first text in the canon of the post-war American debates on urban design.

As a starting point, we will cast our eye over the two protagonists, as we come across them in a photo some 50 years old, amid a lively yet relaxed atmosphere in the distinguished company of specialists. Right of center, we can recognize Jane Jacobs and Kevin Lynch standing right next to each other, their eyes and their bodies are, however, turned away from each other, and each is engaged in lively conversation with other people. What is the relationship between the two, then? Is it a case of bitter rivals, were asked out of politeness to pose for a photo – and who feel compelled to express their mutual dislike, and document it for posterity, by the way they are standing and looking? Or is it rather more a case of a staged scene, where the two protagonists had come together quite voluntarily? Had they perhaps just been talking quite intensively, and now the moment had come – possibly for reasons of politeness – to change topics and partners (temporarily)? A similar photo could quite plausibly show a married couple as hosts, having invited people to a garden party and now making sure their guests are enjoying themselves. But let us not overtax our exegesis of the image at this point ...

We will turn instead to the positions of Jacobs and Lynch in the key question by means of Jacobs's declaration on Visual Order in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* and will preface that question with a few more facts on the context in which the image came about: the reason they met was the Urban Design Criticism Conference staged by the University of Pennsylvania in October 1958 and held near New York. At that time, Lynch was just midway through the final intensive phase of his research project, "The Perceptual Form of the City," which he had begun with Gyorgy Kepes in 1954 and which, six years later – without Kepes this time – gave rise to *The Image of the City*. In the case of Jane Jacobs,

we have to regard the presence of a female activist and journalist amidst this male academic world as anything but usual. When she got to know Lynch at the conference, she had published her article, “Downtown is for people” in *Fortune* only a few months previously and had just received her writing scholarship for *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* from the Rockefeller Foundation, which also facilitated Lynch’s research (Laurence, 2006: pp. 163f.; Orillard, 2009: pp. 296ff.; Seifert, 2011: pp. 77ff.).

### Jane Jacobs on Visual Order: A Telegraphic Synopsis

Before we can relate Jacobs’s positions to those of Lynch, her own statements in Chapter 19 of *Death and Life* should first be summarized. The chapter divides crudely into two main parts: the first is theoretical-polemical and the second, a somewhat longer part, deals with configuring a city design and the concomitant practical activities. The first part’s polemic takes issue with an artistic understanding of planning and, in that connection, with seemingly homogenous settlement



**Figure 5.1** Differences and intersections: *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs and *The Image of the City* by Kevin Lynch

Source: © Jörg Seifert.

patterns. Here, Jacobs makes clear her rejection of large-scale structures, which derive from dubious transferences. By means of a metaphor, she elucidates her concepts of a city's configuration and form and offers conclusions on the role of city design and its areas of responsibility before subsequently turning the aspect of art into an anti-elitist and practical one tailored to everyday life.

The second part initially takes the street as a primary element in visual organization. Here, she attaches a compact definition of the problem, as regards perception and design, to the contradiction between visual diversity and density in the immediate vicinity and its visible extension into the distance. A relative wide-ranging explication of practical possibilities for intervention follows by means of diverse visual street interruptions, of landmarks, and – scarcely separated from these first two – by means of so-called eye catchers, which she clearly understands, however, as a superior category. In the final paragraphs, she also deals briefly with unifiers – that is, instruments from the classical repertoire of urban development – which have an integrative effect, homogenize individual elements and bind them together. At the same time, however, Jacobs also stresses the active role of recipients, who organize details in their own individual ways.

In any case, these unifiers are not understood as anything more than incremental, complementary elements in devising actual urban structures. Jacobs (1992 [1961]: p. 390) stresses that "... emphasis on bits and pieces is of the essence: this is what a city is, bits and pieces that supplement each other and support each other." It is precisely this statement that the metaphor already mentioned illustrates. For that reason, the latter has to be understood as the conceptual essence of the chapter and will come in for closer attention in what follows.

### **Not Structure, but Fires: A Metaphor for the Design of a City**

As already indicated, Jacobs dismisses analogies of cities as objects, structures, and organisms. If urban designers and planners were to look for instruments for establishing a "'skeleton' of city structure" – by, for instance, imposing highways or even promenades – then they would be off on the wrong track. Cities simply do not resemble buildings held together with steel framing and neither are they constructed like mammals or beehives. And although Jacobs makes it clear that she regards metaphors for cities as fundamentally problematic, she does offer her own metaphorical interpretation of what a city is:

... perhaps the best analogy is to imagine a large field in darkness. In the field many fires are burning. They are of many sizes, some great, others small; some far apart, others dotted close together; some are brightening, some are slowly going out. Each fire, large or small, extends its radiance into the surrounding murk, and thus it carves out a space. But the space and the shape of that space exist only to the extent that the light from the fire creates it.

The murk has no shape or pattern except where it is carved into space by the light. Where the murk between the lights becomes deep and indefinable and shapeless, the only way to give it form or structure is to kindle new fires in the murk or sufficiently enlarge the nearest existing fires.

Only intricacy and vitality of use can give, to the parts of the city, appropriate structure and shape. ...

Wherever the fires of use and vitality fail to extend to in a city is a place in the murk, a place essentially without city form and structure. Without that vital light, no seeking for 'skeletons' or 'frameworks' or 'cells' on which to hang the place can bring it into a city form.

These metaphoric space-defining fires are formed – to get back to tangible realities – by areas where diverse city uses and users give each other close-grained and lively support.

This is the essential order which city design can assist. These areas of vitality need to have their functional order clarified. As cities get more such areas and less gray areas or murk, the need and the opportunities for clarification of this order will increase. (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: pp. 376f.)

The omitted passage contains a reference to Lynch. Before returning to that, it seems reasonable to stay briefly with her fire imagery – because it does, after all, furnish a distinctly rich metaphor.

For planners, her metaphor may perhaps initially bring to mind the communities in Patrick Abercrombie's County of London Plan (Forshaw and Abercrombie, 1943: p. 20) or Kevin Lynch's sketch of the Boston districts from *The Image of the City* (1960: p. 69). Given Jacobs's politics and her personal biography, it even seems likely that, with these deliberations, she wanted to elevate the concept of neighborhoods to be the keystone of urban design considerations. However, a glance at Chapter 6 of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* makes clear that this account could only be a misunderstanding – partly owing to the somewhat ambiguous metaphor, but mainly to a shallow reading. We do perhaps imagine figures singing and warming themselves around these fires in their romantic glow – Jacobs, however, does not spare them a single word – they do not stand in any way for introverted neighborhoods existing alongside each other, and out of which the city perhaps comes together as a wider expanse. It is exactly this ideal that Jane Jacobs (1992 [1961]: pp. 112ff.) decisively rejects in Chapter 6. In contrast to small towns and villages, introverted and closed-off is precisely what city neighborhoods are not; city-dwellers make use of the entire urban area in everyday life, and many "city neighbors" are actually only linked by the fact "that they share a fragment of geography," which, however, does need to govern itself in a civilized manner.

What does this metaphor, however, really express? It should have become clear that the imagined romanticism – or also archaism – adhering to the element of fire is here much less central than is the dynamism of the constantly changing everyday life in cities. And connected with that is an arguably fragmented urban configuration, a discontinuous structure and form. If we extricate ourselves from the deceptive image of the camp fire, then the metaphor with its dynamics brings to mind one introduced by the German philosopher Nicolai Hartmann (1926: p. 176) as a means of illustrating changing values: with Hartmann, they are not fires, but spotlights, articulated, variable in size, which sweep across a – here, however, densely inscribed – plain and stand for a limited and changeable sense of values.

Returning to Jacobs: in the first instance, design, structure, and form do not here mean what is material, built, but something socio-cultural, that endows built objects, in their various realizations, with meaning. What do “light” and “darkness” stand for in this image, then? Fire stands for complexity and vitality in usages, and only where this life, this richness predominates do structured, formed cities exist, according to Jacobs. The remainder may well be part of a city too, but it is a mass devoid of shape, structure or face. To this extent, we can perceive here an implicit consideration of Koolhaas’s Generic City, distinctly *avant la lettre*. That would bring us into the “darkness,” to which Jacobs assigns under- and unused, but also mono-functional areas – that is, then, not only wasteland in the worst case, but equally planning in the spirit of CIAM IV too.<sup>1</sup>

Configured space – to come back into the “light” – only exist for Jacobs in as far as it is lived. It is a question of space as Michel de Certeau (1988: pp. 177–238) uses the notion to distinguish it from location – or respectively, of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s anthropological space, as distinct from the geometrical concept. This space is constituted by the way it radiates a vital core beyond itself; it only exists within the “range” of this vitality, of the significance of this core. With Jacobs, space and the configuration of space are, therefore, fundamentally linked to importance and to its surplus beyond itself, and so to centrality. That means, a neighborhood can be “light” or “dark,” vital or unformed; there can be “light” as well as “dark” areas within one and the same neighborhood, or respectively, a “light” can equally well spread itself over several neighborhoods. If we look at several “fires” simultaneously, then, 40 years before Martina Löw (2001), we can, in addition, discern the beginnings of a relational concept of space.

---

1 At this point, one could indeed cryptically remark that large systems of infrastructure, such as highway interchanges, do demonstrate intensive and dynamic patterns of use – especially as Jane Jacobs did not abominate cars utterly. She logically presumes mobility as a condition for a functioning city. However, it is also clear that she wants to keep car traffic out of the fractionalized, dense quarters of a city and wants to reduce it overall. In Chapter 18, she speaks of the “attrition of automobiles” (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: pp. 338–71). To that extent, she does regard highway structures as among the “wrong” means of bringing order – “light” – into the city. These radical rejections must, however, be seen in the context of her personal reaction to planning at the time, such as that for the Lower Manhattan Expressway directly to the south of her own residence at 555 Hudson Street.

Finally, the metaphor contains one further dimension, with which – at long last – Lynch also comes into the game again: only what different people and groups perceive and use by dint of their multilayered everyday practices exists for them, has a perceptible, imaginable, and memorable form in the sense of the fire metaphor: collective use coins collective memory. To that extent, Jacobs's reflections also point towards the shared dimension of mental city images, which Lynch sought to fathom through his studies in Boston, Jersey City, and Los Angeles and to instrumentalize for the development of more objectifiable rules for urban design which is convincing.

Which passage from Lynch's *The Image of the City* does Jacobs quote, then, and how does she use what she quotes? Here it concerns the summarized assessment of sketch maps in the context of qualitative surveys conducted in Los Angeles. What Lynch stresses is the fact that the interviewees leave highways off the sketches, although they are certainly familiar with their locations and structures. We have to add, however, that, in addition to drawing sketches, respondents were asked to provide directions solely from the perspective of pedestrians and not from that of drivers. Lynch (1960: p. 65) writes:

Many subjects had difficulty in making a mental connection between the fast highway and the remainder of the city structure ... They would in imagination, even walk across the Hollywood Freeway as if it did not exist. A high-speed artery may not necessarily be the best way of visually delimiting a central district.

In contrast to Lynch, for Jane Jacobs the city equates very much to the pedestrian city, where highways are inaccessible, disturbing elements. But she also points to further passages by Lynch, which deal with other places and areas the interviewees do not remember, in spite of their prominent location in the urban fabric. Whilst Lynch categorizes such districts as zones with problems and seeks to overcome such blind spots through reviewing their structures, Jacobs concludes that overarching spatial structures fundamentally do not exist.<sup>2</sup> With her, it is not these “‘lost’ areas” or “‘lost’ spaces” that show up as islands, but on the contrary, what shows up are the comprehensible, clearly-formed areas, and it is around them there swills a nothingness devoid of structure. Jacobs, therefore, underpins her fundamental concepts of the city by a detached and idiosyncratic interpretation of the empirical findings, which Lynch had already pre-selected, interpreted, and presented, based on his surveys in the three cities already named.

In this context, it does, then, seem interesting how Lynch, in turn, reacted to this secondary interpretation of his material. However, it must be noted in advance, that – given the reference to Lynch – the fires and their patches of light in Jacobs's

---

2 At least, designing the interconnections of “bits and pieces” does not seem to be a relevant task, or, in other words: establishing such frameworks – to which Lynch (1958: pp. 381ff.; 1965: pp. 291ff.) repeatedly refers – is, according to Jane Jacobs, not a matter of design.

metaphor can be understood as an alternative way of reading the nodes as one of the five elements of the environmental image Lynch frequently cites. According to him, these nodes can function as the “focus and epitome of a district” – one more of the five elements. For Jacobs, there does not, as already mentioned, exist any overarching form and structure between nodes, or respectively, “bits and pieces.” Here, what becomes obvious is not only a fundamental difference to Lynch – whose work is considered “the only extant philosophy of large-scale design” (Banerjee and Southworth, 1990: p. 25) – but also a limitation of the metaphor: The fires in the field are not obviously interconnected with each other but instead seem to develop their dynamics quite autonomously.

In a posthumously published article titled, “The Visual Shape of the Shapeless Metropolis,” Lynch (1990: p. 71) does, for his part, point to the metaphor being based on the way Jacobs understands cities. With that, he ignores her decisive premise on non-existing, structural contexts, or respectively, he converts them, as it were, into an initial circumstance motivating a (relatively simple) strategy for developing metropolitan form. As his thinking runs:

... we may use a set of focal points to organize the region. In this case, these foci must be rooted, connected somehow to their immediate environs, so that these environs can be organized around them.

a. The simplest form is simply a collection of distinctive foci, each of which confers a sense of place to its hinterland, without there being any large-scale system of connection. If the foci are sufficiently dense, and sufficiently differentiated, one can memorize the set, and every location in the region is now ‘placed.’<sup>3</sup> But, at the metropolitan scale, a sufficiently dense set would be too numerous to be remembered as distinctive, or organized in spatial relation to each other.

So did Lynch and Jacobs – consciously or unconsciously – well and truly misunderstand each other? Did they instrumentalize the respective other position for their own purposes? Were they only standing next to each other to mine each other’s resources? Or are there actually still more obvious intersections? The following, comparative presentation of a few loose fragments cannot answer this question conclusively, but it can promote discussion about it.

### **A Comparison of Selected Positions of Jane Jacobs and Kevin Lynch**

A fundamental difference consists in the attitudes both take to organic, homogenous structures, which certainly depend on their different relations to Europe. Lynch – who, for example, deems continuity as one of ten indexes for quality in the

---

3 Note, Jane Jacobs recommends this as the most realistic model for city organization, see *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

development of cities – got to know and appreciate various European cities on a study-trip in 1952. In contrast, for Jacobs such structures, which Rudolf Arnheim (1977: pp. 114ff.) designated, for example, “environment[s] in the nature of a texture rather than a design,” are nothing more than the expression of closed-off, reactionary societies. Linked to that is also a fundamentally different attitude to artistic initiatives in planning. Where Lynch acknowledges urban or respectively city design as a specific art form, for Jacobs, creative attempts to lend cities coherent form and structure amount to taxidermy and, in her opinion, lead to “dead, stuffed cities” (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: p. 373). Unfortunately, at this juncture we cannot go any further into this point, including the question as to what understanding of art both draw on and with what intentions.

In both cases, their differing understandings of structure and form result from a more or less fragmented way of seeing. If Lynch (1960: p. 8) does initially postulate the environmental image in a triad of structure, identity, and significance, he does almost simultaneously try to tone down the components of the significance for analytical purposes albeit temporarily – something which he justifies with the limited influence of urban developers, but which will, all the same, attract considerable criticism of him. With structure and identity, Lynch, therefore, focuses on the physically material dimension, whilst what are crucially significant with Jacobs are precisely the immaterial components of a variety of functions, human activity, and density.

Although both positions are complementary in this point, it is interesting that they do arrive at quite similar insights as regards the intensity of urban design efforts: for Jacobs, striving for visual order serves to support functional order. “Keeping the fires going” means it is only where “something is happening,” “where something is developing” that we have options for action and the need for it in urban design. In Lynch’s terminology, we could say: only the nodes and their immediate vicinity require any attention from designers. That Lynch does come to quite similar conclusions is due to the insight that (1) resources are simply too limited to deal with everything with the same intensity, and that (2) limitation leads to notable contrasts in sequence.

Common concerns and differences manifest themselves in their – here meant literally – perspectives on cities. Both writers take the perspective of streets and pedestrians in their works: the horizontal sight-line people adopt when using cities. In contrast to Lynch, Jacobs (1992 [1961]: p. 379) prefers this, however, as exclusively the “right” perspective on cities; the overhead viewpoint seems obsolete. By using drawings and photos, Lynch, for his part, does work with street-perspective too, but with him a shifting between horizontal and vertical sight-lines comes about. The now well-known sketches from *The Image of the City* can even count as one particular quintessence from the studies. Therefore, we can assume he preferred – in contrast to *The View from the Road* (Appleyard et al., 1964) – the vertical map view.<sup>4</sup>

---

4 By the way, he also took the construct of the cognitive map far more literally than do many researchers who came after him, for example, cognitive psychologists.

This difference certainly goes together with a distinct professional imprint: Lynch's expert viewpoint compared to the layperson's from Jacobs. This latter does not focus on views from maps, but certainly does reflect different ways of seeing city space, depending on whether one is architecturally trained or not. For her, the expert viewpoint tends to soar into the distance, whilst the majority of the city users concentrate on the – necessarily – rich and varied foreground (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: p. 379). From that she deduces that urban design will either have to stage interventions, most likely in the immediate vicinity, or else that it would be necessary to create such immediate vicinities in the first place by means of urban design. As already mentioned, the basic problem of streets consists for her of the contradiction between proximity and visual density on the one hand, and streetscapes continuing into the distance, on the other. For Jacobs, endlessness is synonymous with inhumanity. She demands functional density and variety as an indispensable condition, which consequently means streets cannot extend themselves with no regard to visual density. Views, depth of perspective, vistas of distance do not seem to represent any qualities for her (the urban areas poor in functions and, therefore, poor visually too are, of course, devoid of shape and structure). This results in her demand for visual interruptions, as well as for closed urban spaces, for which she makes concrete suggestions. If Lynch, for example, focuses on an elevated building, then he is concerned with what can be seen looking through underneath it, whilst Jacobs brings in bridging buildings standing across streets – or even buildings sited right in the street, like Grand Central Station – as a possibility of closing off urban space visually.

A further point: both do not assess cities according to stylistic viewpoints, yet all the same, Jacobs is far more rigorous and also more dogmatic than Lynch. For him, the Victorian gingerbread can furnish just as valuable a contribution to perception and orientation as the elevated building as one of the benchmarks of Le Corbusier's modernity (Seifert, 2011: p. 177). Instead, Jacobs (1992 [1961]: p. 375) rejects the latter just as decidedly as she deems the City Beautiful movement, "primarily architectural design cults." All in all, Lynch's attitude seems in many cases more flexible, and we could also say: more opportunistic – an attitude that comes across as decidedly both/and, whilst Jacobs shows tendencies towards a decided neither/nor stance. Lynch, for example, can be discerned as somewhat more complex, freer as regards the switch in scale; for him, both a door handle and a church tower can function as landmarks.<sup>5</sup>

As far as the question of landmarks goes, there are indeed different emphases here too, but equally, however, significant parallels as well. For Jacobs (1992 [1961]: p. 384), landmarks fulfill three explanatory functions as regards the organization of cities. They are, firstly, a vital element for orientation. Secondly, they designate

---

5 For all that, however, the metaphor of the fires waxing brighter and darker does, for its part, contain a way of looking at cities, which is dynamic in terms of time, and Lynch, in fact, completely sees the necessity for it too, yet he does not do adequate justice with his five image elements.

and support urban variety through their difference from their surroundings and the consequent significance allotted them. Thirdly, they can – if properly positioned – indicate functionally important but visually undermined areas. In all this, the components of meaning seem, in their turn, to be important; the ones that Lynch, as already mentioned, tried first of all to exclude. Lynch (1960: p. 101) does, in fact, also point quite definitely to the way places redolent with history contribute to making landmarks memorable and capable of functioning, even though such reflections do take something of a backseat with him.

Jacobs considers buildings to be the most important landmarks and stresses how they can be differentiated according to function and their use set apart from their surroundings. She explicates this with the example of the Trinity Church in New York, which does come across as an effective landmark for several reasons – the predestined site, among other things, contributes to that too – but what is decisive is the functional difference. This church would not be able to stand out amid a crowd of further churches, but on the other hand, an office building with similarly small dimensions could not perform the same either (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: p. 385).

In *The Image of the City*, Lynch (1960: pp. 80ff.) brings in a comparable example with the “little Gray Lady” in Los Angeles, a small two-storey wooden house as a remnant amidst multi-storey structures. With this, he focuses in the first place on differentiations in the yardstick applied and in the materiality, which are closely allied to the differing context of origin and to temporal gaps in the urban fabric. Jacobs (1992 [1961]: p. 385), for her part, provocatively demonstrates that pure leaps in applying particular yardsticks to the urban fabric – given the same function and with the exception of “very rare cases of real architectural masterpieces” – are rather pallid attempts at structuring, which also underestimate the intelligence of people using cities.

Regarding the need for outstanding landmarks, whether close-by or distant, to enjoy equally high perceptibility, Lynch and Jacobs produce identical arguments: whilst Lynch (1960: p. 101) is rather more abstract and brief in focusing on the needs and possibilities for linkages as well as on the problems of discerning large-scale landmarks in a solid street frontage, Jacobs (1992 [1961]: p. 386) points to examples like the Empire State Building and the Consolidated Edison Tower as landmarks of no consequence, which can scarcely be recognized as such at their base. It does, in actual fact, seem to be the case here that Jacobs might have read Lynch’s brief reflections and amplified them by adding illustrative examples.

Jacobs and Lynch are readily trotted out together as critics of modernity. Without going into detail, it is in this point that the differences really do predominate: whilst Jacobs mounts an open, provocative attack on CIAM, Le Corbusier and Urban Renewal (but also on Ebenezer Howard and Lewis Mumford), Lynch does, as far as this goes too, evince in many points the attitude of both/and, be that in the question as to yardsticks, in things stylistic or in his attitude to cars. It seems almost superfluous to mention that Lynch is, in contrast to Jacobs, not an activist – and consequently acts much less provocatively, if not sometimes apolitically. All the

same, he is in many cases not only the distanced, scientific observer, but equally an agent, who – for instance, in 1962 with the Downtown Waterfront-Faneuil Hall Renewal Plan for Boston – sought as a consultant to establish business as usual through constructive suggestions (Banerjee and Southworth, 1990: pp. 665ff.).

In this context, it is worth remembering that Jacobs became famous through her activity in New York City and her successful struggle with Robert Moses over Greenwich Village and that she does, beyond that, partially pay attention to the same area of reference as Lynch: the point of departure for her critique in *Death and Life* are slum clearance projects on the Boston peninsula – the place where Lynch, in his day, undertook, right outside MIT's front door, his first tentative steps in the matter of perceiving cities more objectively. In Jacobs's case, it is a matter, however, of the tip of the North End in particular, whilst Lynch investigates how readable and imageable the whole peninsula can be (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: pp. 8ff.; Lynch, 1960: pp. 16ff.).

To conclude, let us once again glance briefly at the five elements, path, edge, district, node, and landmark, which Lynch deemed constitutive for the way environmental images are made up. In doing so, let us pose the question as to which of the five elements Jacobs takes up. We need to remember, that she does refer – even if more or less thoroughly – to all five elements in the context of her reflections on “visual order.” With her suggestions of how streets should be treated, she does engage extensively with the most public manifestation of paths.

Jacobs comes back to the category of edges and borders with her central quotation from Lynch. And in addition, she explicitly deals with this category in a separate chapter under the heading, “The curse of border vacuums.” Here, Jacobs (1992 [1961]: pp. 257–69) engages with the problems of borders being indistinct and under-utilized and in this context she cites Lynch's reflections as “brilliantly stated” (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: p. 267).

That the fires in Jacobs's metaphor can be understood in the sense of Lynch's nodes, and how the light shines out into the districts is already mentioned. The concept of districts is used explicitly as the environment of bustling and visually dense streets (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: p. 379). Finally, the most wide-ranging exploration of a number of intersections between Jacobs and Lynch does – as already described – take place with regard to landmarks.<sup>6</sup> Taken overall, then, Jacobs's references to central categories with Lynch are by no means insignificant.

At this point, one should mention that because of such positions, Jacobs and Lynch do meanwhile also come in for joint criticism, as, for instance, with Charles Landry (2008 [2000]: pp. 203ff.), who talks about “urban design or urban vitality

---

6 Here too, Jacobs (1992 [1961]: p. 386) draws one more explicit cross-connection between the image elements, where she stresses that certain public spaces, for example, the plaza of the Rockefeller Center, can function both as nodes – “focal centers” – and as landmarks. Lynch (1960: pp. 83ff.) devotes a two-page partial chapter to the interplay of the elements, even though he still thought that this did not do justice to the complexity of the interactions.

‘truths’ that hold true throughout time and space.” This is, however, only to be understood as a short note in the margin. In the present context, it is not possible either to trace this critique in detail or to analyze the particular importance of the two initiatives from a present day viewpoint. Appropriate answers will invariably be complex, because they depend on the zeitgeist and vary according to subjectivity and particular groupings.

Beyond references concerning content, Jacobs and Lynch were, of course, connected via the common external framework the Rockefeller Foundation. It was the place where one and the same person, Chadbourne Gilpatrick, was responsible for supporting the research of Lynch and Kepes from 1954 onwards as well as for Jacobs’s writing scholarship from 1958. Gilpatrick assumed that Jacobs did draw fundamentally on Lynch’s work, and that, alongside various recommendations – among others, from Lewis Mumford – was also what influenced the decision for the scholarship. However, the tradition they shared is certainly yet more important: both were influenced by the British townscape debate. Whilst this manifested itself with Lynch in, among other things, the selection of his texts for his teaching as well as in sketches of visual sequences during his European trip, Jacobs’s highly-respected *Fortune* article was illustrated by Gordon Cullen. In addition, she



**Figure 5.2 Jane Jacobs and Kevin Lynch at the Urban Design Criticism Conference 1958**

Source: © Grady Clay. *AIA Journal*, 31 (1959), pp. 24–5.

explicitly refers to Cullen und Ian Nairn in *Death and Life* (Laurence, 2006: pp. 162f.; Orillard, 2009: pp. 292ff.; Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: p. 390).

The previous sections have attempted to demonstrate common areas and differences in the positions on urban design taken by Jane Jacobs and Kevin Lynch. As regards the question as to what predominates in all this, the recipient/s of their work certainly take on an active and intentional role here too.

If Jacobs and Lynch were supposed to have set different emphases and taken different viewpoints in the framework of their professional activities, and to have more or less openly turned their backs on each other, then they do stand closer together than we perhaps think. And also the way they refer to each other – sparingly but respectfully – in their publications does imply that they would not have had any objections to a joint reading in the sense of a complementary version.

## Bibliography

- Appleyard, D., Lynch, K. and Myer, J.R., 1964. *The View from the Road*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Arnheim, R., 1977. *The Dynamics of Architectural Form*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Banerjee, T. and Southworth, M. (eds), 1990. *City Sense and City Design: Writings and Projects of Kevin Lynch*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Certeau, M. de, 1988. Praktiken im Raum. In: *Kunst des Handelns*. Berlin: Merve, pp. 177–238.
- Forshaw, J.H. and Abercrombie, P., 1943. *County of London Plan*. London: Macmillan.
- Hartmann, N., 1926. Ethik. In: *Einführung in die Philosophie*, 6th edition, 1965. Osnabrück: Hanckel, pp. 144–82.
- Jacobs, J., 1992 [1961]. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Landry, C., 2008 [2000]. *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, 2nd edition. London: Earthscan.
- Laurence, P.L., 2006. The Death and Life of Urban Design: Jane Jacobs, The Rockefeller Foundation and the New Research in Urbanism, 1955–1965. *Journal of Urban Design*, 11(2), pp. 145–72.
- Löw, M., 2001. *Raumsoziologie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft.
- Lynch, K., 1958. Environmental Adaptability. In: T. Banerjee and M. Southworth (eds), *City Sense and City Design: Writings and Projects of Kevin Lynch*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 379–95.
- Lynch, K., 1960. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Lynch, K., 1965. An Analysis of the Visual Form of Brookline, Massachusetts. In: T. Banerjee and M. Southworth (eds), *City Sense and City Design: Writings and Projects of Kevin Lynch*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 287–315.

- Lynch, K., 1985. Reconsidering the Image of the City. In: T. Banerjee and M. Southworth (eds), *City Sense and City Design: Writings and Projects of Kevin Lynch*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 247–56.
- Lynch, K., 1990. The Visual Shape of the Shapeless Metropolis. In: T. Banerjee and M. Southworth (eds), *City Sense and City Design: Writings and Projects of Kevin Lynch*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 65–86.
- Orillard, C., 2009. Tracing Urban Design’s “Townscape” Origins: Some Relationships Between a British Editorial Policy and an American Academic Field in the 1950s. *Urban History*, 36(2), pp. 284–302.
- Seifert, J., 2011. *Stadtbild, Wahrnehmung, Design: Kevin Lynch Revisited*. Basel/Gütersloh/Berlin: Bauverlag.

# Chapter 6

## Jane Jacobs and Sharon Zukin: Gentrification and the Jacobs Legacy

Madeleine Lyes

The city area ... harmed by an interesting sidewalk life and plentiful sidewalk contacts has yet to be found.

*The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Jacobs, 1961: p. 71)

So wrote Jane Jacobs in 1961. Sharon Zukin wrote *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* in 2010, in which she seeks to describe how exactly such a thing has happened in New York. Zukin's book, an exploration of the processes of gentrification in New York under the influence of the contemporary search for authenticity, is blatant in its desire to engage with the legacy of urban theory attributed to Jane Jacobs. The title alone is a deliberate echo of Jacobs's own *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* – and it is to this text, it should be noted, that Zukin exclusively refers. Jacobs's legacy, as conceived by Zukin, stops in 1961. This is perhaps not the outright erasure it may at first seem, for it emerges throughout Zukin's text that her primary engagement with Jacobs is based not on the strict content of her work but rather on the accepted interpretation of that work in the contemporary moment. This chapter will focus in particular on Zukin's designation of Jacobs as a significant member of the first wave of gentrification practices in New York City, arguing ultimately that the Jacobs figure invoked in *Naked City* is a straw man – one which conceals the real targets at which Zukin aims. Zukin's argument with Jacobs is a testament to the power of Jacobs's legacy; Zukin describes her frustration with the enshrinement of Jacobs's ideas in planning and design spheres, fearing that what Jacobs overlooked in her work – strategies for breaking the hold of large-scale developers – has given her followers an excuse to neglect too. But in using Jacobs in this way, Zukin ignores the gap between Jacobs's text and her reputation, between the ideas Jacobs espoused and those which powerful groups attribute to her today.

*Naked City* is the third book in Sharon Zukin's "New York trilogy," following *Loft Living* (1982 [rev. ed. 1989]) and *The Cultures of Cities* (1995). The book examines the contemporary fascination with the idea of authenticity, with the trend in urban city living to privilege life experiences which can claim to be in some way authentic, arguing that this quest for authenticity can be both politicized and manipulated. She looks at certain so-called authentic sites – a cool address in a somewhat dangerous part of town, sawdust on the floor of a bar, ethnic food in a small grocery store – and claims that authenticity is being deliberately invoked

and harnessed. Although these spaces are manufactured by groups aware of the public's desire for such experiences, and even though they are not real, they have a real effect on the new cafes, stores, and gentrified places where we like to live and shop. Zukin observes the quest for authenticity at work in New York and argues that as a middle- and upper-class phenomenon, it functions to dislocate and disenfranchise the original inhabitants of so-called authentic neighborhoods as the wealthy move in and remodel the area for themselves. In attempting to access the authentic, she says, we create gentrification. Zukin sees the seeds of this process at work in Jacobs's ideas, and criticizes her vision of city life for just this reason. Zukin (2010: p. 244) argues that Jacobs's vision was that of the block, the neighborhood, and that we need to focus on cities as a whole: "Authenticity must be used to reshape the rights of ownership." Zukin sees Jacobs as someone ultimately more concerned with the preservation of buildings than the preservation of communities, and wishes to change this. Zukin's (2010: p. 245) strategic suggestions are clear:

Zoning, limits on rent increases, government-backed mortgage guarantees for store owners, special privileges for startup businesses and young apprentices that will maintain crafts and trades, street vending and even gardening: these are the basic building blocks that can produce the neighborhood self-sufficiency that Jane Jacobs prized.

Jacobs's work, she says (2010: p. 244):

cannot guide us to devise strategies for protecting residents and business that would break the great power of those who own, and those who zone, the land.

Today, the figure of Jane Jacobs remains a powerful influence in urban planning. Her work, her legacy, are both at once enshrined and misunderstood on myriad levels across design, academia and the public sphere. It does not go unchallenged, however. It has faced criticism on several levels – for its avoidance of questions of race, for example, which renders any discussion of the American city hugely problematic.<sup>1</sup> But Jacobs's relationship to the phenomenon of gentrification is much more complex than Zukin's interpretation would suggest. Jacobs's work emanated from a city which was rapidly losing both population and investment as wealthy people fled to the suburbs, and deindustrialization stripped the economic vitality of the downtown districts. These were the circumstances she sought to address, and her ideas about the ideal city are intrinsically linked to these phenomena. Her work was revolutionary and baldly states that the disciplines of urban planning and design would have to be themselves re-designed to take into account the body of

---

<sup>1</sup> Although criticisms of Jacobs's lack of engagement with questions of race in *Death and Life* are well founded, her later work (i.e. *Edge of Empire*) does discuss the issue. See Razak, S.H., 2007.

urban everyday phenomena they had been hitherto ignoring and thus endangering. Jacobs's fight (1961: p. 373) was with the prevailing assumption in city planning that the streamlining of urban streets leads to increased order and prosperity, with the "craft of city taxidermy," as she described it, dictating a harmony and regularity of function and style imposed by authoritarian planning legislation. Jacobs gives myriad contemporary examples of city districts where such homogeneity of vision and execution lead to the steady downfall of community and social order, showing that even when amply funded and meticulously planned, overly controlling and streamlined design ideas left once-thriving neighborhoods stilted and unused, inevitably falling into decay.

In her approach, Jacobs privileged the uniqueness of urban existence, ascribing it to the all-pervasive presence of strangers and detailing exhaustively the ways in which interaction between friendly strangers within the city determines its character and climate. She argued that there is value in the messiness of the urban landscape as lived space, and that:

[t]o approach a city, or even a city neighborhood, as if it were a larger architectural problem, capable of being given order by converting it into a disciplined work of art, is to make the mistake of attempting to substitute art for life (Jacobs, 1961: p. 373).

Jacobs had faith in the self-regulating abilities of the masses, in the capability of the urban community to colonize the spaces of the city for their own uses and to foster complex interactive systems without the roadmaps (and roadblocks) prepared for them by an authoritarian planning organization. In this way, we can understand how Jacobs's ideal urban environment, responding to disinvestment and white flight, was one which was once again populated by a mixed-class group that was content to stay in the city to raise children and put down roots. She could not have foreseen the shift in approach to urban centers in the 1980s which began to revamp inner cities to create playgrounds for the new elites, nor the influence of Business Improvement Districts (the first instituted in Toronto in 1970) and powerful developers who were to make New York, the center of global capital, a city beyond the hands of its residents (Schaller and Modan, 2005; Mitchell, 2008; Lewis, 2010). Questions of diversity in Jacobs and authenticity in Zukin reflect the contemporary concerns of their respective eras. Although Zukin sees herself in opposition to Jacobs, both are responding to the exigencies of their times. Zukin (2010: p. 29) acknowledges this in part when she describes the temporally bounded nature of notions of authenticity:

thinking about authenticity shows the importance of time in the broadest sense because city dwellers are increasingly concerned with making their way between the promise of creation and the threat of annihilation, whether by urban renewal or gentrification, by warfare or ecological disaster.

If, therefore, as Zukin begins to imply, the urge for a form of authentic living is temporally tied to our contemporary moment, this suggests to me that rather than criticizing Jacobs for her failure to foresee gentrification or Zukin for her neglect of questions of mediation and representation within the urban, rather even than criticizing the modern urban dweller's desire for open space lofts, skinny lattes and a semblance of gritty living covering middle class comfort, we should look at the origin of these desires, the driving force behind the quest for authenticity – which must itself be an earlier primal loss of the authentic – and begin to ask how, in an ideal world, in our own version of utopia – these needs could be effectively and equitably met.

In her argument with Jacobs, Zukin (2010: pp. 17–18) evokes the particularity of the economic conditions which produced Jacobs's New York, highlighting its transience:

It [Jacobs's neighborhood] is a product of its time, the end of the second generation of the great wave of Southern and Eastern European immigration, and of its location in new York's post-war political economy, with rent control enabling many of the tenants to stay in their apartments and a lack of new investment keeping the small-scale houses that Jacobs likes from being replaced.

It is clear that such a place, such a neighborhood, cannot be revived in contemporary New York. But in using her setting against Jacobs, Zukin ignores the perspective Jacobs brought to city life – one which was always cognizant of the unstoppable nature of urban change. Jacobs's work in *Death and Life* is in large part dedicated to atomizing the rise and fall of particular urban spaces; even its title treats the city as a constantly evolving entity. In her discussion, Zukin focuses in particular on Jacobs's most famous and most anthologized passage, the discussion of the “sidewalk ballet” of Hudson Street, Jacobs's home. In this passage from “On the Uses of Sidewalks: Safety,” Jacobs details a “day in the life” of her own neighborhood on Hudson Street, describing the activities of the street and how it functions as an intricate and outwardly disorganized network. Of this piece, Zukin (2010: p. 17) says:

Rereading her description now, we see that Jacobs is painting an idyllic picture of small town life in the midst of the big city. It's an urban imaginary like Disneyland's Main Street, also dating from the 1950s, with an equally rosy post-war view of local shops, their European immigrant owners, and residents living above and around them.

While the reference to Disneyland gives some indication that Zukin's real argument is with far more recent champions of city-as-small-town like the New Urbanists who have built towns like Florida's Celebration, it is true that there is something idyllic in Jacobs's description of urban life on her street. The rhythms and functions of her depiction have charmed generations of readers, and I would

argue that she intended just such an outcome. The sidewalk ballet passage is a lure, an illustration of the kind of city life which can occur when un-tampered with by overly prescriptive planning authorities, a place Jacobs evoked in order to inspire. It is in the rest of the text that Jacobs properly lays out the details of her observations and plans, the sharp and incisive research which lies behind her sidewalk idyll.

When Zukin describes the authenticity phenomenon and the middle and upper class desire to seek it out, often resulting in its destruction, the specter she faces is that of gentrification. For Zukin, gentrification (a term used to encompass fears surrounding suburbanization, corporatization and disenfranchisement) is a process which threatens authentic city life, which invades neighborhoods and reduces them, over time, to overpriced, overhyped and crucially homogenized environments (Hamnett, 1991; Smith, 1996, 2002; Lees, 2010). Zukin, like all authenticity-seekers, has a horror of sameness. It is instructive, then, to look more closely at the ideas of Jacobs, her erstwhile adversary, on the subject. The term gentrification does not appear in Jacobs's work, and her city was one which faced very different threats to that of Zukin. Jacobs does engage very strongly, however, with the concept of diversity, the most important attribute of urban life and one which was just as endangered in her time as now, though from very different sources. An illustration, for example, of Jacobs's early attitudes to a process much like gentrification is seen in this passage:

... many of the rich or near-rich in cities appear to appreciate sidewalk life as much as anybody. At any rate, they pay enormous rents to move into areas with an exuberant and varied sidewalk life. They actually crowd out the middle class and the poor in lively areas like Yorkville or Greenwich Village in New York, or Telegraph Hill just off the North Beach streets of San Francisco. They capriciously desert, after only a few decades of fashion at the most, the monotonous streets of 'quiet residential areas' and leave them to the less fortunate (Zukin, 2010: p. 71).

Unlike Zukin, Jacobs does not display concern at this re-settlement. One looks in vain for signs of foreboding, or even worries about the loss of those middle class and poorer people forced out of their homes in a precursor to one of the central challenges of urban governance today. For Jacobs, this influx of the wealthy was proof of her theory – it was a positive sign in a thriving neighborhood. Situated against the backdrop of urban desertion patterns in the post-war era, the dislocation of the poor and the arrival of the wealthy into areas condemned by then contemporary planning theory and planning legislation was to be celebrated.<sup>2</sup>

---

2 A commentary which adds complexity to this discussion is Herbert Gans's 1961 response to Jacobs's publication: "The truth is that the new forms of residential building – in suburb as well as city – are not products of orthodox planning theory, but expressions of middle class culture which guides the housing market, and which planners also serve"

This is not to say that Jacobs had no concern for the kinds of homogenizing processes delineated by Zukin. One of Zukin's (2010: p. 128) chief concerns stemming from the contemporary middle class desire for an authentic life is its effect on public spaces in the city, spaces which have become increasingly privatized under the control of BIDs (she cites the case of New York's Union Square, for example) and which tend, she argues, to "reinforce social inequality." This is a new kind of phenomenon, but it was tackled in its nascence by Jacobs (1961: p. 64), who in discussing different kinds of public spaces in the city, details the problems which arise in developments aimed at particular classes – "middle class projects and colonies" – reflecting the same phenomenon in a different time:

The houses here [the Chatham Village development in central Pittsburgh] are grouped in colonies around shared interior lawns and play yards, and the whole development is equipped with other devices for close sharing, such as a residents' club which holds parties, dances, reunions, has ladies activities like bridge and sewing parties, and holds dances and parties for the children. There is no public life here, in any city sense. There are differing degrees of extended private life (Jacobs, 1961: p. 64).

What Jacobs here observes is that public life ceases to be truly public when one particular group controls it, when it comes to serve the needs of only one variety of city resident. This problem goes to the heart of Zukin's protest. The Chatham Village development in the central city becomes like an actual village, not because of its location but because of its homogeneity. Chatham Village's equivalent today is Zukin's Greenwich Village – not because these spaces have geographic similarities but because they represent desirable destinations for contemporary upper middle class urbanites. "Chatham Village's success as a 'model' neighborhood where much is shared has required that the residents be similar to one another in their standards, interests and backgrounds," states Jacobs. "In the main they are middle class professionals and their families" (1961: p. 64). The class-driven nature of the desire to live in a development like Chatham Village is similarly seen in the urban authenticity-seeker today. Of this phenomenon, Jacobs (1961: p. 65) observes:

City residential planning that depends ... on personal sharing of this sort, and that cultivates it, often does work well socially, if rather narrowly, for self-selected upper-middle class people. It solves easy problems for an easy kind of population. So far as I have been able to discover, it fails to work, however, even on its own terms, with any other kind of population.

---

(Gans, 1961, cited in Rybczynski, 2010: p. 91). The reference to the power of middle class choice in Jacobs's era is an interesting counterpoint to the neoliberalism timeline which sees the influence of individualism and choice as a postmodern phenomenon.

The tendency to self-segregate which Jacobs sees at work in Chatham Village is one which she saw continuing into the adult lives of the children raised there. This propensity is also one which has become ever more widespread in the years since Jacobs's research, booming to epidemic proportions in the contemporary moment as gated communities become the most popular new building projects in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Affluent urbanites today in search of authentic spaces in the city may not be gating themselves in, but in homogenizing their patch of city space they are extending their private spaces – areas of protection – into the public realm.

It becomes evident, reading Zukin's text, that in focusing primarily on Jacobs's earliest work, and overwhelmingly on the sidewalk ballet passage, she is losing much of the nuance from Jacobs's writing. Beyond this, it becomes clear that the adversary she conjures may wear a Jacobs mask and fly a Jacobs flag, but it cannot be Jacobs herself. Once this is established, if one is to take Zukin's arguments and warnings seriously, it becomes imperative to correctly identify the real enemies of her vision. In this, it is apparent that powerful groups such as the New Urbanism planning movement and Richard Florida's "Creative Cities" scheme, both of which trumpet their connection to Jacobs and her work, are much more likely candidates in Zukin's battle for the soul of New York. Neither is mentioned in Zukin's text but both stand as clear examples of the misappropriation and sentimentalization of Jacobs's work by influential groups at work in planning and development today, groups which have a stake in the homogenization of city spaces which Zukin tries to fight. It has often been pointed out by critics, for example, that New Urbanism is not all that urban (MacCannell, 1999; Zimmerman, 2001; Day, 2003; Bond and Thompson-Fawcett, 2007). John Rennie Short (2001: p. 278) notes that:

New Urbanism is not all that new and it seems to be not all that urban. It uses old techniques to create up-market suburban communities, but does little to discourage suburban sprawl; it produces densities too low to support mixed communities and instead creates homogeneous enclaves. It is urban sprawl under a different package and has become a useful marketing strategy, an important role in stimulating debate but has little practical effect on creating community.

New Urbanism, nonetheless, claims to be Jane Jacobs's biggest fan. They have expressed a desire to build dense settlements and to re-invigorate the decayed centers of American cities in an effort to combat sprawl, with the principles they espouse drawn from Jacobs's advocacy of the density of life at the heart of cities. Proponents of New Urbanism seem convinced that the creation of community is achieved through the close proximity of diverse groups of people, but they

---

3 According to a report by Blakely and Snyder (1997), eight out of ten current urban building projects were gated. For more up-to-date discussion of this phenomenon, see Low (2003), *Behind the Gates: Life, Security, and the Pursuits of Happiness in Fortress America*.

overlook entirely the pre-existing forms of urban community which do not match their vision. New Urbanism, for example, stresses the importance of “defensible space” in cities, areas which are protected and safe, designed to encourage a feeling of security among middle- and upper-class tenants, and fitting seamlessly with the phenomenon of gentrification and manufactured authenticity decried by Sharon Zukin.

The creative class, as conceived by the Creative Cities mogul Richard Florida, makes up approximately 30 percent of American workers while the rest – the working and “service” classes – comprise the rest. It is Florida’s contention that the prosperity of cities – within the United States and, as the scheme’s popularity has spread, throughout the rest of the world – depends on the city’s ability to woo the creative classes, those whose work in the sciences, architecture, computing, education, sports and, of course, the arts combine to become the major force behind economic development. While Florida (2002: p. 76) asserts that the service class “exists mainly as a supporting infrastructure for the creative class,” the creative class themselves are much more closely examined. Florida (2002: p. 77) tracks their lifestyles and habits in order to better understand them and, in a discovery sure to interest Sharon Zukin, informs us that people of the creative class demonstrate “a strong preference for individuality and self-statement.” Putting aside the question of those members of the working and service classes who may also have some interest in questions of individuality, it is evident that Florida’s creative class shares no small overlap with Zukin’s authenticity-seeking middle and upper middle classes. In a recent interview, Zukin (*Big Think*, 2010) has opined however that “[i]t’s silly to say that a city can survive on the basis of the creative class.” Zukin makes it clear that her ideal city is one which contains a nexus of different classes and ethnicities, of new settlers and the long established, and she criticizes the effects on urban diversity posed by the increasingly mobile groups boosted by Florida’s influence. On examining criticism of Florida, one can perceive arguments entirely in line with Zukin’s own – and, for that matter, with Jacobs’s. In one well-known critical piece, “Struggling with the Creative Class,” Jamie Peck (2005) sums up the effects of the creativity policies in city economies:

They empower, though only precariously, unstable networks of elite actors, whose strategies represent aspirant attempts to realize in concrete form the seductive ‘travelling truths’ of the creativity script; they give license to ostensibly portable technocratic routines and replicable policy practices that are easily disembedded and deterritorialized from their centers of production – at least in a shallow, essentialized form – for all the talk of local ‘authenticity’; they reconstitute urban-elitist, ‘leadership’ models of city governance, despite their ritual invocation of grassroots efforts ... highlighting in particular gentrifying urban neighborhoods as the preeminent sites for both privileged forms of creative action and necessary modes of political proaction ... As such, creativity strategies subtly canalize and constrain urban-political agency, even as their material payoffs remain extraordinarily elusive (Peck, 2005: p. 767).

The privileging of elite approaches to city life, the side-lining of production, the creation of a city template, and above all the disenfranchisement of grass-roots efforts to have a voice in city governance are directly in line with the kinds of complaints Zukin makes about the phenomena she observes in New York. Here, the forces she seeks to counter are laid out infinitely more clearly than in any sally she makes against Jane Jacobs's work, and the evidence of the struggle she faces is that much starker.

Jane Jacobs's work has become enshrined in a very particular way which has somehow simultaneously placed her on a pedestal yet obscured the real power of her work – those aspects of her work which challenge contemporary planning and design priorities, which are more knotty to imagine and produce than many of those who support her seem to comprehend. Zukin accuses Jacobs of caring more about buildings than people, and it is true that Jacobs's work contains no in-depth analysis of the cultural and ethnic groups who use New York in their own varied ways. Jacobs's ideas focus on sidewalks, on buildings, on streets and on parks, because she sees these infrastructural elements as facilities which can be used by any group, as long as they are left to those groups to colonize in their own way. Unlike the New Urbanists, Jacobs values diversity in cities, and unlike the Creative Cities movement, her approach is pragmatic and focused on what the city can do for the people (of all classes) who live there. Her ideas on the city call for a clear delineation between public and private space – contending that both are vital to maintain the equilibrium of uses in daily life. Crucially, public space is defined as space to which everyone has equal access, a tenet which continues to be touted today, and which is almost never faithfully maintained.

In the final passages of her book, Zukin (2010: p. 245) lays out what she sees as imperative in the fight to preserve the city as a liveable space:

What is required is to build the political will for this from the bottom up, and to build this resistance among a wide public of voters, including many in the middle class, may require rhetoric that connects the social goal of rootedness and the economic goal of stable rents to the cultural power of authenticity.

Those who see the validity and urgency of Zukin's arguments and who would seek to implement them must first understand the true nature of their opposition. Jane Jacobs's work does not stand in opposition to Zukin's cause, and the misuse of her legacy must be challenged. Jacobs was, after all, a primary instigator of the most powerful wave of urban protest in twentieth-century America. Sharon Zukin could learn much from her tactics if she would see Jacobs as an ally, not an enemy, in the battle for, as Zukin sees it, the soul of New York.

## **Bibliography**

Big Think, 2010. Interview with Sharon Zukin [Online]. Available at: <http://www.bigthink.com/sharonzukin> [accessed 15 April 2011].

- Blakely, E.J. and Snyder, M.G., 1997. *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.
- Bond, S. and Thompson-Fawcett, M., 2007. Public Participation and New Urbanism: A Conflicting Agenda? *Planning Theory and Practice*, 8(4), pp. 449–72.
- Day, K., 2003. New Urbanism and the Challenges of Designing for Diversity. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 23, pp. 83–95.
- Florida, R., 2002. *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How it's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Hamnett, C., 1991. The Blind Men and the Elephant: The Explanation of Gentrification. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, 16(2), pp. 173–89.
- Jacobs, J., 1961. *The Death and Life of American Cities*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Lees, L., Slater, T. and Wyly, E., 2010. *The Gentrification Reader*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Lewis, N.M., 2010. Grappling with Governance: The Emergence of Business Improvement Districts in a National Capital. *Urban Affairs Review*, 46, pp. 180–217.
- Low, S., 2003. *Behind the Gates: Life, Security, and the Pursuits of Happiness in Fortress America*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.
- MacCannell, D., 1999. “New Urbanism” and its Discontents. In: J. Copjec and M. Sorkin, *Giving Ground: The Politics of Proximity*. London and New York, NY: Verso, pp. 106–28.
- Mitchell, J., 2008. *Business Improvement Districts and the Shape of American Cities*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Peck, J., 2005. Struggling with the Creative Class. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 29(4), pp. 740–70.
- Razak, S.H., 2007. When Place Becomes Race. In: T. Das Gupta (ed.), *Race and Racialization: Essential Readings*. Toronto: Toronto Scholar's Press, Chapter 9.
- Rybczynski, W., 2010. *Makeshift Metropolis: Ideas About Cities*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Schaller, S. and Modan, G., 2005. Contesting Public Space and Citizenship: Implications for Neighborhood Business Improvement Districts. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 24(4), pp. 394–407.
- Smith, N., 1996. *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.
- Smith, N., 2002. New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy. *Antipode*, 34(3), pp. 427–50.
- Zimmerman, J., 2001. The “Nature” of Urbanism on the New Urbanist Frontier: Sustainable Development, or Defense of the Suburban Dream? *Urban Geography*, 22(3), pp. 249–67.

- Zukin, S., 1989. *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Zukin, S., 1995. *The Cultures of Cities*. New York, NY: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Zukin, S., 2010. *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

## Chapter 7

# Taking Sides with a Man-eating Shark: Jane Jacobs and the 1960s “Density Turn” in Urban Planning

Nikolai Roskamm

Jane Jacobs, in her famous book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, wrote:

To say that cities need high dwelling densities ... as I am saying they do, is conventionally regarded as lower than taking sides with a man-eating shark (1961: p. 218).<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter, I will examine why taking sides with high density was such an extraordinary and provocative announcement at the beginning of the 1960s, and why today the very same statement is generally accepted in the current urban planning debate. My thesis is that Jacobs’s point stands as a watershed in urban planning, which marks a turning point within the discipline. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the meaning of density in the urban planning discourse and the real quality of the “density turn.” It is necessary, therefore, to examine the concept of density in general and in terms of its specific history in urban planning. I will analyze in detail Jacobs’s density arguments and look at their theoretical context. Finally, the relevance of the emergence of a density turn and its consequences for the current debate on urban planning will be discussed.

First of all – what is density? The term density often crops up at different levels in the discourse about cities and space: density as a category for spatial and social analysis, density as a condition and a cause in social theory, density as a metaphor and a goal in the urban discourse or density as a consideration of planning regulations. But the term is not only found in recent debate: density is a category with a broad history. Particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century density was a basic term used in geography, economics, sociology, and urban design, to describe conditions and causes of social and urban development. The concept of density originated from philosophy, and physics. Since Isaac

---

<sup>1</sup> For whatever reason Jacobs’s statement is missing in the German translation of her book.

Newton defined it as the mass-to-volume quotient (of a certain material), density has been employed as an analytical parameter for an empirical measure to define the properties of material. Not until the nineteenth century was the term density also used to describe social conditions, such as population densities. Population density defines the ratio of a number of people and a unit of area, i.e. the people to area quotient (related to a certain place). One important difference between the physical and the social/spatial meaning of density is that the first does not require a context, whereas the latter needs to relate to a specific scenario. Spatial/social density that is looked at outside its context is futile (Heidemann, 1975: p. 23), a container without content (Spiegel, 2000, p. 39). So context is important for density. Density is a construction that is construed through context; it is laden with contextual significance and transparent for normative values in the background (Gerberding-Wiese, 1968: pp. 1–3). When density is used as a component of analysis, theory, and policy, then the container becomes filled with content. Hence, when the various practices for appropriating density are examined, our view is shifted to the normative origins that underlie (both overt and covert) density-related discourse (Roskamm, 2011a: pp. 9–12).

The approach to density follows a complex combination of quantitative and qualitative applications. On the one hand, density can be expressed as numbers. Such a ratio represents, firstly, a fictionalization: in reality it is not possible for a density value to be observed. Secondly, the quantitative application of density is a reduction: so as to facilitate comparison, the respective density value must always be reduced to the number one (density of population per one acre or per one square kilometer). Thirdly, the quantitative application of density is an abstraction: the described reality is elevated through the density value to a communicable representational level. All of the above may be contrasted with a qualitative application level. Density becomes a (qualitative) metaphor when it is not specified as a concrete numerical value but is instead referenced as *the* density. Phrases like “the density of the European city,” “the density was too high in the working districts of nineteenth-century industrialized cities,” or “a lack of density in the suburbs” are examples for the term’s usage, behind which are concealed complex and normative constructions that may metaphorically find expression through this term. Decisive is now for the two usage forms – the qualitative application and the quantitative application of density – to enter into a close relationship. The quantitative mention of density is enhanced with meaning (in terms of content) by the metaphorical tradition, and the qualitative metaphorical mention of density in turn acquires scientific substance through its expression in numbers. Density is, as we might put it, a potentially calculable metaphor.

In urban planning, density is a category that has played a major role from the outset. In the second half of nineteenth century, Freiherr Lorenz von Stein elaborated his studies on public administration. Von Stein’s main topic was the local autonomy, and urban planning was an important component in that context. Density was not considered an important factor in the discourse. In his book *Verwaltungslehre* (Study of Public Administration) Stein wrote that the “import

of air and light in housing directly correlates with density of population," so that the capacity of housing must grow at the same pace as the density of population increases. This sentence appeared "as a fundament in the history of housing" (Stein, 1882: pp. 226–32). It is this correlation that is the crucial point for all subsequent density debates in many disciplines. Stein's connection between housing and population density indicates the starting point of the impressive development of the term density, especially (but not only) in the history of urban planning.

The debate about modern urban planning, with density as one of the key concepts, started at the same time. Reinhard Baumeister, known as the first theorist on urban planning and author of the very first textbook about urban design (1876), wrote that high density was at the root of all problems in cities, as a result of crowded dwellings, building floors in layers one about the others, not having enough space between buildings and the lack of sunshine, air, and light. Baumeister summarized the situation as "altogether these conditions could be named as dwelling density" (1911: p. 6). The early theories of urban planners considered high density to be an indication of and a reason behind certain developments in public health, social question and land speculation. The fear of revolution brewing up in dense urban areas is the fourth moment of the strict low density policy followed in urban planning until the time of Jane Jacobs. The issue of density came up almost in all contexts of the urban planning discourse. The consensus was that high density was a cause of negative phenomena and a negative phenomenon in itself. In addition to the concept of population density, the concept of building density was engendered by the growing urban planning discipline. In an analytical context high population density was taken to be the cause for social wrongs and a lack in sanitation in urban areas, and used as a symbol to describe such shortcomings. In the field of planning, building density was employed as a functional instrument which was applied in many urban design policies because urban planners considered it a genuine area of their work. All problems that seemed to be caused by population density were to be dissolved through its regulation (Stübgen, 1902: pp. 15–27). The regulations governing building density were elaborated to cover occupancy rates on development plots and became the formal core of planning regulations, which they still are today (Boeddinghaus, 1986, 2002).

In parallel to the discourse about planning regulations, debate about the ideal city was emerging. The widespread approach to urban planning at that time was to create a vision of the perfect urban settlement. Well-known examples are the *Stadt der Zukunft* by Theodor Fritsch (1896), *Die neue Stadt* by Gottfried Feder (1939) or, of course, Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902). Jane Jacobs pointed out in her book that Howard's idea, as well as other ideal city designs, were concepts which relied on low density. Not only was the orthodox urban planning approach founded on this principle, but so were the modern concepts. Le Corbusier (1926) and his radical vision of urban design are representative of Modernism in urban planning. His urban planning principles are set out in the Charter of Athens, the famous declaration, published by Le Corbusier in the

1940s. The aim of the Charter was to define general guidelines for urban design and planning, and thereby summarize the consensus of the urban design debate. The concept of density was the key principle in these guidelines, fostering a low density policy which was based on the same foundation as the orthodox urban planning discourse (Le Corbusier, 1962). The Charter of Athens claimed that high density is one of the main problems in cities per se. At a certain level population density leads to “discomfort and disease as a permanent condition” and to a “slum” (Le Corbusier, 1962: p. 73). The Charter of Athens dedicated more than a paragraph to the regulation of density. It stated that density in the city should be “dictated by the authorities” (Le Corbusier, 1962: p. 84) and that the task of urban planners should be to define the appropriate population density. However, the guideline does not recommend a high density approach.

This was the picture when Jane Jacobs came onto the scene. The urban planning debate in the late 1950s orbited the positions of Howard and Le Corbusier, both concepts with explicit low density policies. In 1961 Jacobs contended all this in her book to the absolute contrary and advocated high density. “Also, to be frank, I like dense cities best and care about them most” (1961: p. 22). Not only did she liked dense cities, she also disliked urban planning and opposed it with a fundamental attack:

As in the pseudoscience of bloodletting, just so in the pseudoscience of city rebuilding and planning, years of learning and a plethora of subtle and complicated dogma have arisen on a foundation of nonsense. ... The pseudoscience of city planning and its companion, the art of city design, have not yet broken with the specious comfort of wishes, familiar superstitions, oversimplifications, and symbols – and have not yet embarked upon the adventure of probing the real world (1961: pp. 18–19).

On the other hand, Jacobs outlines a counter draft of the orthodox urban design position and creates with her own urban planning concept four conditions for producing lively cities: Firstly, districts must serve more than one primary function to ensure the presence of people using the same common facilities at different times; secondly, blocks should be short, to increase path options between points of departure and destinations; thirdly, buildings should be at varying ages, accommodating different people and businesses which can afford different levels of rents, and fourthly, there should be a dense concentration of people to promote visible city life. Jacobs stresses that all of these four conditions are necessary to generate diversity.

Jacobs declares as “Condition 4” that “the district must have a sufficiently dense concentration of people, for whatever purpose they may be here.” Because “dwelling densities are so important for most city districts, and for their future development, and are so little considered as factors in vitality,” Jacobs devotes a whole chapter of her book to the aspect of density (1961: pp. 200–221). At the beginning of the chapter she looks at the current stage of the value of density in

urban planning. High dwelling densities would have a "bad name in orthodox planning and housing theory" and they were supposed "to lead to every kind of difficulty and failure." But this supposed correlation between high densities and trouble would be "simply incorrect" (1961: pp. 209–21) in Jacobs's argument, which was based on observation of the actual situation in different parts of American cities. She reports of high density areas which she considers good and of low density areas which are bad. Jacobs's main point is to distinguish between high densities of dwellings and overcrowding. The two categories were often confused, especially by the Garden City planners, who "hated both equally, in any case, and coupled them like ham and eggs" (1961: p. 206). But the fact of overcrowded rooms is entirely different to the fact of densely built up land; high densities have nothing to do with overcrowding.

With regard to this argument the separation of high densities of dwellings and overcrowding seems justified. Furthermore, to identify overcrowding of rooms (the American census's definition of overcrowding at that time was 1.5 person per room or more) as a social problem, as Jacobs does, is a comprehensible approach. However, it should be noted that Jacobs makes that distinction mainly to preserve density as a category for urban planning. Jacobs alternates between convicting the common practice of making correlations between dwelling/population densities and (for instance) death rate and her own venturesome connections, "Indeed, overcrowding at low densities may be even more depressing and destructive than overcrowding at high densities" (Jacobs, 1961: p. 208). The chapter contains several such claims. Jacobs declares that overcrowded slums could be found in areas of "one- and two-family houses which can hardly be called dense enough to qualify as real city densities at all," and she reports of "seemingly endless square miles of low-density failure." For an analysis of Jacobs's density remarks (50 years after publication) maybe that is the most important point: despite all critique of urban planning, Jacobs adheres to the urban planners' orthodox way of thinking. She sticks to the traditional approach on density and distinguishes between problematic categories such as the "healthiest" and "unhealthiest" areas of the city and classifies into good "examples" and "failures." Although Jacobs assumes that "it will not do to jump to the conclusion that all areas of high dwelling density in cities do well" and "that the relationship between concentrations of people and production of diversity is a simple, straight mathematical affair," she always preserves density as a category for grading different parts in the city. It is not surprising that in the end Jacobs poses the question, "What are proper densities for city dwellings?" (Jacobs, 1961: p. 208). Jacobs's answer is that "proper city dwelling densities are a matter of performance" and she adds, "We ought to look at densities in much the same way as we look at calories and vitamins. Right amounts are right amounts because of how they perform. And what is right differs in specific instances." Nevertheless, displaying similar ambivalence, Jacobs does not hesitate to explain thereafter which dwelling densities (in numbers!) would be appropriate for creating a lively city.

However, Jacobs reverses her opinion about density in urban planning and reclaims high population density and high building density as positive urban planning achievements. In Jacobs's opinion, high population and building densities are requirements for a vibrant city, and she demands them to be adopted as an urban planning tool. This was a completely new position since no one before her had proclaimed higher density an urban planning goal. Jacobs was aware that her attitude was a tangible provocation and that arguing against the foundation of a discipline was running into danger of evoking hostile reactions, which she anticipated when she described it as "taking sides with a man-eating shark." In Jacobs's thinking, a dense concentration of people was one of the necessary conditions for a flourishing and diverse city. Density could be considered as a positive good, because it would be the:

source of immense vitality, and because they do represent, in small geographic compass, a great and exuberant richness of differences and possibilities, many of these differences unique and unpredictable and all the more valuable because they are.

Jacobs redefines the density question in urban planning when she wrote:

Our difficulty is no longer how to contain people densely in metropolitan areas and avoid the ravages of disease, bad sanitation, and child labor. To go on thinking in these terms is anachronistic. Our difficulty today is rather how to contain people in metropolitan areas and avoid the ravages of apathetic and helpless neighborhoods (1961: p. 219).

Another way of analyzing Jacobs's approach to density is to consider the sources of her interpretation. Jacobs refers to perceptions from other disciplines, especially in national economics. The question of positive or negative effects concerning high population density was a major issue of the debates in national economics during the nineteenth century. On the one hand, there was the conservative position based on the theory of Robert Malthus, the British clergyman and economist. Malthus (1798) devised the famous theory about the balance in the relation between an increase of population and means of subsistence. He predicted an upcoming catastrophe caused by overpopulation and alerted preachers to the dangers of overpopulated cities that would be the result (Münk, 1993). However, the opposite viewpoint also had followers in the nineteenth century; a concentration of the population would create the conditions for civilization and cultural progress. The two sides of the debate represented the conservative and the progressive positions on national economics. And Karl Marx's concept of capital accumulation is based on this dispute with Malthus's theory (Marx, 1890: pp. 553–78). Nonetheless, that discussion did not take place in the field of urban design and urban planning. Jacobs's achievement was to bring these arguments into the focus of urban planning,

to open up the narrow horizon of the discipline and to create the opportunity for a new perspective on density.

Furthermore, Jacobs draws on a second discipline in this context: the density theories of urban sociology. Even though Jacobs does not refer to Louis Wirth directly, it is obvious that her four conditions for city diversity are closely connected to the three conditions which Louis Wirth (1938) uses to define cities in his famous essay "Urbanism as a Way of Life: Size, Heterogeneity and Density." In his evaluation of high density, Wirth was a long way from the urban planning mainstream. His argument was that high density was a requirement and the basis for a more tolerant mindset and behavior of the inhabitants of cities. Indeed, Wirth's theory was not acknowledged in the urbanism debate until many years after its publication. The central position of density in urban sociology can be retraced to the first proclamation in Emile Durkheim's social theory (1893).<sup>2</sup> According to the French founder of the discipline of sociology, density was the main factor for leading to the evolution of society in general. Durkheim (1895) was the first to incorporate the concept of density in social theory, although he revoked his conjecture during his lifetime. Jane Jacobs did not go into detail as regards the history of density in urban sociology. However, her excursions into the fields of economics and sociology have opened the door for a different view on the orthodox role of density in urban planning. In general, Jacobs's point about density was not totally new, but the introduction of other perspectives to urban planning was new.

After Jacobs the value of high density in urban planning changed completely; high density as a phenomenon of the unhealthy city turned into high density as a criterion for compactness and urbanity. Jane Jacobs's theory stands at the beginning of an impressive turn in the urban planning debate about density. However, this turn did not take place overnight. The official density policy for urban renewal projects emerged in the 1960s: in official memos urban areas were classified as slums, which were to be demolished if they had a certain density. The orthodox urban planning strategy was based exactly on this outdated negative opinion on density. Especially in connection with slum clearance policies, the traditional interpretation of density was widespread and unimpaired: The goal for urban renewal was to demolish high density areas in old working class neighborhoods and to build new low density cities for modern people. Hence, the density turn did not take place as a result of a change in policy by senior urban planners but because of the postulations of the local pressure groups opposing orthodox practices of urban renewal. In the 1960s and 1970s urban planners faced residents of high density areas who began to react against slum clearance programs and to fight for the preservation of their homes. In that sense, the density turn was not the beginning but the result, less the outcome of the theoretical debate within the discipline and more of local resistance against urban planning practices.

---

2 For more detail see Roskamm (2011a: pp. 19–58). On the subject of the current renaissance of density in urban sociology also see Roskamm (2010 and 2011b).

Nevertheless, the density turn was accompanied by theoretical debate, for which Jane Jacobs's book is the best example. The rejection of the existing dense city (particularly rooted in the German debate) became the subject of urban planning discussion. Jacobs's pamphlet was followed by books like *Die moderne Großstadt*, in which the author Hans-Paul Bahrtdt (1961) indicated the anti-urban approach of urban planning and urban design. Urban sociology was a controversially discussed topic in urban planning discourse and contributed a new interpretation of the existing dense city. The anti-urban position needed to be overcome before the urban planning debate could begin to consider the density-based tolerance concept of urban sociology. After that paradigm shift it became possible to swap the position "high density is evil" with the position "density is urbanity." However, at the same time the orthodox position on density became reinforced. In Germany the first standard regulation for building density was issued (in the Federal Land Utilization Ordinance) only one year after Jacobs's book was published. The regulations were based on the traditional low-density approach. In the late 1960s and 1970s it was controversially debated (Boeddinghaus, 1969; Borchard, 1970; Hübner, 1969), but the roles of density limitation have remained unchanged. German planning law has had unchanged upper limits for 50 years, which are hardly ever challenged today. Therefore, the density turn has taken place only in theoretical debate, the urban planning programs and guidelines, whilst the urban planning regulations still follow the orthodox position on density. And it is remarkable that nobody today talks about such obvious inconsistencies (Boeddinghaus, 2002).

However, the density turn and Jane Jacobs's altercation may contribute to finding an answer to the question "how much paradigm did shift." The density turn in urban planning is one element of that shift. Jane Jacobs claimed that defending high density in the early 1960s was regarded as lower than taking sides with a man-eating shark. Twenty years later urban planning policies favored high density. So, on the one hand, there was a turn; high density was attributed a new value. On the other hand, looking at it from a different standpoint, there was no turn; what has not changed is the major role the concept of density plays in urban planning and urban design itself. Density has remained a key category for analysis and regulation; the discipline has maintained its nineteenth-century based foundation. Vice versa, this knowledge could be helpful in the understanding of Jacobs's role. Despite her vehement critique of urban planning, Jacobs's arguments are still part of the reasoning adopted in urban planning (at least her remarks on this). That is one reason why so many urban planners today like to claim "we are all Jacobseans." The fact that Jacobs's arguments are still present in urban planning categories also distinguishes her approach from that of other urban planning criticism, particularly in the 1960s. For instance, comparing Jacobs with the contemporaneous Situationist International (Wark, 2011), both conform to her radical rejection of orthodox urban planning policy. But the Situationists soon left the subject of urbanism and fundamentally questioned urban planning, while Jacobs took sides with the shark and remained still in the same camp.

In conclusion I would say that to reflect on the understanding of the density concept in urban planning and the substance of the density turn in the 1960s is not as easy as it may at first seem. Indeed, density was completely revalued in the urban planning debate after Jacobs. Even so, density remained at the center of urban discourse. What has not changed in the urbanism debate is the approach to building regulations as an instrument to govern and organize the urban environment. Density still is a major planning concept (although with changed signs). Density continues to be the foundation of urban planning and in the urban discourse. From this point of view, Jacobs's density argument is less a manifestation of a new beginning in urban planning than an indication of an ongoing plot. Of course the turn from density as a metaphor for epidemic, poverty, and subversion to density as a metaphor for diversity, vitality, and urbanity is impressive. However, urban planning has remained true to its foundations; density was and is a basic concept of urban planning that stands for the approach of shaping society through controlling the built environment or, expressed in another way, of governing the city through regulating density.

## Bibliography

- Bahrdt, H.P., 1961. *Die moderne Großstadt*. Reinbek: Rowohlt.
- Baumeister, R., 1876. *Stadt-Erweiterungen in technischer baupolizeilicher und wirtschaftlicher Beziehung*. Berlin: Ernst.
- Baumeister, R., 1911. *Bauordnung und Wohnungsfrage*. Berlin: Ernst.
- Boeddinghaus, G., 1969. *Die Bestimmung des Maßes der baulichen Nutzung in der städtebaulichen Planung*. Aachen: Dissertation.
- Boeddinghaus, G., 1986. Die anerkannten Grundsätze des Städtebaus. *Stadt*, 3, pp. 57–62.
- Boeddinghaus, G., 2002. Zur nicht erfolgten Novellierung der BauNVO. *Baurecht*, 9, pp. 1325–42.
- Borchard, K., 1970. *Städtebauliche Orientierungswerte*. In: Akademie für Raumforschung und Landesplanung (ed.), *Handwörterbuch der Raumforschung und Raumordnung*. Hannover: Jänecke, pp. 3181–202.
- Durkheim, E., 1893 [1992]. *Über soziale Arbeitsteilung*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Durkheim, E., 1895 [1984]. *Die Regeln der soziologischen Methode*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Feder, G., 1939. *Die neue Stadt*. Berlin: Springer.
- Fritsch, T., 1896. *Die Stadt der Zukunft*. Leipzig: Verlag von Theod. Fritsch.
- Heidemann, C., 1975. *Städtebauliche Verdichtung*. Dortmund: Institut für Landes- und Stadtentwicklungsforschung ILS.
- Gerberding-Wiese, I., 1968. *Dichtewerte und Freiflächenzahl im Städtebau*. Aachen: Dissertation.
- Howard, E., 1902. *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. London: S. Sonnenschein & Co.
- Hübner, H., 1969. Richtwerte und Werturteile. *Bauwelt*, 51–52, pp. 270–72.

- Jacobs, J., 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Le Corbusier, 1926. *Kommende Baukunst [Vers une Architecture]*. Berlin/Leipzig: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt.
- Le Corbusier, 1962 [1942, 1933]. *An die Studenten. Die ›Charte d'Athènes‹*. Reinbek: Rowohlt.
- Malthus, T.R., 1798. *An Essay on the Principle of Population as it affects the future Improvement of Society, with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, Mr. Condorcet, and other Writers*. London: J. Johnson.
- Marx, K., 1890. *Das Kapital. Kritik der ökonomischen Ökonomie*. Vol. 1, Marx/Engels Gesamtausgabe, 1991. Zweite Abteilung, Band 10. Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- Münk, D., 1993. *Die Organisation des Raumes im Nationalsozialismus*. Bonn: Pahl-Rugenstein.
- Roskamm, N., 2010. Das Konstrukt ›Dichte‹ und die »europäische Stadt«. In: O. Frey and F. Koch (eds), *Die Zukunft der europäischen Stadt*. Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag, pp. 71–85.
- Roskamm, N., 2011a. *Dichte. Eine transdisziplinäre Dekonstruktion*. Bielefeld: Transcript.
- Roskamm, N., 2011b. Lost in Spatial Turn. In: J. Kemper and A. Vogelpohl (eds), *Lokalistische Stadtforschung, kulturalisierte Städte: Zur Kritik einer »Eigenlogik der Städte«*. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, pp. 73–85.
- Spiegel, E., 2000. Dichte. In: H. Häußermann (ed.), *Großstadt. Soziologische Stichworte*. Opladen: Leske+Budrich, pp. 39–47.
- Stein, L. von, 1882. *Die Verwaltungslehre. Dritter Theil. Das Gesundheitswesen*. Stuttgart: Cotta'sche Buchhandlung.
- Stübgen, J., 1902. *Die Bedeutung der Bauordnungen und Bebauungspläne für das Wohnungswesen*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht.
- Wark, M., 2011. *The Beach beneath the Street*. London and New York, NY: Verso.
- Wirth, L., 1938. Urbanism as a Way of Life. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 44(1), pp. 1–24.

PART IV  
Jane Jacobs and Her Impact  
on Urban Planning Outside  
North America

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

## Chapter 8

# More than Building Rejuvenation: The Shift Towards Gentle Urban Renewal in Vienna

Christiane Feuerstein

In the course of history, different concepts of urban renewal were developed in order to adapt cities to new economic, cultural, and political circumstances. Some of these changes occurred “accidentally,” but many were planned. Sometimes new layers of urban life were placed over old ones, sometimes the old structures were destroyed and replaced by the new.

When comparing the different urban renewal concepts in post-World War II cities in the north-east and Midwest of the United States with those in Vienna, some similarities and several differences can be found. In both countries cities were confronted with the poor condition of nineteenth-century housing stock in their centers, even though their frameworks of real estate markets, laws, etc. were very different; for example, their differing approaches to social housing. To this day, federal and municipal interventions in rent legislation and communal housing programs, which go back to the innovative communal housing program from the interwar period (*Gemeindebauten*), are an important instrument in anti-segregation politics in Vienna, whereas the American housing market was and is segregated, and subsidized housing has a negative image.

### **Light, Air, and Sun: Urban Renewal in the “Modernist Style”**

Starting in the 1940s and 1950s, the centers of many American cities were abandoned by their mainly white middle-class residents, often former European immigrants. Their departure to new suburban developments (“the white flight”) was supported by the construction of new housing and interstate highways funded by the federal government. Mass production of efficiently and cheaply built single-family houses made the realization of planned communities possible on a large scale and the highways provided a fast connection by private transport between the suburbs and the commercial and financial centers remaining in downtown. Furthermore, the highways formed physical barriers in the city. As another consequence, many downtowns, alongside being the economic center, became an inner-city destination for the poor. Mainly low-income residents, especially black people who were discriminated against by a racially segregated housing market, moved into the inner cities. Some neighborhoods still included thriving businesses

and middle-class residents, but in general property taxes went down. As a result of the Housing Act of 1949, federal urban renewal programs were funded to increase property tax revenues. The goal of Title I in this federal law was to eliminate substandard housing through “slum clearance.” In the areas categorized “blighted,” local governments were allowed to take over private land for public use, clear it and divide it into new parcels. Since 1954, Title III of the Housing Act has promoted the building of civic centers, office buildings and hotels on the cleared land. To control this process some cities founded redevelopment agencies which bought the land and developed it in partnership with private investors; in other cities the cleared land was sold directly to private investors. The tenants in these areas were often moved to public housing, known in the USA as “the projects.” The poorly planned and constructed slab-like high-rise complexes were designed to squeeze in as many families as possible and became increasingly troubled by vandalism, drug use, rape, assault, and robbery.

Jane Jacobs’s book, *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*, was published at the peak of this urban renewal of previously neglected inner cities in the United States. The combined forces of providing adequate affordable housing and the concern to accommodate the increasing presence of automobiles proved to be an awkward alliance (Online Dictionary of American History, 2003), which was strongly criticized by Jane Jacobs. In her book she argues against highways in the inner cities, urban sprawl, slum clearance programs, and the mono-structure of standardized housing in the projects. The role model for standardized housing had been – seen from a European point of view – a misinterpreted version of the utopian architecture of modernist Le Corbusier. In the 1920s he and many other architects and urban planners reacted to the housing misery of their time with programmatic alternative plans under the motto “light, air, and sun for all.” Le Corbusier saw himself as a “space doctor” – as a doctor not only in the field of architecture and urban planning, but also for society. For him, the architect was not only responsible for the design and the structure of individual buildings but also for the whole framework of life – he was not only planning a city, he was also planning a social utopia. For Jane Jacobs, looking on the American projects which had become islands of despair and dereliction – literally and figuratively walled off from the rest of the street – Le Corbusier’s concept of a city worked “like a wonderful mechanical toy.” For her, the “dazzling clarity, simplicity and harmony” of his vision “was so orderly, so visible, so easy to understand. It said everything in a flash, like a good advertisement” (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: p. 23). In the 1970s, when it became clear that this large-scale approach had failed, a lot of these slab-like high-rise complexes were torn down, like the Pruitt-Igoe Project in St. Louis, Missouri. Its implosion became legendary.

The situation in Vienna after World War II – heavily destroyed by the war – was very different to the situation of the cities in the United States at the time. Political-economic conditions had changed and the former imperial residence and capital of an empire found itself in an isolated and peripheral geopolitical situation

in central Europe next to the iron curtain, lacking in economic dynamics. By 1989 – the fall of the iron curtain – the population in Vienna was decreasing.

To ease the housing shortage caused by the devastation of the war, the municipal administration under the social democrats restarted the publicly financed housing program (*Gemeindebauten*) from the 1920s. In the post-war reconstruction period, as well as in the 1960s and 1970s, most of the apartments were built in large-scale residential estates on the outskirts, mainly in the south and east of the city, where the land was owned by the city council. This policy left the inner city districts more or less untouched and led to a lack of reinvestment in the mainly privately owned housing stock. While many young families moved out, elderly people tended to stay in the inner city.

Not surprisingly, large-scale renewal with major demolition and new construction rarely occurred and was at a different scale compared to the urban redevelopment projects in the United States. However, both used the same tool – zoning regulations – in the hope of solving social problems by constructing new apartment blocks. One of the few rehabilitation projects was the redevelopment of Alt-Erdberg in the 3rd district (Erdberg), between 1956 and 1958. The project followed the credo of the modern movement. In Alt-Erdberg's old village center, the long, low houses were replaced by new buildings: 1,600 new apartments with baths were built, as well as playgrounds and public parks. Just before demolition,



**Figure 8.1** Urban redevelopment project in Alt-Erdberg, 1956–58

Source: © Franz Göttlicher (Bildokumentation Assanierung Alt-Erdberg 1952–1958) Bezirksmuseum Landstraße]

the amateur photographer Franz Göttlicher documented a rather romanticized view of everyday life in the old buildings. Soon afterwards not only Jane Jacobs perceived the formal new housing layout as monotonous, whereas the old streets were associated with lively variety.

A different picture emerges in the study by architect Franz Schuster which was financed by the city of Vienna: damp buildings without gas and electric lighting, toilets 20 to 30 meters from the apartments, and so on. The area was classified as blighted. The police viewed the unhealthy living conditions in a direct relationship to crime, as the following quote shows:

The building conditions in the region Alt-Erdberg offer criminal elements a cheap shelter option. ... In the area many inns and taverns are well established and especially the taverns are well attended during day time. Drunken excesses are frequently mentioned in the reports ... (Feuerstein, 2009: p. 12).

Consequently, the aim was not only a structural renovation, but also a socio-demographic restructuring. The restructuring was to be a contribution to a “modern, decent and cultured city layout” (Feuerstein, 2009: p. 14).

Although no highways were proposed or built in Vienna, modern transportation planning claimed its victims. Even architecturally valuable historical monuments were not safe from the wrecking ball if this was required by modern transportation planning. So despite protests from a citizens’ initiative, the baroque church Florianikirche in the 4th district (Wieden) had to make way for a “car-friendly” widening of the Wiedner Hauptstrasse in 1965. Four years later, in 1969, construction for the new subway was being planned and the metropolitan railway stations, designed by Otto Wagner in 1898 and at the time decried as kitsch, were to be torn down. The demonstrations of architects and architecture students succeeded in preventing the demolition of the Karlsplatz station. This protest contributed to the discussion on the re-evaluation of the cultural and historic heritage and Vienna’s building stock. Meanwhile, the buildings by Otto Wagner have become part of the city’s cultural heritage, and the restored pavilion today adorns postcards and flyers for travel and tourist information.

### **Between Maintenance and Revival: Trend-setting Projects for a More Neighborhood-oriented Approach**

The picturesque Spittelberg area in the 7th district (Neubau) to the west of the former imperial stables designed by baroque architect Fischer von Erlach – today adapted and integrated into the Museum Quarter – was saved by grass roots development too, and like the buildings of Otto Wagner, it has become one of Vienna’s main attractions for tourists. In early winter, a romantic old Viennese Christmas market and pub gardens during summer create an inviting atmosphere.



**Figure 8.2** Demonstration of architects and architecture students preventing the demolition of the city rail station designed by Otto Wagner at Karlsplatz, 1969

Source: © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv, Wien FO 400406/25.

In the early 1970s, the dilapidated former red-light district on Spittelberg was to be replaced by new public housing. A colorful protest initiative of local residents, artists, and architects formed to preserve and revitalize the historic buildings. In June 1975, as part of the Festival for All, the birthplace of the baroque portrait painter and poet Friedrich Amerling was occupied and alternative models for low-cost urban renewal projects were debated – Spittelberg was not to become an exclusive neighborhood for the privileged. Spittelberg was one of the first newly created preservation zones based on the Old City Redevelopment Act (Altstadterhaltungsgesetz) which the city passed in 1973 to maintain historically and culturally important buildings and ensembles in Vienna. Spittelberg's building stock was saved, but many former local residents were displaced to other neighborhoods.

The displacements and shifts in the rental population resulting from physical improvement caused by a mainly market-driven urban renewal is currently an issue of intense discussion. Meanwhile, re-urbanization and redevelopment have become – worldwide – an important field in architectural and urban production. Architectural references to squares, promenades, or markets well match the requirements and objectives of the real estate industry. When investment is left completely to market forces, small income groups cannot afford the remodeled apartments for which private investors expect adequate returns through higher

rents. As a consequence, historic areas in cities are transformed into places of consumerism in an open air museum atmosphere.

Whereas today the protection of urban heritage reconstruction is critically discussed, the alliance of artists and preservationists in the Spittelberg neighborhood were contributing to the aesthetic re-evaluation of the common, ordinary architecture of everyday life. Artists and architects still occupy spaces for temporary use today in order to withdraw the economic pressure from these places. But not only economic questions were relevant in those days. In the 1970s there was an international trend to occupy buildings ready-for-demolition or empty industrial compounds and use them as a testing site for new lifestyles and uses. In 1976, the *Auslandsschlachthof* in Vienna's 3rd district (Erdberg) was occupied by activists who called themselves *Arenauts*. Over one summer the buildings of the former slaughterhouse were used as an autonomous cultural center called *Arena*, closing a gaping hole in Vienna's cultural activities. In the 1970s, official programs were mainly oriented to high culture and there was a lack of places for young people, alternative culture and counter-culture in the city.

Supposedly more than 200,000 people visited the *Arena* during the squatting, and not only Leonard Cohen described it as the 'best place in Vienna,' 'best place in Europe,' or 'best place in the world' ([www.arena.co.at](http://www.arena.co.at)).



**Figure 8.3** Festival for All, Spittelberg, 1973

Source: © Gert Winkler Wien Museum, Inv. Nr. 222.074/2.

When the summer was over the slaughterhouse was torn down, but the Arena was relocated at the slaughterhouse for the home market in St. Marx, also in the 3rd district, where it still remains today. After the “Arena summer” municipal institutions increasingly supported alternative movements, youth collectives, and cultural centers. Although the demolition could not be prevented, the subculture movement drew attention to everyday functional architecture and urbanism, previously not appreciated. Meanwhile, aesthetic judgment has been revised.

Slowly the functional approach came into a crisis. Grass roots developments (Spittelberg), subculture (Arena), and mass media (Planquadrat) were at the fore of this development. To address the problems of a major city, a TV series titled Planquadrat (grid square) was conceived in 1973 by a cooperative of municipal institutions and the Austrian broadcasting company (ORF). They decided to focus on the problems of small inner courtyards in the densely built areas in older districts. Inner courtyards are typical of the urban fabric in many European cities, and those apartments facing onto the courtyards in particular are often dark and unattractive. For this reason the revitalization of those backyards by down zoning and removing courtyard wings was an intensely discussed issue in international technical literature on urban renewal in the 1970s. Following the idea of generous courtyards as an essential part of the communal housing program (Gemeindebauten) from the 1920s and 1930s, the city proposed to transform the private inner courtyards of the “Gründerzeit” (founder epoch) into green courtyards open to the public.

The project area was a late nineteenth-century block of buildings in the 4th district (Wieden), where the zoning map of 1966 provided for a park in the center and the demolition of an entire row of houses along the Mühlgasse street. The film crew used not only statistical data and official documents for the documentary series; they also informed themselves – in the spirit of Jane Jacobs – on the spot by following film author and director Helmut Voitl’s ideas:

You have to learn that things usually not noticed can play an important role in planning. Eventually one begins to see an area through other people’s eyes. ‘You have to see real life! It’s no art to sit behind a desk with a pencil,’ said one of the inhabitants, hitting the nail on the head (Feuerstein, 2009: p. 32).

The film crew did not limit themselves to filming – they interfered, informed residents and initiated actions. Together with a group of teenagers, they drew a white diagonal line across all the walls to be torn down in the large central courtyard. The new series was shown on TV at prime time in May 1974 and reached a large audience. In the second broadcasting, Helmut Zilk moderated a discussion between the residents and Mayor Leopold Gratz (Zilk, too, later became mayor of Vienna). Inspired by the broadcasting, a group of architecture students developed the so-called Planquadratspiel (the literal translation is grid-square-game) and invited the residents to formulate their needs and wishes with the help of the game. In August 1974, a small exhibition presented rehabilitation concepts for the houses

that were initially to be torn down. The houses have since been renovated and the completed garden courtyard was handed over to the residents association in 1979; who still manage it today.

### **The Paradigm Shift, the First Urban Renewal Area in Ottakring and the Gründerzeit Housing Stock**

Parallel to the broadcasting of the Planquadrat discussion with the mayor in May 1974, the Urban Renewal Act (*Städterneuerungsgesetz*) went into effect. The law was very much oriented towards the top-down concept of large-scale area rehabilitation. Similar to the laws in the United States, it was to specify geographically clearly-defined renewal zones, “besides, it contained the obligation of building owners to offer their property to the city in case of compulsory purchase, and finally, the option of a 50 percent tax deduction tied to the renewal costs” (Fassmann and Hatz, 2006: p. 3) – but this part never became effective. In a first step, a heavily built up and densely populated working class area in the 16th district (Ottakring) was chosen. Typical for the area was its housing stock from the Gründerzeit.

The Gründerzeit architecture was little appreciated in the 1970s, not least because of its history. By the end of the nineteenth century, the outer districts had become the new residential districts for immigrants coming mainly from the eastern region of the Danube Monarchy. In only 60 years – between 1840 and 1910 – the population of Vienna had increased from 401,200 to 2,083,630 people. The rapidly growing urban population and the economic development led to a gigantic re-planning of the city. The old city walls, separating the inner city from the suburbs, were replaced by the Ringstrasse corridor with its impressive and representative monuments. With the second city extension in 1890 the defense walls (Linienwall) were replaced by a city railway system (*Stadtbahn*) designed by Otto Wagner.

In the outer districts the former village and suburban structures were replaced by tenement blocks (*Mietzinshäuser*). Mainly developed by means of private capital, maximum land utilization was limited only by few regulations concerning building height and rudimentary requirements for fire safety. Speculators tried to achieve the highest possible return of investment by using schematic floor plans and increasing building density as high as possible. Most tiny flats consisted of only one, sometimes two rooms as well as a kitchen lit and ventilated by a window to the hallway, with neither toilet nor bathroom. Running water was only available from a sink, the so-called *bassena*, in the exterior hallways. Often up to ten people lived in these tiny flats, many of them lodgers. In the overcrowded houses tuberculosis was so widespread that it was internationally known as the “Viennese disease.” The low standards of these poorly appointed flats contrasted sharply with the buildings whose facades imitated the splendor of the Ringstrassen Palais.

In the 1970s, the houses were no longer so overcrowded, but few of these apartment buildings had received any improvements or renovations since their construction. Due to rent control regulations landlords had little or no interest in maintaining or improving their properties (Fassmann and Hatz, 2006: p. 2).

Slowly soft methods reached urban planning. At the annual meeting of the German Association of Cities (Hauptversammlung des deutschen Städtetags) in 1971, architects and urban planners discussed the rediscovery and reassessment of the past under the motto “save our cities now” (Rettet unsere Städte jetzt) (Schubert, 2011: p. 122). In light of this discussion, the city of Vienna established a working group in the municipal planning department for the practical implementation of the Urban Renewal Act (Städterneuerungsgesetz) in 1974. Due in no small part to the discussions surrounding the broadcasting of the Planquadrat series, the working group started to develop a comprehensive approach for the renewal area instead of focusing only on green areas and public space. According to Jane Jacobs, the new concept was to take the real needs of the population into account instead of it being based on a phantom concept of “normal existence.” For eight weeks officials of the executive office sat in an information bus in Ottakring to listen to the wishes and concerns of residents. On Tuesday, 1 October 1974, the local newspaper *Kurier* published the headline worded “Urban Renewal: No One Has To Move Out” (Assanierung: Niemand muß aus der Wohnung) (*Kurier*, 1974).

With the aim of including residents, landlords, and shop owners in the process of urban renewal and renovation, the first area renewal office (Gebietsbetreuung) was established in the project area. Today, 12 local urban renewal offices offer advice and information for tenants, flat and house owners. Commissioned by the city, the offices are run by architects or housing developers who have a neutral position between all involved actors and stakeholders in a neighborhood. They coordinate and promote rehabilitation programs, predominantly for private housing stock. Similar to the ideas of Jane Jacobs, the concept of gentle urban renewal in Vienna resists a merely functional approach and one-sided planning oriented only to the interests of local automobile traffic. In Vienna urban renewal was and still is more than building renovation, connecting the preservation of buildings with certain social and spatial qualities. Today Jane Jacobs’s claim for “plentiful city diversity” (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: p. 101) has become an urban ideal.

## **Institutionalization**

Step by step, the Vienna model of gentle urban renewal, with its focus on sustainable renovation, was developed throughout the following years. The goals were to maintain and improve the existing building fabric, create affordable high-standard apartments and maintain a balanced social-mix in the residential population.

The Apartment Improvement Act (Wohnungsverbesserungsgesetz) of 1969 was the beginning of a series of new laws. Its goal was the creation of incentives for renters to undertake improvements in their apartments (Lichtenberger, 1994: pp. 6–7). It

was followed by the Old City Redevelopment Act (*Altstadtsanierungsgesetz*) of 1972 and the Urban Renewal Act (*Stadterneuerungsgesetz*) of 1974. The important legal basis for the shift from the small-scale study area in Ottakring to large-scale urban renewal programs had been the Residential Building Rehabilitation Act (*Wohnhaussanierungsgesetz*) of 1984 and the Viennese Housing Promotion and Renovation Act (*Wiener Wohnbauförderungs- und Sanierungsgesetz*) of 1989. The international innovation of these two laws was their funding prerequisites. The crucial requirement was no longer the building's site in a clearly defined urban redevelopment zone, but its age. The technical standard of the building and the predominant category of apartments replaced the location of the building as requirements. Apartments without bathroom, toilet, and running water were categorized as "D." According to the standard of improvements the qualifying certification could be upgraded to "Category C," "Category B," and "Category A." To be qualified as Category A, an apartment must have a minimum size of 30 square meters and must at least be equipped with central heating, a kitchen or kitchenette and a modern bath or shower with toilet. The Vienna City Development Plan (*Stadtentwicklungsplan*) of 1985, with its special emphasis on urban renewal, documents the institutionalization of this policy and marks the keystone of the legal development of the Viennese urban renewal policy. The document did not establish any new measures or instruments but summarizes the principles and goals of gentle urban renewal. One year later (1986) a reform of the Rent Act (*Mietrechtsgesetz*) was passed providing incentives for renovations by private owners and liberalizing rents for Category A apartments.

To prepare and implement the urban renewal measures and to administer the different subsidies and tax revenues, the Vienna Land Procurement and Urban Renewal Fund (*Wiener Bodenbereitstellungs- und Stadterneuerungsfond*, later renamed *wohnfonds\_wien.fonds für wohnbau und stadterneuerung*) was established in 1984. According to the different spatial levels of urban renewal – the level of the individual apartment, the level of the building, and the level of an entire neighborhood – different measures are required. Investments in a central heating system or a bathroom are encouraged at the level of individual apartments. Basic renewals as well as maintenance of the physical structure, including lighting, sanitary installations, and repairs to the facade or the roof, are subsidized at the building level. These measures can be combined with creating new penthouse apartments. Residents are invited to participate in any modifications to their individual apartments, but they are not forced to do so. So even in buildings which have undergone basic renewal, substandard apartments may be found next to Category A ones. At the neighborhood level, the concept of block renewal aims at the coordination of renovation measures in single buildings, improvements to public spaces and structural changes on the entire block, for example, landscape interventions that cross property boundaries.

Since the beginning of the major urban renewal campaign in 1984 more than 8,400 buildings have been submitted for subsidized renewal and approximately

4,700 subsidies have already been secured. This affects about 201,000 dwellings – on the average 10,000 per year and already more than a fifth of the total Viennese housing stock (Förster, 2004: p. 17).

Unlike in the United States, where urban renewal is mainly left to the market and rent legislation is more liberal, the Viennese municipal government, with its model of gentle urban renewal, has established a legal framework and a system of incentives that allow the improvement of old buildings but avoid displacement of low-income residents or an increase of segregation in general (Fassmann and Hatz, 2006: p. 10).

Due in no small part to the wide spectrum of contributors – namely tenants, house owners, architects, urban planners and municipal authorities – urban renewal in Vienna is far more than mere construction and refurbishment.

## Bibliography

- Arena Wien. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.arena.co.at/index.php?section=aboutus#abouteng> [accessed 16 July 2011].
- Fassmann, H. and Hatz, G., 2006. Urban Renewal in Vienna. In: G. Enyedi and Z. Kovacs, *Social Changes and Social Sustainability in Historical Urban Centres: The case of Central Europe*. Pécs: Hungarian Academy of Sciences – Centre for Regional Studies [Online]. Available at: [http://univie.academia.edu/GerhardHatz/Papers/108578/Urban\\_Renewal\\_in\\_Vienna](http://univie.academia.edu/GerhardHatz/Papers/108578/Urban_Renewal_in_Vienna) [accessed 16 July 2011].
- Feuerstein, C., 2009. Anfänge der sanften Stadterneuerung in Wien. Die Entdeckung der alltäglichen Stadt. In: C. Feuerstein and A. Fitz, *Wann begann temporär? Frühe Stadtinterventionen und sanfte Stadterneuerung in Wien*. Wien: Springer Verlag, pp. 11–59.
- Förster, W., 2004. Stadterneuerung – der Wiener Weg [Urban Renewal – the Viennese Way]. In: R. Sterk and H. Eisenberger, *Wiens Sanfte Erneuerung: Wie Bewohner die Revitalisierung ihrer Stadt erleben [Vienna's Gentle Renewal: How Inhabitants Experience the Revitalization of Their City]*. Vienna: Christian Brandstätter Verlag, pp. 9–26.
- Jacobs, J., 1992 [1961]. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Vintage Books Edition.
- Kurier*, 1974. Assanierung: Niemand muß aus der Wohnung [Urban Renewal: No One Has To Move Out], 1 October 1974.
- Lichtenberger, E., 1994. Vienna and Prague: Political Systems and Urban Development in the Post-war Period. In: M. Barlow, P. Dostal and M. Hampl (eds), *Development and Administration of Prague*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University, pp. 91–115.

- Online Dictionary of American History, 2003. Urban Renewal. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Urban\\_renewal.aspx#1](http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Urban_renewal.aspx#1) [accessed 16 July 2011].
- Schubert, D., 2011. 50 Jahre Jane Jacobs “Tod und Leben großer amerikanischer Städte.” Paradigmenwechsel in der Stadtplanung auf dem Weg zum erhaltenden Stadtumbau. In: *Forum Stadt*, 1/2011, pp. 101–26.

## Chapter 9

# Jane Jacobs, City Planning and its Rationale in Spain

José Luis Sáinz Guerra

Translation from the Spanish by Alan Hynds

Jane Jacobs's criticism of the American city, in particular as expressed in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, is today an important reference point for the critical view of modern American city planning. Yet it is also a theoretical contribution to city planning and an attempt to introduce new approaches. At the same time, it is an attack on the principles and aims that have shaped modern, orthodox city planning in America.

What is her standpoint? Jane Jacobs analyses the city from the perspective of the users. The question is to establish whether certain elements in the city are adequate or not and for whom. She rarely deals with technical matters, rather she analyses theories and their outcomes, and in a critical view relates them to their practical application. What is more, Jane Jacobs focuses on large cities, and within these, on inner-city areas, turning the experts' arguments upside down:

I have concentrated on great cities, and on their inner areas, because this is the problem that has been most consistently evaded in planning theory (Jacobs, 1961: p. 16).

In particular, she focused her criticism on the major principles of planning theory, which analyzed cities that were very different from today's cities; principles that have become obsolete in the city of today. She criticizes the fact that still these principles are considered to be the unalterable criteria for modern city planning. She is also highly critical of the current shortfall in city planning policies which emerged from city planning theories in the nineteenth century, and which have no justification in the present:

These odd intellectual omissions go back, I think, to the Garden City nonsense, as so many of the unspoken presuppositions of city planning and city design do (Jacobs, 1961: p. 289).

Generally, citizens look at the city in the same way as they would look at nature; they believe that the events taking place are the product of uncontrollable forces. Citizens do not usually look for a culprit for the city planners' mistakes, which may entail traffic jams or rising house prices. Flooding, traffic black spots and declining city centers are believed to be fate. However, Jane Jacobs's view focuses on the effects that the theories of city planners, technicians, and politicians have on cities.

Despite having had no university education or specialization in city planning, Jane Jacobs was still able to bring many new ideas to the intellectual debate and to defeat the proposals coming out of city planning offices with strong arguments. Her contribution is a severe critique of the urban renewal policies in American cities in the 1950s.

Clearly, Jane Jacobs did not write a handbook or an academic textbook on city planning, nor was it her intention to do so. Reading the pages of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, one could conclude that it was written by an activist. The book is evidently the product of the political struggle and the theoretical debates that occurred in New York and other American cities in response to the city planning policies pursued by the public administrations at that time. In fact, the book is a reflection on and an analysis of her city; how it works, which phenomena transform it, which agents act upon it and why, which mechanisms are set in motion, what transforms the streets, the squares and the parks. At the same time, it is a criticism of city planning and the ideas prevailing in the institutions of further education and municipal planning offices, where they are applied by municipal technicians. This enlightened book is much more than just a view on city planning, as it analyses the connections between economic power, political power and the administrators' discourse, which can change the city. Above all, Jacobs emphasizes the fact that the city should be a place for people to live in. This is what gives the book a deeper meaning. Jane Jacobs speaks about the city and about how it is used by people. She demonstrates how the city is manipulated by economic and political powers and how the city planning discourse is used and for what ends.

### **Jane Jacobs and the Spanish City**

Jane Jacobs's book was first published in Spain in 1967; the second edition came out in 1973.<sup>1</sup> In the 1970s Jane Jacobs was already a well-known author in Spain, at least in city planning circles. Her theories were commented on and discussed by

---

1 Jacobs, J., 1967. *Muerte y vida en las grandes ciudades*. Barcelona: Península. Translation by Ángel Abad. Recently reedited Jacobs, J., 2011. *Muerte y vida de las grandes ciudades*. Madrid: Capitán Swing. Foreword by Zaida Muxí, Blanca G. Valdivia, Manuel Delgado. Translation by Ángel Abad and Ana Useros. It is surprising that in the different Spanish editions the word "American" has been omitted from the title.

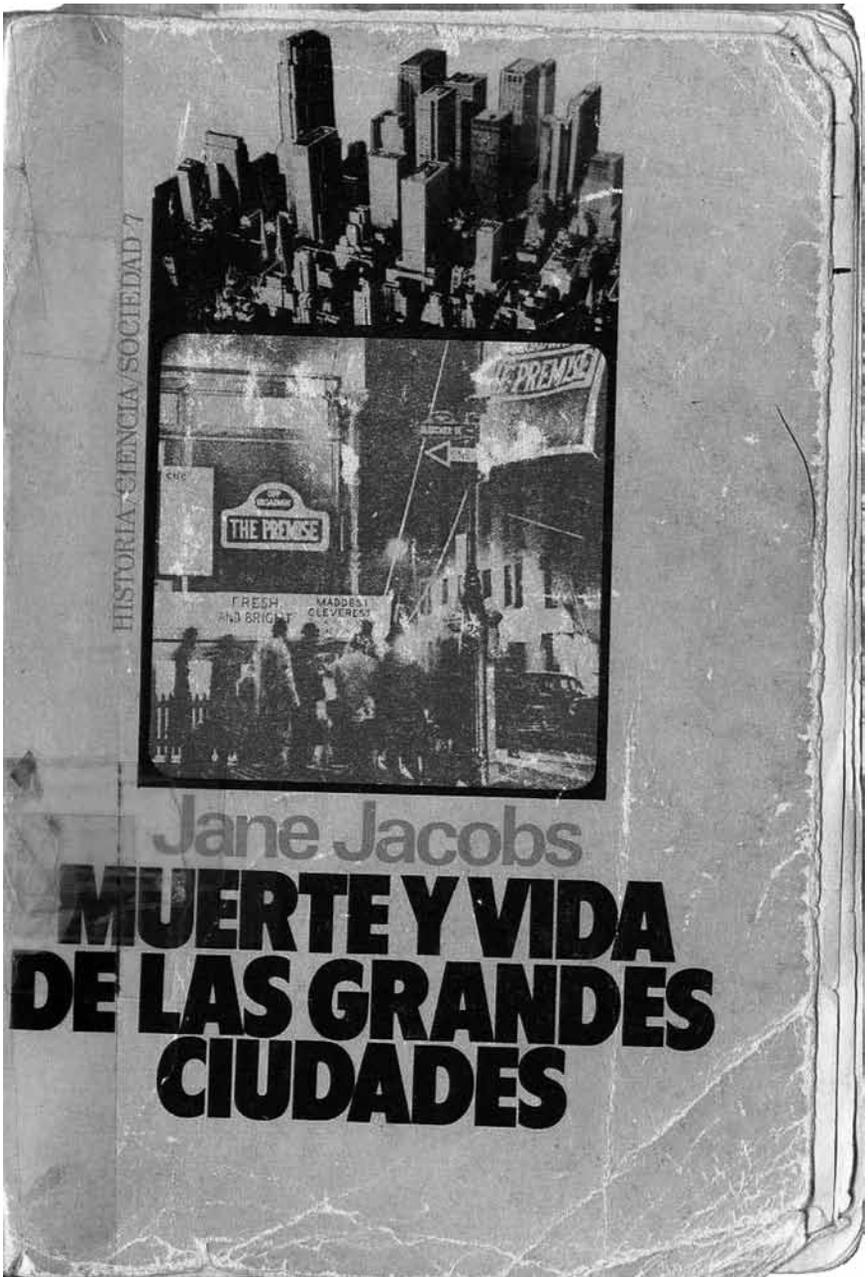


Figure 9.1 Cover of the first Spanish edition of Jane Jacobs' book *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1967)

Source: © With kind permission of the publisher.

university lecturers in their city planning classes.<sup>2</sup> The success of her first book led to the translation into Spanish of *The Economy of Cities*.<sup>3</sup>

The first Spanish edition of Jacobs's book represented a break in the mainstream of thinking about cities. It stressed the value of public space, especially in the traditional city, favoring social contacts, lively streets, neighborhood relationships as well as the importance of density, complexity, and diversity. In Spain, these subjects were much debated, focusing, on the one hand, on the low quality of new residential areas for workers, and on the other, on the destruction of the historic city. At that time, some authors criticized the "city of development" as a result of economic forces. In particular, they condemned the gigantic housing developments which were built speculatively on the outskirts and justified as being modern and created in a "functional" mode. The work that documented the (poor) theoretical basis for the transformation of Spanish cities was undoubtedly that written by Fernando de Terán (1978) entitled *Planeamiento urbano en la España Contemporánea* [*City Planning in Contemporary Spain*], which was a source of critical reflection on urban speculation and the role of institutional city planning. The architect Antonio Miranda published his book, significantly entitled *Elogio a la medianera urbana* [*Praise for the Urban Party Wall*] in 1977, stressing the quality of the historic city as opposed to the cities sprawling into the surrounding landscape with rows upon rows of houses. In numerous works Mario Gaviria, sociologist, city planner and translator of Henri Lefèbvre into Spanish, criticized those spaces that were the result of speculation and praised the value of the historic centers, as in the case of Pamplona (García, Gaviria and Tuñón, 1979). The engineer José Luis Gómez-Ordoñez and the architect Manuel de Solà-Morales published an article explaining the economic nature of growth processes in cities and investment in infrastructures (1977). But despite their articulate critique, these publications failed to affect city planning policies.

Jane Jacobs begins her book by effectively criticizing the most important authors who shaped the modern American city, especially the creator of the Garden City, Ebenezer Howard, and his followers in America, Lewis Mumford, Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, and Catherine Bauer. Her criticisms are thrown wider and become more caustic when speaking of Le Corbusier and his Radiant City:

The man with the most dramatic idea of how to get all this anti-city planning right into the citadels of iniquity themselves was the European architect Le Corbusier (Jacobs, 1961: p. 21).

---

2 The author was a student at the School of Architecture in Madrid in the 1970s. I can testify that Jane Jacobs was studied in the city planning classes of several of the younger lecturers from the Department of City Planning. In the classes of Luis Moya, Ramón Lopez Lucio and others, texts concerning her theories were discussed, especially as regards mixed uses in the city to maintain its vitality, and the quality of the complexity of uses and relationships within the historic city. Later, in Ph.D. courses, Mario Gaviria also frequently based his thinking on her theories.

3 Jacobs, J. 1971. *La economía de las ciudades*. Barcelona: Península.



Figure 9.2 The cover of Jane Jacobs' book *The Economy of Cities* in its Spanish version (1971)

Source: © With kind permission of the publisher.

Le Corbusier was a legendary figure throughout Europe in the post-war years. In France, he exercised a tremendous cultural and ideological dominion which had undeniable consequences on social housing policies. Le Corbusier was a mythical figure in Spain's schools of architecture, possessing all the qualities of a pioneer, an architectural artist and an engineer. Jane Jacobs's criticism of Le Corbusier or, more precisely, of the city that Le Corbusier imagined, was seen as truly heretical by some of the Madrid School's lecturers. Nonetheless, she disapproved of the utopian city models, created as the city of the future, which Le Corbusier had thought up in the 1920s, and whose arguments were being used to build the American city of the 1950s. In those days, not many authors disagreed with the architects who followed Le Corbusier's theories, as Jane Jacobs did.

The Spanish architect José Luis Sert is an important figure in Spain's debate about the modern city. He is noted for his work in Spain during the early period of rationalism in the 1930s, for his friendship with Le Corbusier from his time as a student in Barcelona lasting until the Swiss architect's death, and finally for his theoretical influence in the USA as the person who introduced the theories of the Modern Movement.<sup>4</sup> In fact, Sert worked in the USA after the Second World War and, from Harvard, exercised great influence on the dissemination of the ideas of modern city planning and architecture in North America. In spite of his affinity with Le Corbusier's ideas and their lifelong friendship, José Luis Sert was critical of the American city which was being shaped in the 1950s. He criticized the City Beautiful as a movement that "ignored the root of the problems and only aimed for visual effects," while his reflections on sprawl show his lack of confidence in the Garden City formula, which was criticized so much by Jane Jacobs some years later.<sup>5</sup> His view, as a long term US resident, was much more critical of the modern city, and his observations were more precise than those of his master Le Corbusier.

During this period, Jane Jacobs shared her interest in Spain's city planning circles with another writer of great acclaim among lecturers and students, Henri Lefèbvre. This French author had published many books, some on subjects and theories similar to those expressed by Jane Jacobs. His books, *The Urban Revolution* (Lefèbvre, 1972), *The Right to the City* (1978) and *From Rural to Urban* (1971), expressed radical criticism of the modern city and praise for the historic city and, as one of its most singular aspects, the traditional street. In his article *The Tavern Club – The Key Point for Social Life* (Lefèbvre, 1971: p. 135), he talks about the attraction that the

---

4 José Luis Sert designed the Spanish Pavilion in the World Fair of 1937, during the Spanish Republic, famous for housing "Guernica" by Pablo Picasso.

5 "The younger generation in this country (perhaps resembling their grandparents rather than their parents) is less suburban-minded than its elders, as it has become aware that the uncontrolled sprawl of our communities only aggravates their problem, and that the solution lies in reshaping the city as a whole. The necessary process is not one of decentralization, but one of recentralization." Excerpt from the speech given by José Luis Sert, when he was Dean of the Graduate School of Design of Harvard University, at the First Conference on Urban Design, on 9 and 10 April 1956. Published in *Progressive Architecture*, August 1956, pp. 97ff.

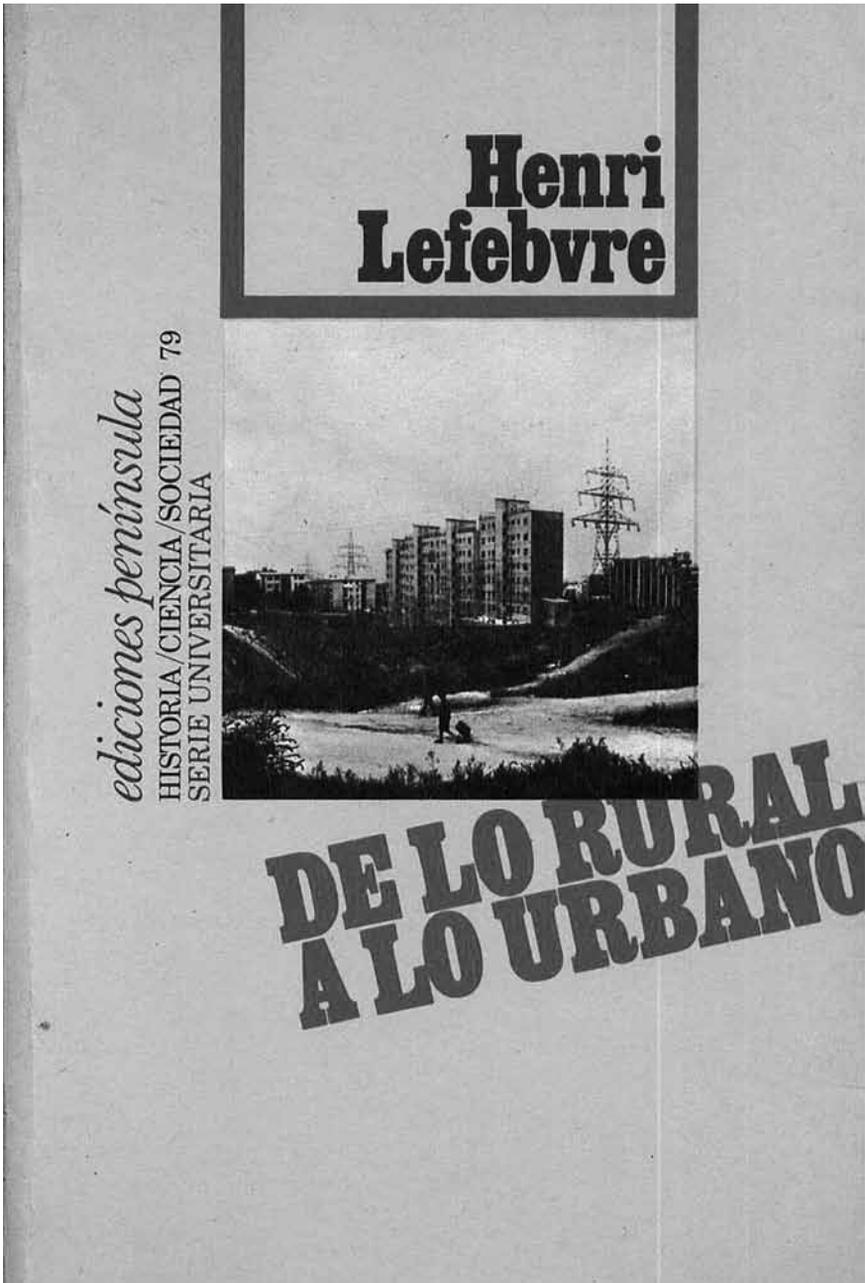


Figure 9.3 The cover of the book *From Rural to Urban*, in its Spanish version, by Henri Lefebvre (1971)

Source: © With kind permission of the publisher.

traditional bar has for citizens living in a clean, aseptic and functional modern-style apartment block; a bar where neighbors can meet, talk loudly, laugh and chat in a friendly atmosphere, an environment that the modern city and its rational buildings does not offer. Some years later Henri Lefèbvre also published critical works on new, modern workers' cities (*Les Grands Ensembles*) built in France to house large groups of the working population, in which he made similar criticisms with references to some of the aspects that Jane Jacobs had already pointed out in her book (Lefèbvre, 1971: p. 103).<sup>6</sup> Lefèbvre's thinking was precisely based on the analysis of what he called daily life in these new, modern neighborhoods.<sup>7</sup>

### **Street Value or How a Street Works**

Jane Jacobs reinvents the way we understand the city by critically analyzing reality. She looks at our surroundings with a different eye. One of her main contributions is, without doubt, street value. First of all, she criticizes the dominant theories at the time and, in particular, focuses on the demonization of the street, setting out the main ideas of orthodox planning, and summarizing the thinking of the great theoreticians of modern planning in the phrase: "The street is bad as an environment for humans ..." (Jacobs, 1961: p. 20). She speaks, for instance, about how the safety of a neighborhood is achieved thanks not to the presence of the police, but to a dense and almost unconscious network of constant voluntary controls and reflexes on the people's part. What this note implies is the perception of the collective life of a city as a real "physical order" – i.e., the concept that Jacobs herself proposes – made up of micro-processes in which, more than a rapport between integrated organic elements, what happens is, in fact, a ballet, or a suite of highly efficient, coordinated initiatives that can give a mass of units in permanent agitation an internal coherence. What Jacobs does, in plain, simple language and starting from a direct appraisal of reality, is to recognize, in a street, a public park or a neighborhood, examples of what she herself imagines as a sum of movements and activities, most of which are trivial and casual, but whose combined result is so much more.

### **The Problem of Bad Design of Modern Cities**

In the 1970s Jane Jacobs's message in favor of the dense, diverse city encouraged human relations and brought vitality, intensity of use, and quality of life to Spanish

---

6 "Los nuevos conjuntos urbanos. Un caso concreto: Lacq-Mourenx y los problemas urbanos de la nueva clase obrera." It should be pointed out that the article published in the Spanish compilation in 1971 had originally been published in the "Revue Francaise de Sociologie" in 1960.

7 The French expression he uses is "la vie quotidienne," which has been translated as "daily life."



**Figure 9.4** A patio in the Galaxia residential complex in the centre of Madrid

*Source:* © José Luis Sáinz Guerra.

city centers. In Madrid, both the Ensanche de Madrid and the historic quarter of medieval origin were praised, but in particular, the Malasaña neighborhood, which at that time saw a kind of cultural revitalization, later giving rise to the so-called *Movida Madrileña*.<sup>8</sup> The American author was praising the way of life of our historic cities, to the detriment of the modern cities with their new blocks, empty parks, and the automobile. What should a public space be like so that people would use it? In what way does the design of a public space influence how local citizens appreciate it and use it regularly or, alternatively, abandon it to homeless people? At that time, the so-called *Complejo Galaxia* (Galaxy building) was opened in Madrid in the tight Ensanche quarter, between the streets “Fernando el Católico,” “Menendez Valdés,” “Gaztamide” and “Andrés Mellado.” It was designed in the style of the School of Architecture of Madrid and an example of what Jane Jacobs had meant by bad design of public and private spaces. The

---

<sup>8</sup> The Ensanche de Madrid, or the Plan Castro, is a plan for the expansion of the city of Madrid based on straight streets in the form of a grid, with square or rectangular blocks and a high density. The project was created in the nineteenth century and finished in the twentieth century.

design of these blocks was bad because it intended to increase profits and the courtyards with shops, bars, and restaurants opened out onto the streets. However, this space, heralded as groundbreaking and original, soon generated problems; the patrons of the bars stayed in the courtyards long into the night and disturbed the sleep of residents living nearby and, what is worse, drug dealers liked to carry on their business in these semi-hidden spaces with many concealed corners and several exits to different streets. What Jane Jacobs had predicted actually came true in these interior courtyards; the neighbors were unable to control the activities that went on there and even the police could not return them to their intended use. To this day those courtyards have many boarded-up shop fronts, which is a sign of a failed design.

### The Sacking of Cities

The term “the sacking of cities” was coined by Jane Jacobs in the introduction to her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. In the third paragraph of her introduction, she talks about a well-known and persistent myth according to which, if we had enough money, we could get rid of all the slums and poor areas in ten years; we could rejuvenate the large, sad, grey belts that were the suburbs of yesterday; we could offer the middle classes, and their random tax obligations, a place to settle down; we could even solve the traffic problem. When what has actually happened is that the neighborhoods that functioned well have become worse places than they were at the beginning; the civic centers, in which it is difficult to find a good library, have become deserts that no one goes to. Jane Jacobs concludes by saying: “This is not the rebuilding of cities. This is the sacking of cities” (1961: p. 4). The term “the sacking of a city” is strong; it refers to soldiers or pirates who conquer the city and take everything there is by force, stealing whatever they find, as well as destroying what they cannot carry or make use of. It is this dual aspect of robbery and destruction that gives the term used by Jane Jacobs its strength. Another word that may be associated with the phrase is violence. This word has similar connotations in many languages (English, Spanish, French, German and Italian). It brings to mind a kind of behavior known in the past in cities that have been sacked many times by pirates or by soldiers in the European wars. It is, without a doubt, a strong word which is used figuratively to describe what went on in American cities in the 1950s and 1960s; a word which is explained throughout the book in numerous examples. For Jane Jacobs, some of the interventions carried out in American cities deserved such an assessment: the sacking of the cities.

Over the last decade in Spain, something akin to the sacking of the cities has gone on, in the sense used by Jane Jacobs; a process that is closely related to the transformation she had witnessed in American cities. The concepts the American author describes can be used to explain the process that Spanish cities

have undergone. Over the last 20 years, they have been subjected to a process characterized by several simultaneous phenomena:

1. The deregulation of city planning, according to the theory of profiting from ultra-liberal market policies.
2. The investment of large quantities of the city's public resources in services and large infrastructures (from different levels of the local, regional, and state administration).
3. The preference for certain agents to intervene in the city and to take advantage of capital gains, privatizing the city's social capital and destroying the quality of urban space.

The deregulation of city planning took place at the end of the 1990s when the Ley 6/1998 (Land Law and Evaluation Regime) was approved.<sup>9</sup> The main purpose of this law was to reduce land and house prices in Spain by increasing land supply and market competitiveness. This law was preceded by other legislation two years before, which, in its title, already announced the liberalization of measures related to land, and which aimed to “increase the supply of land in order to decrease the price of available land” and to “simplify the procedures and shorten the existing deadlines.”<sup>10</sup> The Ley 6/1998 established, in its exposition of motives:

the reform of the land market in the sense of a greater liberalization to increase supply, making up part of the necessary structural reform of the Spanish economy ...

As a consequence of this new law and these new criteria, the cities' general plans were modified in that they enormously increased their development areas, breaking the existing balance in Spanish cities between population growth, economic growth, and spatial growth. In fact, the relationship with the land and housing market was also broken, when construction took place at such a rate that the market could not absorb all the houses and the enormous stock of unsold properties is now, at the time of writing this text, one of the main causes of Spain's current problems in the economic crisis.

The investment of large public resources in Spanish cities over those 20 years is a factor that must be taken into account, as such an investment had never been made before over such a short period of time in the entire history of the Spanish city. It coincides with Jacobs's concept of “cataclysmic money.” In fact, during the democratic period Spanish cities have received enormous investment, amounts

---

9 Ley 6/1998, de 13 de abril, Sobre Régimen del Suelo y Valoraciones. Madrid: BOE (Law 6/1998, 13 April, on the Land and Evaluation Regime).

10 Real Decreto-Ley 5/1996, de 7 de junio, de Medidas Liberalizadoras en Materia de Suelo y Colegios Profesionales. Madrid: BOE. (Royal Decree-Law 5/1996, 7 June, on Measures to Liberalise Land Laws and Professional Colleges).

until then unimagined that have continued to increase in quantity over the last few years. During the time of Franco's dictatorship the Spanish tax system was primitive, based almost exclusively on indirect taxes. Consequently, the public administration, and in particular the town councils, lacked sufficient economic resources to be able to take on large public works. When democracy arrived, a profound tax reform was carried out (for instance, setting up individual tax declarations) which led to a healthier situation for the public administration finances. As a result of these reforms the public administrations, at central, regional and local levels, were able to carry out enormous investments (along with the additional investments of the "Feder" Funds from the EU to promote social cohesion among the different member states), part of which were dedicated to transport infrastructures. This investment in infrastructures such as highways and ring roads has modified Spanish cities and allowed them to spread out into the surrounding land, thereby changing their traditional, compact urban form. The investment in infrastructures has led Spanish cities to a change from the dense city model to the sprawling American model.

In addition, the new highways, which provided access to the hinterland, gave rise to new patterns of behavior among the citizens, the public administration and especially the estate agents and financiers. The agents, developers and businessmen, who until then had focused on the historic city and its residential areas, began to concentrate on buying up large areas of land outside the city, close to the new highways and ring roads. This land was easily accessible due to the new infrastructures, and much cheaper than land in the city. The typical procedure was for the developers to draw up agreements that included an option to buy for the land owners, usually farmers, who received a small sum of money as a deposit. The final purchase of the land and payment took place after a specified number of years, when the land had been developed and sold. In a few cases, the land was purchased by paying the total price with bank loans using the land itself as a guarantee. In both cases, the final price would be paid to the farmers or the banks, once the land had been developed and the plots sold. For the Spanish banks, this type of real estate investment was the best way of making money, as it had always earned them the biggest profits. In a further step the city planning regulations were modified, which had an impact on urban development projects at all levels. The planning discipline could have avoided unjustified growth and thus prevented or modulated urban sprawl. The most important and simplest argument for avoiding sprawl would have been the creation of sustainable cities that consume little energy and provide public commuter transport. In addition to this, there would not have been the need to destroy agricultural land for building new housing and, finally, the preference for rehabilitating and improving existing cities (in the sense that Jane Jacobs set out 60 years ago), which had numerous empty plots and many vacant properties. However, the most important question was: who would live in these new houses? Did the developers not understand that the population was not large enough to fill up all those housing estates they were so happily building? Nevertheless, the deregulation of city planning

that took place at the end of the 1990s left town councils free to do what they wanted. In most cases, they took to approving new plans and new extensions to their cities beyond the existing limits, without reflecting on the consequences.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Spanish legislation is extraordinarily lax as regards the use of transport infrastructures, and the laws for the recuperation of capital gains from developers who develop land close to highways only recover approximately 10 percent of their profits.

It is surprising how much the panorama of the American cities of the 1950s described by Jane Jacobs is full of references to city planning theories then used by technicians and politicians; theories which are easily criticized, badly applied, confused, and contradictory to the actual situation. But at least they were aware of the theories and respected them. In the Spanish scenario, the only city planning theories were ultra-liberalism and the supremacy of the market. Upon this theoretical basis, more than 5.5 million homes were built all over the country between 1998 and 2010, of which more than a million are still unsold today, jeopardizing the solvency of the banks.

As a consequence of this development, the traditional city center is threatened by a process of decadence which is ever more visible and brings with it the impoverishment of existing urban space. In fact, many families have opted for abandoning the traditional city to buy a house in the suburbs, where “cataclysmic money” has produced developments which are badly designed, built too quickly, monotonous, and alienating. This decadence has also been accompanied by the disappearance of many local shops in the traditional quarters of the cities and the center. Large shopping malls, situated near ring roads with ample parking, are better suited to shopping by car. The traditional shops cannot compete with this and have been severely affected. The administration has encouraged this trend by situating their offices outside the city centers. Another example seen in many Spanish cities are the so-called “cities of justice,” new areas in which the courts and associated offices are all situated together, leaving their old building in the center empty. The Spanish tax system has also contributed to the decadence in city centers, particularly in the way it is assisted by the municipalities. City councils calculate the tax payable by house owners solely as a proportion of the value of the property and not in relation to the expenses which the property generates for the council. This results in the paradox situation that properties in denser city centers, whose narrow streets and fewer parks are cheaper to maintain, pay higher municipal taxes than the properties in the garden cities. In the suburbs with wide streets and parks, where densities are ten times lower and maintenance costs per

---

11 Numerous voices were raised during these years against the unchecked urban growth, to cite just one, we could remember the “Auken Report, concerning the impact of the extensive city planning in Spain on the individual rights of European citizens, the environment and the application of EU legislation,” approved on 26 March 2009 by the European Parliament.

housing unit therefore much higher, the properties pay far less municipal taxes (Garrido, Magrinyà and Moral, 2011).<sup>12</sup>

When city councils saw that the construction of houses in the municipality brought additional funds for their budgets from municipal licenses they used this extra income to invest in exceptional, singular buildings. Consequently, the urban growth policies have led to the construction of great, emblematic buildings, such as museums, concert halls, bull rings, cultural centers, and multifunctional buildings. Almost every city in Spain has one or more of these buildings which are often underused in relation to their cost, or not used at all. The emblematic architecture designed by famous architects is expensive and the buildings are costly to operate. Especially now the responsible administrations cannot afford the costs, leaving behind “white elephants,” buildings which are empty, underused or with greatly reduced utility. The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao is a successful building of international acclaim and a positive example of investment into unique architecture. It was designed by Frank O. Gehry and constructed during Bilbao’s hardest times. It now represents the important boost for the city’s economic recuperation, but also for the city’s social and symbolic recovery. However, the success of the Guggenheim is difficult to reproduce and many attempts in other cities have failed. New museums require art collections to be exhibited, for which there are often no funds; in some cases the acquisition of such collections would amount to ten times the cost of the building itself. The museums, music schools, and cultural centers require specialist staff, conservators or teachers who must be paid an annual salary. The concert halls require the organization of attractive festivals each season, good orchestras have to be contracted along with the best singers in order to attract the public and make it economically and socially profitable. Meanwhile the extraordinary income from licenses has dried up and many city councils currently face maintenance and operating costs for buildings that a normal budget, without extras, cannot absorb.

The enormously expensive Ciudad de la Cultura de Galicia (City of Culture) in the outskirts of Santiago de Compostela, designed by Peter Eisenman, represents the sum of all excesses, the most grandiloquent gestures. Some critics point to the fact that it has converted the landscape of one of Spain’s most beautiful cities into a funfair. The investment for its construction was so great that the money ran out even before the building was finished. There is serious doubt about whether there is any institution in existence that could take on the enormous outlay needed to keep it working at 100 percent. Another example of enormous expense is the Niemeyer Center of Asturias, in the depressed city of Avilés. It is another cultural “box,” built on the hope of revitalizing the region’s economy using the culture industry. This needs great investment in culture, and its bare walls and empty rooms show a lack of ideas and resources to fill it. The building is yet another exaggerated

---

12 The translation of the title of this article is: The evaluation of the economic sustainability in city planning. The major urban determinants in municipal income and expenses.



**Figure 9.5** The cultural “boxes” that contain no culture: The Millennium Dome in Valladolid

*Source:* © José Luis Sáinz Guerra.

gesture of Niemeyer’s own architecture. Just as pretentious and unnecessary is the Millennium Dome built recently in Valladolid. Its high economic cost, paid with money that the city does not have and has obtained by means of loans, contrasts with the banality of its contents.

In summary, the starting point of this disastrous end result was when city councils decided that they did not need city planning experts to manage their cities, since they thought it was the market that ruled, and the people who best understood the market were developers. Thus, the municipalities, freed from the rigid discipline of city planning, put themselves entirely in the hands of developers, who, financed by the banks, completely transformed Spanish cities in only a few years. Development was based on a single formula: to build new housing where before there was only farmland and to connect to existing cities with new infrastructures. Thus, the alliance between councils, developers, and banks was formed; an alliance that has many justifications, forms, and appearances. The most perverse of all was when the bankers were also mayors, sitting on both sides of the bargaining table. Such was the case in some councils whose mayors were members of the savings banks’ management boards that were behind the urban developments. Today, many of the savings banks are having difficulties, have disappeared or been absorbed by larger entities, as a result of the enormous number of unsold houses. In effect, the lack of planning meant that the number

of houses built greatly exceeded the number the market could absorb, and finally, many developers, being unable to find buyers for their products, went bankrupt. These houses have passed into the hands of those who initially lent the money, the banks.

In the Spanish example, the sacking of the city occurs because development is guided by a supposed god market, vicious and unjust, finally devouring its priests. A part of the public investment in highways and ring roads, financed by the citizens' taxes, ends up in the developers' pockets as profits from the increase in the price of the agricultural land which has been made accessible. The city centers, which were until just a few years ago full of vitality, are in danger of gradually being left empty, while many of their prior functions, such as housing and shops, are disappearing. That is to say, the city has been sacked and there was robbery and destruction. The robbery has been in the form of land speculation, appropriation of the capital invested in infrastructures that has been passed to the land through its revaluation, while the destruction has come in the form of decadence in the city center brought about by radical changes in city models.

## **Conclusion**

In short, when Jane Jacobs analyzes, outlines and defines the urban problems of modern American cities of the 1950s, she is providing us with the key to understanding other cities, including Spanish cities. She encourages us to think in a different way about cities. On the one hand, she shows us the passivity of the citizens, who accept projects that transform their environment, often without understanding the basics. At the same time, she denounces some theories of city planning as being pseudo-scientific, hiding under the umbrella of the ideas enunciated by the great men in planning, but which are false and mistaken. City planning, hiding behind scientific and administrative vocabulary, becomes an ideology and uses the institutions as its support, generating the characteristic language of bureaucracy. City planning itself is then transformed into an institution within the offices of municipal technicians and, from there, dominates all; and what does it then do, but destroy the city.

The developers, architects, property owners, politicians, and investors move within an abstract space determined by paper, property deeds, contracts, economic values, profits, and losses. They reduce urban reality to the abstraction of plans and projects. Then a substitution of the real occurs, almost logically, what is lived is replaced by the vocabulary of technical reasoning, argued for and justified by property rights and professional competence. The agents who operate in the city, the technicians and specialists for urban space are, in fact, working on a different level and, on many occasions, real life lies beyond their ken. The urban space they produce is generally no more than business for profit's sake; profit is what moves the entire machinery. However, it is often that very same profit that destroys whatever good the city had.

## Bibliography

- Auken Report, 2009. European Parliament resolution on the Impact of the Extensive Urbanization in Spain on Individual Rights of European Citizens, on the Environment and on the Application of EU Law, based upon petitions received, approved on 26 March 2009 by the European Parliament. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2009-0192+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN> [accessed 10 June 2011].
- Garrido Jimenez, F.J., Magrinyà Torner, F. and Moral Ávila, M.C., 2011. La evaluación de la sostenibilidad económica en el planeamiento. Los principales determinantes urbanísticos en los ingresos y costes municipales. *II Congreso de Urbanismo y Ordenación del Territorio*. Madrid: Colegio de Ingenieros de Caminos, Canales y Puertos de Madrid.
- Gómez-Ordoñez, J.L. and Solà-Morales, M. de, 1977. Crecimiento urbano como inversión en capital fijo. El caso de Barcelona (1840–1975). In: *Ciudad y Territorio*, Revista de Ciencia Urbana, 2/77.
- Jacobs, J., 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Jacobs, J., 1967. *Muerte y vida en las grandes ciudades*. Translated by A. Abad. Barcelona: Península.
- Jacobs, J., 1971. *La economía de las ciudades*. Translated by J. Alvarez and A. Pérez. Barcelona: Península.
- Jacobs, J., 2011. *Muerte y vida de las grandes ciudades*. Translated by A. Abad and A. Useros. Madrid: Capitán Swing.
- Miranda Regojo, A., 1977. *Elogio a la medianería urbana: Los problemas de los desarrollos en vivienda unifamiliar aislada*. Madrid: COAM.
- García Tabuenca, A., Gaviria, M. and Tuñón, P., 1979. *El espacio de la fiesta y la subversión. Análisis socioeconómico del Casco Viejo de Pamplona*. San Sebastián: Lur.
- Lefèbvre, H., 1971. *De lo rural a lo urbano*. Translated by M. Gaviria. Barcelona: Península.
- Lefèbvre, H., 1972. *La revolución urbana*. Translated by M. Noya. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Lefèbvre, H., 1978. *El derecho a la ciudad*. Translated by M. Gaviria and J. González. Barcelona: Península.
- Ley 6/1998, de 13 de abril, Sobre Régimen del Suelo y Valoraciones. Madrid: BOE.
- Real Decreto-Ley 5/1996, de 7 de junio, de Medidas Liberalizadoras en Materia de Suelo y Colegios Profesionales. Madrid: BOE.
- Terán, F., 1978. *Planeamiento urbano en la España contemporánea. Historia de un proceso imposible*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili.

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

## Chapter 10

# Beyond Diversity: Jacobs's *Death and Life* and its Relevance for Dutch Urban Regeneration Policy

Gert-Jan Hospers

*The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was published in the United States in 1961 and has been a classic ever since. That is to say: a real classic that was reprinted many times, always lent out in libraries and producing countless hits on Google. The problem with classics, however, is that they are always referred to, but seldom read. *Death and Life* has run this risk since, with its 450 pages, it is not an easy read. The author, a Jane Jacobs from New York, was largely unknown. Strangely enough, she was a journalist without a degree in urban planning, urban sociology or other related discipline.

But to start a book with the sentence, “This book is an attack on current city planning and rebuilding” and continue in this spirit up to the last page, will obviously attract a wide readership (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: p. 3). Jacobs needed a lot of words to put forward a simple message: planners, give the city back to the people! Reactions were bound to come. The book was ridiculed as “an abattoir for sacred cows” and even “Mother Jacobs’s home recipes for urban cancer” (Allen, 1997; Alexiou, 2006). It was immediately clear, however, that Jacobs’s work would become a classic. About Jacobs and *Death and Life*, the well-known Columbia University sociologist Herbert Gans said:

She told planners, ‘This is how people live – pay some attention.’ Others were trying to get the same message across, but she did it better, and she’ll be read 50 years from now for that reason (quoted in Allen, 1997: p. 62).

Gans was right: half a century later the book is more popular than ever. *Death and Life* is still being reprinted and translated, while references to the book and secondary literature have been growing rapidly since the 1990s, notably after Jacobs’s death in 2006 (Harris, 2011).

As an example of the impact of Jane Jacobs’s *Death and Life* this chapter discusses the reception of the book in the Netherlands. What impact did Jacobs have on Dutch urban professionals? How do they use Jacobs’s ideas? Can they learn more from her than the usual plea for diversity? To address these questions, the chapter is organized as follows. First, the reader gets acquainted with *Death*

*and Life*. Then, the reception of the book in the Netherlands is discussed. After that, the chapter turns to Dutch policy practice by exploring two case studies of Dutch neighborhoods where Jacobs's ideas have been used in an explicit policy justification. The chapter ends with the implications for urban regeneration policy.

### ***The Death and Life of Great American Cities***

*The Death and Life of Great American Cities* is Jacobs's most influential book (Page and Mennel, 2011). In 22 chapters, divided over four parts, Jacobs showed how cities develop and regulate themselves. In part one ("The peculiar nature of cities") she discussed a city using organic terms: it is like an amoeba whose shape is changing constantly. To understand cities, one has to go to their neighborhoods, or even better: step into the streets. Streets are a city's vital organs. Life happens here, people meet here and it is here that social and economic activities take place. As Jacobs put it: people perform an "intricate sidewalk ballet" on the streets. Seen from this point of view, any day-to-day activity, like chatting with neighbors on the corner or putting the garbage out, is a deed of dramatic expression. The neighborhood is the scene, the street is the stage and the inhabitants are the players.

For a correct performance of the sidewalk ballet, the city neighborhood ideally meets four conditions. In part two of the book ("The conditions for city diversity") Jacobs dealt with them extensively. First, make sure that a neighborhood has more than one function. A mix of functions (living, working, shopping, recreating) guarantees that people are on the street all day, which in turn enables cafes, restaurants, and shops to flourish. Second, avoid long stretches of building, but invest in short building blocks and a finely meshed pattern of streets. Thus, pedestrians have the opportunity to walk around and turn from one street to the next. Third, try to mix buildings of differing age and state of upkeep as much as possible. Both old and new buildings have their own economic value and moreover contribute to a varied cityscape. Old buildings are important for creativity or, as Jacobs (1992 [1961]: p. 188) noted, "Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings." Fourth, make sure that a city has "high dwelling densities," that is, compact neighborhoods bringing many different types of residents (families, senior citizens, entrepreneurs, artists, migrants, students) together. Thanks to this density and diversity, there is sufficient critical mass for a range of local facilities.

In short, the key for a vital city neighborhood is diversity: diversity in functions, streets, buildings, and people. This diversity ensures that there are "eyes on the street" and "social capital" that both increase the feeling of security and the chance for collective action. Social capital is not so much a question of people counting their neighbors among their friends, but rather the fact that residents feel at home in their neighborhood and keep an eye on things. Diversity is of major importance not only from a social perspective, but also from an

economic viewpoint. A diverse neighborhood creates a market for all sorts of entrepreneurs. As Jacobs (1992 [1961]: p. 167) noted:

The diversity, of whatever kind, that is generated by cities rests on the fact that in cities so many people are so close together, and among them contain so many different tastes, skills, needs, supplies, and bees in their bonnets.

Cities go through a life cycle, as the title of part three (“Forces of decline and regeneration”) already suggests. Whether a city neighborhood will decay and revive, depends on certain factors. For instance, the success of a lively district can lead to a process of self-destruction, also known as “gentrification”: streets become more popular, attract higher income groups, house prices rise and less wealthy residents have to move out. In turn, physical barriers such as railway tracks or a large park may cut off a neighborhood from the rest of a city, which, according to Jacobs, increases the risk of “slumming.” Strong population fluctuations are also a drawback, because neighborhoods need dedicated residents who care about their living environment. Finally, a sequence of public, private and shadow investments can disturb the natural development of neighborhoods. Such a “cataclysmic” use of money cannot revitalize parts of the city, but rather contributes to their starvation.

In part four (“Different tactics”) of the book, Jacobs turned to the policy implications of her view. Although cities always experience a life cycle, there is still a role for local policy. For example, municipal government should subsidize dwellings for the financially weak to ensure that they can stay where they have been living. The provision of public transport is important too, so that the sidewalk ballet in neighborhoods does not get obstructed by cars. Finally, local authorities can improve the cityscape by introducing diversity in the built environment and the street pattern. However, government should appreciate that city life is first and foremost a matter of “organized complexity.” A city neighborhood looks chaotic, but behind this chaos there is always a natural order. Therefore, it is simply impossible to plan parts of the city from behind the desk. The city goes its own way.

### **Jacobs’s Influence in the Netherlands**

Jacobs’s *Death and Life* caused a shock in the American planning community of the early 1960s. Big names in the field, such as Robert Moses, Edward Logue, Edmund Bacon and Holmes Perkins, fiercely criticized the book. Who was this Jane Jacobs? Why did she as a non-planner dare to talk about planning? *Death and Life* was seen as an “overstatement”; critics dismissed it as “inconsistent,” “unfounded,” and “amateurish” (Klemek, 2007). In fact, Jacobs’s analysis of city planning was based on her own experiences, anecdotes, stories from people she knew, newspaper articles, sociological reports and all kinds of non-scientific publications. This eclectic method – described by Jacobs as “seeking truth from

facts” (Allen, 1997) – makes the book a good read, but not academic at all. Jacobs applied an approach that has been called “urban montage”: the reader could imagine walking in the streets of New York or another large city, while Jacobs is taking snapshots along the way (Berman, 1982).

A more fundamental critique came from Herbert Gans, the sociologist who foresaw that *Death and Life* would become a classic. He stated that the analysis of Jacobs was based on three principles: (1) people like diversity; (2) diversity brings about vitality; and (3) the physical environment determines human behavior (Gans, 1962). Gans questioned these statements – and rightly so. As a matter of fact, not everyone wants to live in a diverse and vibrant neighborhood. In addition, a reviewer criticized Jacobs for her neglect of urban challenges, such as diseases, poverty, and crime. Solutions for these problems:

... cannot be achieved by star-gazing from the second floor window of a Greenwich Village flat – while anxiously awaiting the 3 a.m. closing of the neighborhood pubs as an omen that all is well in the land (Allen, 1997: p. 52).

Indeed, Jacobs was naïve in assuming that diversity automatically leads to vitality. Even in the 1960s, the dark side of diversity was coming to the fore, including crime and racial problems. Finally, Jacobs’s belief in physical determinism was too strong: as if the built form of a city would be the most important factor influencing the way we live our lives.

Despite this criticism, *Death and Life* did have an impact on American urban planning. How much impact and what effect it had is hard to say. In 1974, John Zucotti, chairman of the New York City Planning Commission (and one of the successors of Robert Moses) said, “To a large extent, we are neo-Jacobseans” (Zucotti, 1974: p. 23). At present, most planners in the USA pay lip-service to Jacobs, although this is not always visible in the cityscape. Jacobs’s influence can be seen more clearly in movements like “new urbanism,” “smart growth,” and “advocacy planning,” which like Jacobs’s ideas start with the present state, human measure and small scale initiatives (Dreier, 2006). In turn, American sociologists, geographers and economists praise Jacobs as “the diva of diversity.” And Richard Florida and Edward Glaeser, writers of bestsellers on the creative and economic power of cities, both refer to Jacobs as their inspiration source (Florida, 2008; Glaeser, 2011).

Whilst Jacobs was criticized in the USA after the publication of *Death and Life*, the book was received reasonably well in Europe. This is not hard to explain since Jacobs defended the historic, mixed city that can be found everywhere in Europe. In the Mediterranean countries Jacobs was not widely read, perhaps because of language barriers. After initial reservations, the British liked Jacobs’s message, which some even regarded as “a warm but high wind across the Atlantic” (de Wolfe, 1963: p. 93). Also in Scandinavia Jacobs’s ideas fell on fertile ground. She influenced the Danish architect and planner Jan Gehl, who stresses the importance of a human scale in public spaces. In his *Life between Buildings* (1987) and *Public*

*Spaces, Public Life* (2004) Gehl argues – like Jacobs – for inviting and diverse neighborhoods that are pedestrian and bicycle-friendly.

In the Netherlands it took some time before *Death and Life* gained momentum. In the 1960s and 1970s planners showed little interest in the organic and incremental approach that Jacobs advocated. At that time, demolition, and radical renewal were seen as the most appropriate urban development strategies. Until today, the results of this policy are visible everywhere in the Netherlands (with the Hoog Catherijne shopping center around Utrecht Central Station being one of the most prominent examples). In interviews, however, Jacobs referred to the Netherlands as a nation where she saw her ideas on vital city life confirmed (Brand, 1998; Tobin, 2000). Her view of the country must have been colored by the inner city of Amsterdam with its density, diversity, and associated hustle and bustle. Jacobs visited the Netherlands in 1984 at the invitation of Queen Beatrix to deliver a speech at the Royal Palace. Jacobs's visit followed the publication of her work *Cities and the Wealth of Nations* (1984), and was prepared in academic circles, among others by Professor Jan Lambooy, the "father" of Dutch economic geography. In an interview in 2002 Jacobs herself, however, referred to her visit to the Dutch royal family for quite another reason: she told the interviewers that she was very impressed by the fact that the Dutch Queen personally appoints mayors in the Netherlands and regularly invites them to the palace to talk with them (Chavez et al., 2002). This is a mistake, perhaps caused by linguistic barriers: in the Netherlands mayors are appointed legally (de jure) by the monarch, but in reality (de facto) always appointed by the national cabinet. Since the mid-1990s Jacobs's work has become more popular in the Netherlands. The Dutch have particularly rediscovered "the early" Jacobs. Not only cities in the west of the country, like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Utrecht, but also several provincial "middle towns" cite her work to ground their neighborhood policies.

The popularity of Jacobs in the Netherlands is clearly reflected by the recent translation of *Death and Life* into Dutch, books about her work and the organization of several "Jacobsean" study days. For example, the publishers of the Dutch translation (SUN/Trancity) and the Dutch Architectural Institute NAI organized a well-visited Jane Jacobs Festival in Rotterdam (29 October–1 November 2009). When the Dutch refer to Jacobs, they mostly highlight the ideas set out in Part Two of *Death and Life*, "The conditions for city diversity" in which Jacobs describes the four generators for diversity in neighborhood districts. Since small blocks and concentration are quite common in Dutch cities, the policy discourse often focuses on mixed-use and aged buildings. Indeed, most quotes in Dutch contemporary policy documents, speeches, and books deal with the need for diversity in neighborhoods (Franke and Hospers, 2009). Thus, mixed-use development measures, such as enabling residential accommodation above shops and giving public support to immigrant entrepreneurship, are legitimized. Without a doubt, the most quoted Jacobs passage in the Netherlands is the famous "new ideas, old buildings" citation. The passage – often mistakenly abbreviated to "new ideas need old buildings" – is mostly used to prevent the demolition of old factory

buildings in urban areas (Saris, van Dommelen and Metze, 2008). In addition, a number of Dutch authorities have based their neighborhood and regeneration policies on Jacobs's notion of "social capital" and "eyes on the street" (Blokland, 2009). Also famous Dutch architects like Koolhaas and Christiaanse have paid tribute to Jacobs. Christiaanse, for example, declares that he has been inspired by her, calling Jacobs "a light in the dark" (Franke and Hospers, 2009).

### **Jacobsean Policy in Two Dutch Neighborhoods**

It is not hard to see why Jacobs was enthusiastic about the Dutch capital of Amsterdam when she visited in the 1980s. Amsterdam's historic center makes a messy impression: it has high dwelling densities, a variety of buildings and shops and a convivial atmosphere (van Duren, 1995). Cars thread their way along narrow streets and over bridges, cyclists steer their bikes along tram tracks and most pedestrians cross the lights on red. Along the famous Amsterdam canals we can see stately seventeenth-century town residences and warehouses now serving as offices for law firms and real estate agencies or as hotels, art galleries and apartments. In the narrow streets we pass restaurants and bars, shops selling souvenirs, coffee and books as well as places where antiques, art and furniture are traded. When we turn our eyes upward, we can observe that the upper parts of the buildings are often inhabited. The city center is full of people; in addition to office workers, students and hurrying mothers with their children, also elderly people, day trippers and tourists crowd the streets. Life in the center of Amsterdam is indeed the vibrant city life imagined by Jacobs – one of urban quality through diversity. But what about places that are more "ordinary" than Amsterdam? In this respect, let us explore two Dutch towns where Jacobs's ideas have been used as a policy justification: Arnhem and Enschede, both in the east of the Netherlands.

Arnhem is a medium-sized town (147,000 inhabitants) that is known for its creative industries, notably fashion design. The Klarendal district in Arnhem has been renovated with reference to Jacobs's work. Klarendal is a working class area with a mixed population: one third was born and raised there, one-third is of Turkish origin, and the rest of the residents are students and artists. Over the decades, the vitality of the neighborhood has declined due to the closure of local shops such as the bakery, butcher, and florist. Therefore, a group of active residents asked the local housing corporation for help. The corporation, which owned 80 percent of the houses in Klarendal, decided to restructure the neighborhood in a Jacobsean way. The decision was to focus on the theme of fashion, because this sector would fit in with the image of Arnhem as a hot spot for fashion. Using the catchphrase "100 percent fashion" the housing corporation invested 25 million euros in the set-up of a so-called Fashion Quarter in Klarendal (ten Wolde, 2008). Empty shop premises were bought and renovated. A former mail distribution center was transformed into an atelier, show floor, and bar. Artists and fashion designers in Klarendal can rent shop space for their workshops and dwellings. The new shops

offer designer clothes, bags, and hats, and attract a lot of window shoppers. As such, they contribute to a vivid street scene.

The Roombeek district in Enschede, a former textiles town (157,000 inhabitants), is another example of a neighborhood where *Death and Life* was explicitly used as a manual. In 2000 the district was hit by a fireworks disaster that killed 21 people. Over the last ten years, the neighborhood, which was completely destroyed in the catastrophe, has been rebuilt by making use of interactive planning methods like those put forward by Jacobs. In public meetings with former residents and housing experts, four values for the rebuilding of the district were determined: vitality, solidarity, discovery, and familiarity (Colenbrander and Lengkeek, 2008). Subsequently, the original inhabitants of Roombeek could participate in the reconstruction of their destroyed dwellings, while newcomers were allowed to build new houses under private commission. In order to strengthen links between the inhabitants, the city of Enschede invested heavily in ponds, green areas, and walking trails as well as many neighborhood festivities. The municipality also built a museum of regional history and a community center in the district and facilitated the location of amenities. Thanks to this innovative restructuring approach, Roombeek has attracted a lot of visitors and media attention. In 2007 the authorities of Enschede even won a Dutch award for their Jacobsean revitalization strategy. In that respect, the Roombeek district was praised as a “neighborhood in plural,” a place where “Jane Jacobs is in the air” (Colenbrander and Lengkeek, 2008: p. 24).

At first sight, the neighborhood projects discussed above are examples of good practice that pay tribute to the work of Jane Jacobs. To be sure, Klarendal and Roombeek have been revitalized as far as it goes: the areas both got facelifts, are able to retain and attract entrepreneurs and certainly enjoy a more vivid street life now. But on reflection, the neighborhood policies can be criticized. This criticism goes beyond the obvious question of whether the millions of euros that have been invested here have paid off. Are the Dutch revitalization policies really Jacobsean? Was this what Jacobs had in mind when she asked for more human measure, small-scale development and common sense in planning and policy? From this perspective, a few points of criticism can be made of the regeneration case studies, as well as similar restructuring projects in other Dutch towns.

First, it seems that local agencies such as housing corporations have a tendency to steer rather than to support the organic development of neighborhoods. Thanks to the rejuvenation policy the image and atmosphere of Arnhem’s Klarendal district have been improved. But new problems have emerged. For example, the catchphrase “100 percent fashion” was chosen for Klarendal without consideration of the needs of its inhabitants. This has resulted in a mismatch between residents and entrepreneurs. A comment from one of the locals at the opening event of the Fashion Quarter is telling, “I am more in need of a textiles discounter than these expensive fashion shops. I cannot even pay for one of the bags exhibited in the shop windows” (ten Wolde, 2008: p. 3). Another danger of a thematic approach to revitalizing a neighborhood is that businesses that do not fit within the theme

may stay away. Here, we are at the heart of Jacobs's view: local authorities should not straitjacket a neighborhood nor strive for homogeneity. Instead, there must be ample room for diversity and heterogeneity. Paradoxically, a vital urban place specializes in diversity – it cannot be captured in one single theme.

Second, it is of great importance to have a sense of reality when it comes to neighborhood restructuring. Jacobs published *Death and Life* in 1961 and based her view on the situation in New York City at the end of the 1950s. However, Greenwich Village, at the time when Jacobs was writing her masterpiece, was different from the situation in the district of Roombeek half a century later. The reality of the provincial town of Enschede can by no means be compared with the hustle and bustle of New York. For example, the number of inhabitants and the degree of diversity in both the town of Enschede and the Roombeek district are too small to have an economic basis for the variety of amenities that Jacobs experienced in New York. In addition, the way residents use neighborhoods has dramatically changed over the decades. In most cities and towns in the Western world, the neighborhood economy has come under pressure. Thus, urban places have lost their distinctiveness (Zukin, 2010). This is due to a combination of factors, including demographic change (the average households size decreases), technological progress (people are using information technology to work at home and buy on the web), increased mobility (people are visiting shopping malls at the city's periphery) and political-economic reasons (the growing importance of property developers in shaping our cityscape).

### **From Copy and Paste to Focus on the Here-and-Now**

*The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs is still widely read and cited among urban planners and professionals, from the USA to the Netherlands. Although the book is 50 years old, it seems as if parts of it have been written recently; especially Jacobs's plea for enough diversity which continues to be important and valuable. Her four generators of neighborhood diversity have enduring implications for urban regeneration policy:

- Try to mix functions as much as possible. If people can live, but also work, shop and recreate in their neighborhood, there is hustle and bustle on the street all day, which is conducive to safety, social cohesion, and retail development.
- Invest in short building blocks and a finely-meshed pattern of streets, so that residents and visitors of the neighborhood can walk around and turn different streets. Thus, there are more opportunities for unexpected encounters.
- Attempt to mix buildings of differing age and state of upkeep. In this way, the cityscape gets more diversified, while it enables all kinds of

entrepreneurs to settle down. Moreover: old buildings provide fertile ground for new ideas.

- Make sure that a neighborhood is compact: it should be densely populated and house different types of inhabitants, so that it has the critical mass needed for the development of a variety of neighborhood amenities.

It is not always easy to follow these principles in practice owing to legal barriers, planning regimes, and political goals. As a consequence, it is a kind of paradox to observe that Jacobsean neighborhood projects set up in Dutch towns like Arnhem and Enschede can be criticized with the help of similar Jacobsean insights. Most authorities seem to forget the importance of the here-and-now. After all, Jacobs's romanticized view of New York is not comparable with the provincial reality of a Dutch town like Enschede in 2011. Jacobs was well aware of the tendency of policy makers to "copy and paste" good practices from elsewhere. It was perhaps for this reason that she started *Death and Life* with the following passage:

The scenes that illustrate this book are all about us. For illustration, please look closely at real cities. While you are looking, you might as well also listen, linger and think about what you see (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: p. xiii).

She even explicitly warned of copy-paste behavior:

But I hope that no reader will try to transfer my observations into guides in what goes on in towns, or little cities, or in suburbs which still are suburbs (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]: p. 16).

Therefore, I think that besides Jacobs's principles of neighborhood development also her method of "urban montage" and emphasis on the human measure are valuable for the work of contemporary urban planners and professionals (Goldsmith and Elizabeth, 2010):

- Always start from the here-and-now. A neighborhood always is what it has become. A locality's history is something to build on. Become acquainted with the neighborhood, talk with residents and take advantage of bottom-up initiatives.
- If public interventions in a neighborhood are needed, be careful. Don't think in big and radical plans, but develop on a small scale and in an incremental way. Please be patient – after all, grass-roots urban development always takes time.

Unfortunately, Jacobs was not precise about the policy implications of her ideas. In *Death and Life*, her other books, articles, and interviews she stressed the effect of local circumstances on the vitality of a neighborhood. For example, on the topic of where to locate a book store in a city and where not to locate one she wrote:

All of the elements that make for neighborhood diversity are so interrelated that all elements would be important in some degree for a bookstore's success, but I must admit that I don't know much about bookstores. For all I know, someone right now may be planning a bookstore in a location where none of these elements is present. I hope not; but if so, I wish him luck (Jacobs, 1962 [1961]: p. 32).

When asked about regulatory measures, Jacobs gave vague answers:

What is a good regulation? Well, for one thing, knowing why it is in there and when it no longer is necessary. Knowing when a different regulation is necessary (Harris, 2002: p. 4).

Urban professionals who expect clear answers from Jacobs will inevitably be disappointed. They should treat *Death and Life* as an inspiration source rather than an ideology. In a sense, that would be a real tribute to Jacobs: she did not like ideologies at all. In her typical, idiosyncratic way she said:

Ideologies, no matter what kind, are one of the greatest afflictions, because they blind us to seeing what is going on or what is being done (Harris, 2002: p. 5).

## Bibliography

- Allen, M., 1997. *Ideas that Matter: The Worlds of Jane Jacobs*. Owen Sound, ON: Ginger Press.
- Alexiou, A.S., 2006. *Jane Jacobs: Urban Visionary*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Berman, M., 1982. *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. London: Verso.
- Blokland, T., 2009. *Oog voor Elkaar: Veiligheidsbeleving en Sociale Controle in de Grote Stad*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Brand, S., 1998. Vital Cities: An Interview with Jane Jacobs. *Whole Earth*, Winter, pp. 1–4.
- Chavez, R., Duer, Z. and Fank, K., 2002. *Jane Jacobs, Urban Economy and Development*. Interview by R. Chavez, Z. Duer and K. Fank, 4 February 2002, Toronto.
- Colenbrander, B. and Lengkeek, A., 2008. (eds.) *Op Locatie: Enschede na de Vuurwerkramp*. Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010.
- Dreier, P., 2006. Jane Jacobs's Legacy. *City & Community*, 5(3), pp. 227–31.
- Duren, A.J. van, 1995. *De Dynamiek van de Constante: over de Flexibiliteit van de Amsterdamse Binnenstad als Economische*. Utrecht: Jan van Arkel.
- Florida, R., 2008. *Who's Your City? How the Creative Economy is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision in Your Life*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

- Franke, S. and Hospers, G.J. (ed.), 2010. *De Levende Stad: Over de Hedendaagse Betekenis van Jane Jacobs*. Amsterdam: SUN/Trancity.
- Gans, H., 1962. City Planning and Urban Realities: Review of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. *Commentary*, 33, pp. 170–75.
- Gehl, J., 1987. *Life Between Buildings*. Copenhagen: The Danish Architectural Press.
- Gehl, J. and Gemzoe, L., 2004. *Public Spaces, Public Life*. Copenhagen: The Danish Architectural Press.
- Glaeser, E., 2011. *Triumph of the City: How our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier and Happier*. New York, NY: The Penguin Press.
- Goldsmith, S. and Elizabeth, L. (eds), 2010. *What We See: Advancing the Observations of Jane Jacobs*. Oakland, CA: New Village Press.
- Harris, B., 2002. Cities and Web Economies: Interview with Jane Jacobs. *Government Technology Magazine*, 3 [Online]. Available at: [www.newcolonist.com/jane\\_jacobs](http://www.newcolonist.com/jane_jacobs).
- Harris, R., 2011. The Magpie and the Bee: Jane Jacobs's Magnificent Obsession. In: M. Page and T. Mennel (eds), *Reconsidering Jane Jacobs*. Chicago, IL: APA Planners Press, pp. 65–81.
- Jacobs, J., 1962. Where to Locate a Book Store in a City and Where Not to Locate One. *Publishers Weekly*, January, pp. 28–31.
- Jacobs, J., 1992 [1961]. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Jacobs, J., 2009. *Dood en Leven van Grote Amerikaanse Steden*. Translated from English. Amsterdam: SUN/Trancity.
- Klemek, C., 2007. Placing Jane Jacobs within the Transatlantic Urban Conversation. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 73(1), pp. 49–67.
- Page, M. and Mennel, T., (ed.) 2011. *Reconsidering Jane Jacobs*. Chicago, IL: APA Planners Press.
- Saris, J., Dommelen, S. van and Metze, T. (eds), 2008. *Nieuwe Ideeën voor Oude Gebouwen: Creatieve Economie en Stedelijke Herontwikkeling*. Rotterdam: NAI Uitgevers.
- Tobin, A., 2000. Urban Planning Guru on the Traps We Set for Ourselves. *Canadian Press*, 27 March, pp. 1–3.
- Wolde, O. ten, 2008. De bedrijvigheid terug in de buurt. *Talis Trends*, June, pp. 1–5.
- Wolfe, I. de, 1963. The Death and Life of Great American Citizens. *Architectural Review*, 133, pp. 91–3.
- Zucotti, J., 1974. How Does Jane Jacobs Rate Today? *Planning*, 40(5), pp. 23–7.
- Zukin, S., 2010. *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

## Chapter 11

# Jane Jacobs's Perception and Impact on City Planning and Urban Renewal in Germany

Dirk Schubert

In North America Jane Jacobs enjoys iconic status. Her honorifics range from Mrs. Insight, Urban Hero, Queen Jane, Urban Futurist, Urban Visionary, to Anti Planner and Urban Guru. Less positively, she is also described as a “dogmatic amateur” and “trouble maker.” This myth is grounded in her unconventional approach, her criticism of postwar urban planning and urban restructuring based on the examples of New York and later Toronto, and also on her relentless commitment to the cause of citizen inclusion and participation in the planning process. In addition to the journalistic success of her books, she and local action groups were able to foil “master builder” Robert Moses’s slum redevelopment and motorway plans in New York – and similar plans in Toronto after her relocation to that city – and to promote a new approach to planning. She was frequently invited to attend conferences and give lectures in Europe and Asia.

In recent years several North American publications have examined her work from a biographic perspective, especially with regard to her time in New York as Robert Moses’s adversary. For the 50th anniversary in 2011 of her first publication there was a boom in new publications and appraisals of her work in North America (see for details Introduction by editor) where there have even emerged reader-response schools of criticism of her work that manifest themselves in citation cartels or analogous exclusion mechanisms. The number of (journalistic) publications entitled WWJJHS (“What Would Jane Jacobs Have Said?” or WWJD “What Would Jane Do?”) is endless. Of course these questions are unscientific and speculative, so their answers can only be of a naïve and polemic nature.

In Germany there is a simplistic tendency to reduce her thought and work to her first book and selected quotations from it. She is considered an eccentric outsider who shouldn’t be taken too seriously but who, from time to time, had sudden flashes of inspiration. She encoded and did not make explicit the focal points in her work, and thereby opened the floodgates to much speculation. Many planners now profess to base their work on Jacobs’s ideas when in fact they don’t, whereas others do so without being familiar with the details of her work. T.J. Campanella (2011) recently compared the effect of Jane Jacobs’s first book with Martin Luther’s Ninety-Five Theses, which he nailed to the door of All Saints’ Church in Wittenberg 500 years ago, thereby initiating the Protestant Reformation.

The aim of this chapter is to trace how the translation of her first publication came about, how the translated work was received, the effect it had on the discourse between urban planners and, ultimately, the effect it had on urban renewal and planning in Germany.<sup>1</sup> However, an analysis of Jane Jacobs's direct and indirect influence on the discipline of urban planning, on the design and construction of projects, is hampered in a number of ways. She did not take part in the discussions within the profession, did not attend relevant conferences, did not contribute to the fashionable topics of the day, and did not publish in the professional journals. Her emphasis lay elsewhere. She focused on her own ideas and constructs without opportunistic reference to the zeitgeist and did not concern herself with the possible sensitivities of other authors.

### **The Death and Life of Great American Cities: “The Failure of Town Planning”<sup>2</sup>**

Jane Jacobs's best seller was published in England in 1962, and translations of this book appeared as follows: German in 1963, Spanish in 1967, Italian in 1969, Japanese in 1969, French in 1991, Portuguese in 2000, Chinese in 2005, Dutch in 2009, and lastly, Turkish in 2011.<sup>3</sup> Jane Jacobs's first publication continues to be topical and in demand. Altogether, over a 100 editions have been published in the different languages.<sup>4</sup> Although considered a classic it shares the fate of many important books: often referred to but rarely read (in their entirety) or understood.

The book was published during a period of upheaval. In 1961, ageing President Dwight D. Eisenhower was succeeded by the young and charismatic John F. Kennedy. After the turbulent decades of the Depression, the World War and the Korean War, the late 1950s provided a period of conformity and peace (the “silent fifties”) during which material desires that had previously been deferred were satisfied en route to the affluent society. The migration of the white middle class (“white flight”) to the suburbs made space for lower-income households and population groups with immigrant background. However, overcrowding promoted the downward spiral of many areas. Jane Jacobs's first book was written against the

---

1 The German edition of J. Jacobs's, *Tod und Leben großer amerikanischer Städte*, 1969 [1963], Gütersloh and Berlin, includes omissions and some problematic translations. Furthermore, there is no index. I have quoted the unrevised Vintage Book 1992 edition *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. The new 1992 edition (The Modern Library) contains an additional foreword by the author. In 1970 her second book was also published in German with a sensational title *Stadt im Untergang – Decaying Cities*.

2 This is the subtitle of the paperback edition that was published in Great Britain (Penguin) in 1965.

3 The book series is published by Ihsan Bilgin and Tansel Korkmaz (Istanbul Bilgi University). The author thanks Ihsan Bilgin for information received.

4 An overview of all editions is available at: <http://www.librarything.com/work/25885/editions/> [accessed 6 May 2012].

background of the 1950s in New York, when the western world was increasingly influenced by the American way of life.

It may be that Greenwich Village provided the kind of inspiring setting which enabled her to write the right book at the right time. In the 1960s, the Village was probably the most exciting place in the world for young people and starry-eyed idealists. It took little time before a myth grew around this unknown author who, up to the age of 45, had supposedly written only short articles. Her contributions to the *Architectural Forum* were not credited to her, so Jacobs was hardly known within the discipline. Her first book (Jacobs, 1992 [1961]) was characterized by her critical perspective on urban topics and quickly became a bestseller. The publishers provided Jacobs's book with an aggressive marketing campaign. "Perhaps the most influential single work in the history of town planning [...] a work of literature," said *The New York Times* Book Review.<sup>5</sup> In January 1961 the book was finished, and by November it was available in the book stores and on the "recommended reading list" – just in time for Christmas.

Jane Jacobs's attack on planners had a lasting effect in Germany as well (Klemek, 2011: p. 225). However, its reception was compromised by the fact that the special US-American context was not understood in Germany. America's cities and urban landscapes often present a more amorphous settlement structure and lack clearly defined centers. Self-reliance, a liberal economy and the role of private business had a higher significance than in Germany. Migration from the city symbolized social advancement, car ownership and an owner-occupied home in the suburbs. It tied in with the ideals propagated by the real estate industry, and promoted rampant growth as well as automobile-based development, but clashed with Jane Jacobs's notion of compact, mixed use, inner-city forms of living. By contrast, European cities are religious, political, economical and cultural centers with long histories and traditions; planning and governance are organized hierarchically, and both "public interest" and "common good" affect planning, although the weight attached to these varies considerably.

Two years after the building of the Berlin Wall and the sensational success of "Death and Life" in North America, the book was published in Germany. A distinguishing feature of its reception at the time was a widespread lack of knowledge about the US-American situation. Jane Jacobs was presented as *the* serious expert, and her book accepted without thought as *the* standard work. None of the controversy surrounding her book, urban motorways and New York and the USA's slum redevelopment found reflection. In 1969, the average household income in the US was around \$4,000, twice that of West Germany. The situation was similar with regard to car ownership; whereas in the USA there were 414 cars per 1,000 inhabitants, in West Germany there were just 195. Although the number of motorcars in Europe had only just reached the USA's 1920s level, it was important to consider car-based "solutions" in the renewal of inner cities (Grebler, 1964: pp. 5, 6, 23). While in the USA 68 percent of annual residential new building

---

5 This quotation is on the cover of later editions, for example the 1992 edition.

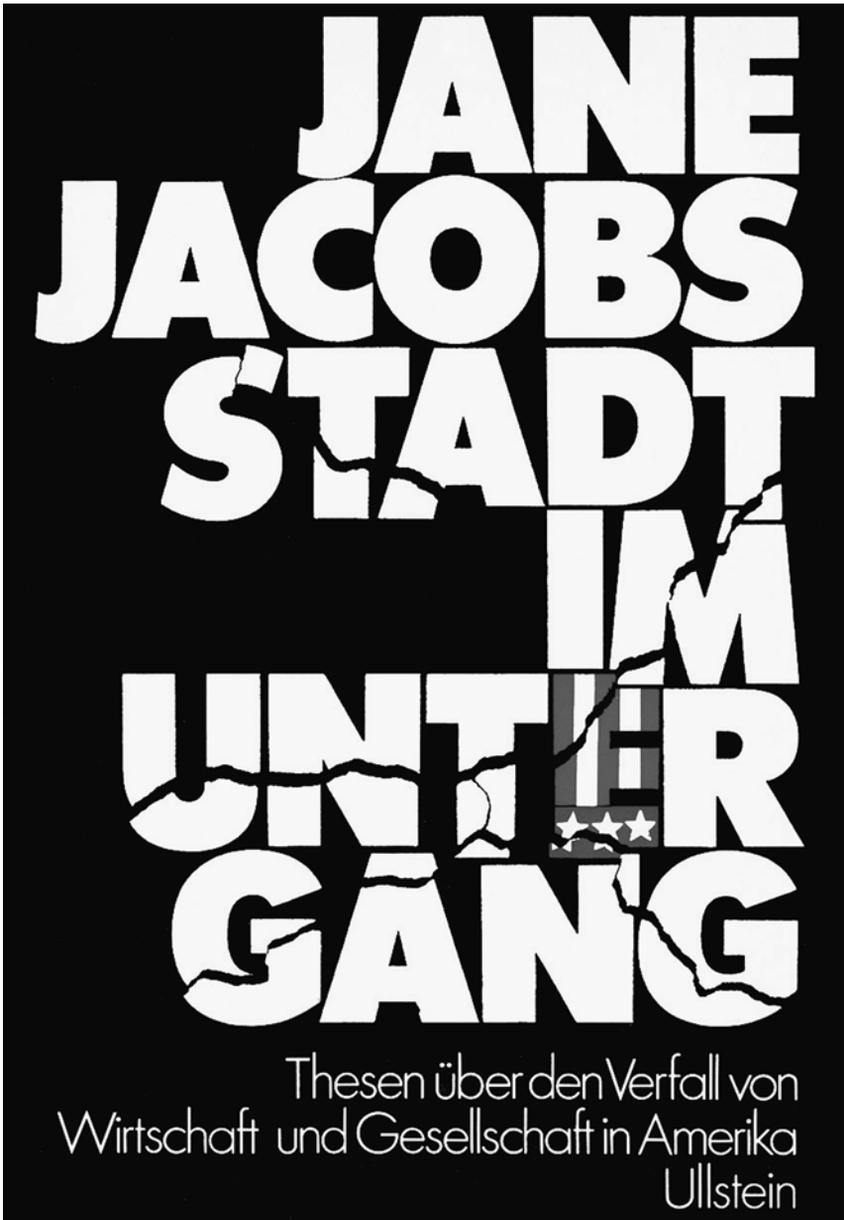
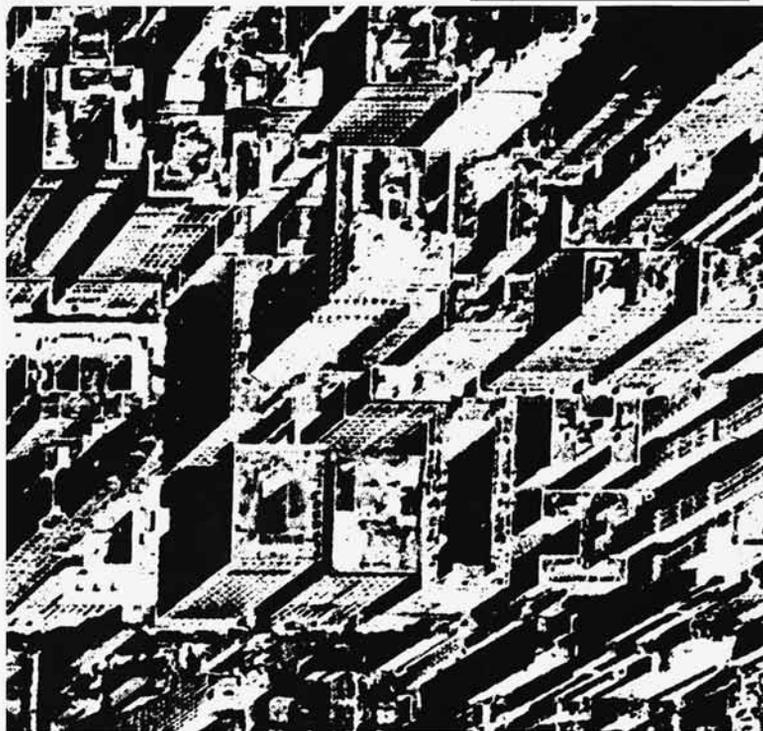
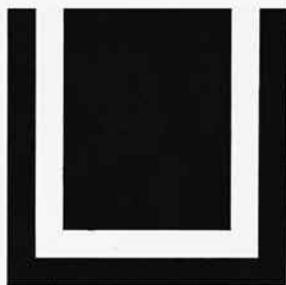


Figure 11.1 Jane Jacobs books published in German: *Tod und Leben großer amerikanischer Städte* (1963) and *Stadt im Untergang – Thesen über den Verfall von Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (1970)

Source: © By kind permission of publishers.

**Jane Jacobs**

**Tod und Leben  
großer  
amerikanischer  
Städte**



**Bauwelt Fundamente**

was for single-family homes and duplexes, in Germany this amounted to only 45 percent. In the USA, 98 percent of new homes were constructed by private builders, but in Germany this was only 67 percent (Heidenheimer, Hecló and Teich, 1975: pp. 72 and 159). The flow of planning ideas was now reversed and German and European experts were travelling to the USA to take lessons on urban renewal.

### **Housing Shortage and the Economic Miracle**

Although the economic miracle (*Wirtschaftswunder*) had brought economic recovery to (West) Germany, the shortage of housing had yet to be overcome and not all the wounds inflicted by wartime destruction had healed. City planning had to take a back seat in favor of reconstruction, redevelopment and a massive program of housing construction. In 1947, Jane Jacobs's adversary Robert Moses was invited to Germany by General L.D. Clay and asked to make suggestions for the country's reconstruction. Moses states in his down-to-earth report that:

No word, picture, photograph or movie can give an adequate impression of the wreckage of German cities. It must be seen (Rodgers cited in Moses, 1952: p. 292).

He described the enthusiasm of busy urban planners who would draw up grand plans for beautiful, modern cities – which he considered wholly unrealistic.

The planning principles criticized by Jane Jacobs included decentralization, a rejection of the city and a nature-based ideology, were also promoted in Germany as a result of the terrible wartime destruction. The outline of the dominant model for an “organic, segmented and low density city” had already been developed during the period of National Socialism. It assumed a harmonious and class-structured society which would be rooted in the soil of low-density, near-natural neighborhoods. “We need to build family-friendly homes for families with a will to live and reproduce,” is how Oswald Nell-Breuning (1953: p. 144), educator of Catholic social teaching put it in 1953. A policy of home ownership was fundamental to this. As the cold war escalated it became necessary to build “bulwarks against communism” (so the Federal Minister of Housing Construction Paul Lücke) in the form of owner-occupied homes.

(West) Germany needed social housing to deal with a dire housing shortage. Originally intended as a temporary measure to supplement the market, it accounted for nearly 50 percent of new building by the late 1950s and for 25 percent by the late 1970s. In the USA the social housing stock made up only about 1 percent, whereby New York was the leading exception with between 4 and 5 percent. In many US cities, public housing neighborhoods had a consistently negative image as soulless monostructures and isolated planning. By contrast, public housing in West Germany was initially in great demand as a result of the shortage situation and also because the rents were low.

Within the scope of urban renewal in Germany, planners sought to “do away” with the alleged sins of the late nineteenth century Gründerzeit period and its overcrowded tenements, and the construction and housing industries were looking for work in the longer term. Furthermore, the major housing corporation flagship “Neue Heimat” had for some time been lobbying for urban renewal with the aim of securing a new field of operation. “Although we have not entirely resolved the housing shortage, a balanced market is coming into view and the number of white circles (with low levels of housing shortage – A/N) shows the huge advancement that has already been achieved.” Urban redevelopment now required some outreach work to “promote trust” and “put across the situation to the people concerned.” The (uncritical) argument put forward was that it was worth looking at the successes of slum renewal in the leading western nation.

Urban renewal has increasingly become a matter of national concern in the USA. By the end of 1962, 3 billion dollars in federal grants had already been approved. [...] This is the only basis on which the astonishing regeneration of many American cities has been possible (Schwedler, 1965: pp. 1, 15 and 33).

Even when Jacobs’s book was little known and had not yet been translated, a debate about the new housing estates’ bleakness, lack of urbanity and insufficient mix of uses had begun. As early as 1963, a conference entitled “Creating Society by Means of Density” (*Gesellschaft durch Dichte*) took place in Gelsenkirchen, and was followed by another in 1964 with the title, “The Kind of City in Which we Want to Live” (*Großstadt in der wir Leben wollen*) during which her central propositions were discussed – even though there was still no awareness of her book (Boeddinghaus, 1995).

### **“A Lady’s Unkind Comments”**

In Hanover in 1962, Jane Jacobs’s book came to the attention of one of Germany’s most distinguished planners, Rudolf Hillebrecht, when he read a review of it in an American journal which caused him to acquire a copy of his own.<sup>6</sup> Hillebrecht sought to revive the international relationships<sup>7</sup> that had been severed by the war. As early as 1949 he travelled to Great Britain and Sweden, and in 1951 he went

---

6 Until the end of the Second World War Hillebrecht (1910–1999) was the head of Konstanty Gutschow’s practice in Hamburg. He was recruited to Albert Speer’s reconstruction staff. After that he became a town planning counselor in Hanover. Hillebrecht soon became a leading figure in the field of urban planning, he was a member operated of many committees and in 1959 *Der Spiegel* dedicated a cover story entitled “Das Wunder von Hannover” [The Miracle of Hanover] to him.

7 Hillebrecht visited New York, Washington, Boston, Cambridge, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago, Milwaukee, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, New Orleans, Knoxville, Tennessee Valley TVA and Pittsburgh.

to Paris. These trips were followed in 1952 by an invitation to visit the USA. He wrote:

Last year I became certain that I absolutely had to become acquainted with the USA, because it would be irresponsible nowadays to recommend to the council that amounts of several millions be spent on constructing roads and transport facilities as well as buildings without having taken the opportunity to get to know a country in which the construction of buildings and transport facilities at least is further advanced than here (Auffahrt and Dorn, 2010: p. 47).

In preparation of his journey, Hillebrecht frequently corresponded with German speaking planners and architects including W. Gropius and H. Blumenfeld. When he returned from his journey, he had lost 15kg in weight thanks to having spent hours walking in the land of automobiles and car-based town planning.

Ever open to new ideas, Hillebrecht skimmed through Jane Jacobs's book and passed it on to his colleague at the Town Planning Department, Klaus Müller-Ibold,<sup>8</sup> who spoke fluent English. This brought about Klaus Müller-Ibold's review of the book, which he entitled "Urban Planning in Upheaval – Will there be Changes to Current Urban Planning Methods?" (Umbruch in der Stadtplanung, Werden sich die Methoden der heutigen Stadtplanung ändern?). In this review he also considered other, newer contributions from urban sociology and the "serious endeavor to help us urban planners better to understand the phenomenon of the city as a whole" (Müller-Ibold, 1962: p. 878). Jane Jacobs's critique of Howard's garden city idea and her demand for greater density and mixed use utilization were dealt with in detail. The thinking of urban planners, being trained architects, was considered too formal and static and therefore ignored the structural changes that were happening all the time. Terms like "neighborhood" and "car-friendly city" were being turned into guiding principles, and the city was understood not as being multilayered and multifaceted, but as a "condition" and not as a "process" (Müller-Ibold, 1962: p. 874). Urban planners were "creating a permanently fixed image," but a change of thinking would require a great deal of time and effort to "develop a science of urban planning that can fulfill these tasks" (Müller-Ibold, 1962: p. 876). In his view there was an urgent need for critical reflection to allow appropriate, forward looking reaction to current and future developments and trends.

This review of the original edition then fell into the hands of Ulrich Conrads, publisher of the "Bauwelt" series of books, who initiated the book's publication in German. Hillebrecht subsequently visited Jane Jacobs in 1964 in New York and in 1970 in Toronto.<sup>9</sup> Two years after the publication of the German edition of *Death*

---

<sup>8</sup> Klaus Müller-Ibold was born in Shanghai and attended the American school. Therefore he spoke English fluently – unusual for that time. Conversation between the author and Klaus Müller-Ibold, 21 December 2009 in Hamburg.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Rudolf Hillebrecht and Walter Jessen on 1 October 1987 by Sid Auffahrt. The author expresses his thanks to Sid Auffahrt for the transcripts.

*and Life* he completed a seminal consideration of its urban planning ideas which initiated a broader debate and caught the attention of the media (Hillebrecht, 1975a). Hillebrecht thereby placed Jane Jacobs's book in the historical context of urban planning principles.

A review of the German edition argues that given the backdrop of Germany's miracle of home building and reconstruction, "a sociology-based critique of urban planning (has come) almost too late."

JJ analyzes the previously unchallenged highest values of 'orthodox' urban planning which in its ideal form brought about a conglomeration of Ebenezer Howard's 'horizontal' garden city (1890) and Le Corbusier's 'vertical' Cité Radieuse (1920). [...] J. Jacobs's analysis is sparked off by the nightmare of American urban planning; the 'entirely unexpected' and increasingly frequent desolation of inner-city areas, the criminalization, the desolation or 'slumification' of newly built suburbs and housing estates. It turns out that orthodox urban planning itself is to blame, as it 'decentralizes' the former variety of city uses by creating cultural centers, financial districts, entertainment centers, housing districts, shopping centers, etc. By this process, 'residential neighborhoods' become desolated bedroom communities in which crime in broad daylight is on the agenda because that's when it is safest (Reicher, 1964: pp. 52–3).

In 1967 Jane Jacobs was invited to attend the "Constructa" construction show in Hanover (Lawrence, 1989: p. 6).<sup>10</sup> While she was appreciative of Hanover's planning, she found Frankfurt, where she visited the Goethe House "dirty, garish, ugly and just plain mean looking," and Genoa was "incredible" (Allen, 1997: p. 87). She was homesick and missed her family, but also enjoyed the new impressions that came her way, "Paris is very, very beautiful." In a similar manner she recorded the youth fashion for miniskirts and long hair while on her trips to Europe.

In this year of debates and student uprisings, the psychologist Alexander Mitscherlich and the economist Jean Fourastié also gave talks in Hanover. The conference proceedings read:

Not only Jane Jacobs [...] but also 'Miss Universe' in the shape of 19 year old Swede Margareta Arvidsson travelled specially from the USA to Hanover to bestow some glamour on the second Constructa show.

Ulrich Conrads (1967: p. 142) continued:

It was undoubtedly agreeable and interesting to see Mrs. Jacobs [...] in person. However, both her generalizing report about a failed American redevelopment

---

<sup>10</sup> In the edition by F. Lawrence mentioned by Jane Jacobs as her first journey to Europe in 1966.

measure and her support for replacing the tabula rasa mentality of eager urban renewers by the ‘theory of infill’ were essentially too lightweight to have been specially transported from New York to Hanover.

Hillebrecht’s “competent” direction may have contributed to Jane Jacobs positive assessment of planning in Hanover:

The best planning I have ever seen. [...] Some is just unbelievably good. [...] In Hanover I actually see the kind of planning all built, actually executed.

Her assessment of Hamburg, which she also visited, was similarly positive:

Hamburg’s waterfront is marvelous. [...] Right at the waterfront are great old brick warehouses. [...] The bomb damage must have been terrible (Jacobs, n.d.).<sup>11</sup>

Yet at the time it was precisely Hanover, with its flyovers, car-friendly development and bypasses, that in professional circles was considered a model of traffic planning.

We also know from the records that Jane Jacobs’s 1967 trip included an appointment with Alexander Mitscherlich (1908–1982) (Jacobs, n.d.). In 1965, Mitscherlich (1965: pp. 37 and 39) had provoked controversy with his criticism of housing construction and reconstruction, and met with considerable resonance in the media. In 1968 Hillebrecht (1975b: p. 141) complained that Mitscherlich’s “pamphlet” had sparked the debate about the inhospitability of cities but contained only provocative generalizations. By contrast, Jane Jacobs’s feisty book had met with broad and profound resonance as well as articulating long-felt but latent sentiments.

## Critiques and Reviews

Another review of the book, entitled *Have Urban Planners Failed*, described Jane Jacobs’s book as the “most unconventional and provocative book on urban planning” that “sounds the long-awaited death knell for traditional urban planning in its entirety.” The reviewer refers (Sello, 1964: p. 16) to the fact that since European and German cities have a longer history and so are more “colorful” and contain more traces of the past, they are richer in variety and more interesting than their North American counterparts. In October 1962, Victor Gruen (1963: p. 24), the eminent urban planner much admired by Jane Jacobs, was invited to give a lecture in Hamburg by Neue Heimat, Germany’s foremost housing corporation

---

11 In her lecture in London in February 1967, Jane Jacobs placed a positive emphasis on the work of Rudolf Hillebrecht (Jacobs, 1997: p. 98).

at that time. He spoke about the dominance in the USA of the “autocrats,” and proposed a differentiated system of streets, roads and uses.

In another review, the journalist Hermann Funke (1963) starts from the premise that according to Jane Jacobs, cities are not built for urban planners but for laypersons. Jane Jacobs dares “to challenge 60-year-old urban planning theories” and to question the achievements of use-deconcentration.

To follow Jane Jacobs would mean to abandon contemporary urban planning (whose axioms, like mathematical theorems, are valid in precedence of experience) in favor of a much less secure form of urban planning based on practical experience and urban field studies.

Germany’s town planners needed to get to grips with the country’s high levels of traffic chaos. In 1964, the urban planner Friedrich Tamms looked to Jane Jacobs’s arguments to substantiate his own position. His maxims would be “desolation of the cities” and “traffic restrictions.” “In her opinion the excessive use of automobiles is incompatible with concentrated urban life. One of the two will have to give way. Depending on which is victorious, either the city becomes desolate for the sake of cars or traffic has to be reduced for the benefit of cities” (Tamms, 1964: p. 36). Hans Blumenfeldt (not Blumenfeldt), “the traffic planner from Toronto” is also cited: “The automobile also provides protection from the weather; it is a dog kennel, nursery, bedroom and (sometimes) even a love nest.” The car was a showpiece of success. Tamms referred to Düsseldorf as an example, and stated that “modern traffic is a necessity of our time” (Tamms, 1964: p. 36). However, with regard to the oft-cited and dreaded gridlocks, the USA was considered our teacher. In this regard an article in the journal *Die Neue Stadt* contains the following statement:

The Americans, who are far ahead of us thanks to being so heavily motorized, combat their traffic chaos and accidents with the three big *Es of Engineering, Education, and Enforcement* (cited in Schildt, 2007: p. 57).

Following Jane Jacobs’s book, the polemic against the planners intensified, especially in the press. In 1964, the ZEIT national weekly newspaper published an article by Alfred Prokesch entitled “Steine auf die Planer” (Stones on the Planners) which caused a storm of controversy. Prokesch (1964) strung together citations from Jane Jacobs’s written attack and declared it to be “the most unconventional and provocative urban planning book of all times.” New models were needed he argued, but why should the new models be more correct than the old ones? Even down-home urban planners like Rudolf Hillebrecht were receptive to the critique. “It is an historical fact that there is not and never has been successful urban planning.” The debate was taken up by ZEIT two week later under the title “The City – A Compromise – Utopias are Essential – Pro and Contra Jane Jacobs.” “Will our experts rise to the provocation of this major attack?” To make clear the lack of connection between planning and changing life “requires an outsider who grimly

keeps her anger at bay by writing.” Reference is made to the fact that “we don’t provide appropriate training for this important occupation.” The skills “with which young urban planners are released into practice” were inadequate. “The courses provided by our universities differ little from building design and similar subjects. There is no mention of professional training in specialist schools.” The aim was to build cities that fulfill the requirements of sociology, of transport and hygiene and other disciplines as well as possible. “This goal cannot be achieved by simply allowing cities to grow, but requires considered and even detailed planning. The angry cry by this brave American is a gun salute with powder and without lead.”

Yet in the same issue urban planner Gerhard Boeddinghaus (1964) sought to put the record straight: “However, one must caution against a misapprehension; it is simply not true that unplanned cities are best.” He referred to planning law and the Federal Land Utilization Ordinance (Baunutzungsverordnung):

The division of cities into designated residential areas, core areas and so on is legally fixed, and the same applies to the exploitability of municipal land. [...] Urban planning as imagined by Jane Jacobs is not possible under current legislation.

Succinct references to the excessive legal regulation of urban planning and to the existing – albeit modifiable – instruments were likely to be counterproductive given the overheated debate.

By contrast, Gerd Albers (1964: p. 2), old wise man of German urban planning, placed Jane Jacobs’s “massive attack” in an historical context. He questioned whether “today’s urban planning practices as regards the tools of the trade, its methods and objectives are still on the right track.” He also asked whether one could still speak of a “science of urban planning” if its central theses turned out to be wrong. “One man’s rush, restlessness, haste and lack of soul is another man’s pulsating life, the expression of urban vitality that has to be maintained, promoted and invigorated.” His argument included the pendulum of opinion, the barely comprehensible fashions for “density” and “urbanity,” and he directed himself at those people who consider Jane Jacobs’s book a high water mark. He suggested that rather than jump on the bandwagon or accommodate simplifying critiques like those expounded by Mr. Prokesch, we should concentrate instead on the relevant urban planning tools, mindsets and objectives.

H.P. Bahrtdt, probably the most important German urban sociologist of the time, enthusiastically took up Jane Jacobs’s book:

which, despite the lack of an explicit theory has contributed more to the sociology of the city and to urban planning than many other publications (Bahrtdt, 1973: p. 115).

According to Bahrtdt, Jacobs had shown that “anonymity and a mix of functions do not simply mean a lack of order and integration” (1973: p. 114), but could also

be seen as positive conditions for urban coexistence. In a 1974 edition of his book *Die Moderne Großstadt* [*The Modern City*] first published in 1961, he emphasized that in preceding years there had not only been an intensification of the discourse about the city, but also a complete change of thrust, as a result of his own book:

but mostly thanks to Jane Jacobs's book that was also published in 1961 [...]. In those days the doors were still closed (Bahrtdt, 1974: p. 8).

In a similar vein to H.P. Bahrtdt, the urban sociologist Heide Berndt argued in 1967 that the "unease with modern urban planning found its clearest expression" in Jacobs's book. "It is precisely these tacitly applied criteria of urban planning which assume without further ado that the city has to be rejected [...]" that make Jane Jacobs the main target of her attack "[Her] achievement lies in proving the dysfunctionality of planning criteria in relation to planning objectives" (Berndt, 1967: p. 263).<sup>12</sup> H. Berndt takes up Jacobs's general accusation of the urban planners' hostility to cities and places it back within Howard's tradition:

We must not make the same mistake as J. Jacobs and understand modern town planning's latent urban hostility as something immediate that arises from the personal ignorance or malice of urban planners; because we are dealing here with collective prejudices that have a long history (Berndt, 1967: p. 264).

Above all, H. Berndt continues, it is to Jacobs's merit that she highlighted "the social functions that are met by spatial constructs and how social relations can be supported or prevented by means of particular spatial structures" (Berndt, 1967: p. 283). In this respect, architectural homogeneity corresponded with social homogeneity for reasons of profitability (Berndt, 1971: p. 30), because urban planning measures were implemented "in torrents" rather than selectively.

Bahrtdt and Berndt's admiration and positive assessment of Jacobs's book is contrasted by the radical critique of the sociologist Katrin Zapf in her study, "Rückständige Viertel" [Underdeveloped Neighborhoods]. "Remedial measures aim to offset the islands' backwardness and align their outdated conditions with the mainland's new standards" (Zapf, 1969: p. 14). Jacobs's book is rated by Zapf as a work of "romanticizing realists" which understands "orthodox city planning theory" as "anti-city planning" and which judges the "segregation of functions" and decentralization as "systematic attempts to destroy the city."

She strikes a blow for urban diversity and against the purists' quasi-sterile, straightforward, functionally unmixed, generously endowed with green spaces but enervatingly boring anytown. [...] Jane Jacobs's functioning city is a milling crowd. In the diversely animated streets there is no crime as there is in modern American housing estates (Zapf, 1969: p. 249).

---

12 H. Berndt refers to the German edition of Jane Jacobs's book.

According to Zapf, from Jacobs's point of view "it would barely make any sense to clear areas that are in need of regeneration." Zapf accuses Jacobs of "general opposition to the organized modernization of society."

Not only did they (Herbert Gans is also criticized, A/N) equal the common perfectionist view of planning and the more bizarre planning utopianism, with their works they made a direct plea for backwardness. [...] What these critics of planning love, they describe as equal subcultures, although in both cases these are underdeveloped and underprivileged milieus [...]. The apologists' arguments are still academic, so far they have failed to provide evidence of failed practice to confirm their positions (Zapf, 1969: p. 251).

In a further volume of the by now rapidly increasing literature on urban (planning) sociology, Jane Jacobs is called the most successful spokesperson for the objective of urbanity. She herself does not use the term.

With her four conditions Jacobs has created a controversial model which, if fully realized, would mean that many city dwellers would be in the dreadful condition of residing in a permanent funfair [...] (Schmidt-Relenberg, 1968: pp. 211–12).

A different emphasis is provided in *Die gemordete Stadt* [*The Murdered City*], a book that was published in 1964, in which (Siedler, Niggemeyer, Angress) "ironic affection for yesterday" with its "trashcan idyll" and "basement romance" is pictorially and textually documented on the example of Berlin. The culturally conservative book – a kind of (abridged) illustrated version of Jane Jacobs's ideals – laments the loss of imperial Berlin's urban substance and its urban ways of living (Warnke, 2011: p. 140). The book argues that the loss of historic buildings caused by wartime destruction was being exacerbated by radical regeneration measures. The facades in many "Gründerzeit" neighborhoods had been stripped of their decorative plaster elements. The authors are not concerned with justifying living and housing conditions that are indeed problematic, but with the special appeal that is lost by thoughtless, hygienising constructional measures. The authors advocate a "passion for disorder" and, with "ironic melancholy," forms of underdevelopment.

In this book, which is subtitled *Abgesang auf Putte und Straße, Platz und Baum* [*Farewell to Cherubs, Roads, Squares and Trees*], Jane Jacobs is quoted and (with reference to Berlin) a plea is made for a diversity of street and sidewalk uses. Soon afterwards, the (co-)author and photographer Elizabeth Niggemeyer visited Jane Jacobs in New York and during the course of a conversation was able to discern substantial conceptual consistency with respect to preservation, mix and diversity of use.<sup>13</sup> Twenty years later the authors published *Die verordnete Gemütlichkeit*

13 Author's telephone interview with E. Pfefferkorn-Niggemeyer on 17 November 2010.

Sanierung -  
für wen ?

Eine Textsammlung,  
herausgegeben vom  
Büro für Stadsanierung  
und soziale Arbeit  
Berlin-Kreuzberg



Figure 11.2 Cover of German book: *Urban Renewal for Whom?* (with incorrect spelling: *Büro für Stad(t)sanierung und soziale Arbeit*), Berlin 1970

Note: With translated articles from Marc Fried, Herbert J. Gans, James Q. Wilson and others, 2nd edition with an article by David Harvey.

Source: © Publisher no longer exists.

[*Prescribed Coziness*] which documents in pictures the consequences of demolition and redevelopment and Berlin's "long road to ugliness" (Siedler, Niggemeyer, Angress, 1985: p. 6).

Although American culture would swiftly conquer the world, in the Germany of the early 1960s there was very little understanding of urban development in the USA, of the consequences of sprawl and urban renewal programs, or of the desolation of the inner cities. A fascination with economic dynamism, rapid growth and mass motorization prevailed, and the myths surrounding "the land of opportunity," "from rags to riches" and the idea of a society that, unlike Europe, was "classless" were widespread. Whether a development was proposed or had been built was often confused and the same illustrations published over and over. A report by a group of professionals who travelled from Hamburg to the United States thus states:

They live apart but work together. We often hear about the social stratification, indeed the split of the population into different income classes. The residential districts are assigned to specific income groups. [...] Strange class and race situation! (Dähn, 1965: p. 151).

The report speaks of "young people" in Greenwich Village's Washington Square and the successes of urban renewal in Manhattan, where "low level development was demolished. These residential areas strike one as very unfriendly" (Dähn, 1965: p. 166). The history of American cities did not need a world war. The inner cities and even entire towns were simply abandoned.

The effect of Jane Jacobs's book in Europe and Germany needs to be considered against the backdrop of entirely divergent circumstances. In the USA car distribution progressed earlier and further, and there was a marked increase in middle and upper class people moving to the suburbs. In North America, the expansion of tertiary uses in city centers promoted the drive outwards of residential uses and, hence, monostructures. Within the scope of a series of lectures held in 1963, it was noted that a third of the population in the USA lived in the suburbs. The exodus from the cities was rated as an "ominous" development attributed to motorization and the mobility made possible by the automobile. "Only snobs and people whose cars are temporarily off the road for repairs [...] travel by train" (Uenk, 1963: p. 28). In turn, Rudolf Hillebrecht (1965: p. 41) gave an account of his experiences in America to the German Association of Cities in 1965. He was, he said, "surprised and shocked" by the inner cities which resembled bombed-out cities, i.e. were like "our inner cities immediately after the war." He made reference to Jane Jacobs's book again, and lamented the neglect of public transport. For him the key to regenerating American cities lay in improving public transport services in the city centers. In Germany, it was not until the early 1970s that plans began to increase for urban freeways like the western expressway in West Berlin or the motorway approach road in Hamburg-Ottensen, which would have entailed extensive demolition of buildings, noise pollution and the fragmentation

of neighborhoods. By then, however, there was a large network of local citizens' groups that successfully campaigned against plans to transform cities into car-friendly places.

In 1968, Victor Gruen put it in a nutshell in a lecture to the Hamburg branch of the German Press Club:

Europe can learn from America's urban planning mistakes. [...] In the United States, where people had the good fortune, or perhaps misfortune, of being exposed to the impact of technological development, higher living standards and regional population growth approximately 20 years earlier than European countries, we can clearly perceive and assess the consequences of the mass exodus from the cities. [...] Europe has almost caught up with America's technological and economic lead, and therefore European cities are exposed to similar risks. They don't have much time, it is time to act before it is too late (Gruen, 1968: pp. 1 and 10).

Gruen sought to revive the USA's inner cities by means of pedestrian zones based on the European model. He was a supporter of the Alsterzentrum ("Alster Manhattan") project in Hamburg. This was a huge high-rise development proposed by the Neue Heimat housing corporation which had been seized upon enthusiastically by the press as a contribution to the city's modernization. A large section of the centrally located district of St. Georg would have fallen victim to the wrecking ball. The district's two churches would have been preserved in a "basin" (Baues, 1991: pp. 188–99).

Primarily, strengthening the inner city, as would be given rise to by, for example, the planned Alsterzentrum in Hamburg, helps the recovery of the whole city center because it counteracts the current trend towards decentralization, construction of overspill towns and so on. However, strengthening the inner city also helps the whole city and the region (Gruen, 1968: p. 10).

In 1964 professor Werner Hebebrand (1899–1966) retired from his position in Hamburg and was succeeded by the head of the civil engineering authority professor Otto Sill (1906–1984). The daily newspaper, *Hamburger Abendblatt*, commented on the replacement that:

In recent years urban planning has attracted considerable interest across the world. This has been influenced significantly by Jane Jacobs's provocative book [...]. Conventional town planning has been shown to have made so many mistakes that one may be forgiven for losing heart. [...] Veritable miracles of monotony and uniformity [...] were created and excluded from the fascinating momentum of urban life. This is why we can now hear everywhere the cry for 'urbanization' (More skyscrapers in the city centers) (*Hamburger Abendblatt*, 1964: p. 5).



**Figure 11.3** Project of “Alster Zentrum” of housing company Neue Heimat in Hamburg, supported by Victor Gruen, with a planned demolition of a whole urban district

*Source:* © Neue Heimat – Company no longer exists.

As early as 1971, the motto at the German Association of Cities’ AGM was “Save our cities now.” The politics surrounding the development of existing stock was becoming increasingly important, so a working group for urban renewal was formed. In this group, opposers (Hermann Funke) and proponents (Rudolf Hillebrecht) argued about (missed) opportunities for reconstruction. Both sides referred to Jane Jacobs to provide evidence for their respective arguments. Hermann Funke alleged that:

We are presented with theoretical approaches to the city by outsiders, by Hans Paul Bahrdt, Alexander Mitscherlich, Jane Jacobs and others, but not by those people who should be concerned with it, the professors of urban planning at our institutions of higher education. Instead of dealing with the theory, they are pushing into practice, chasing commissions and claiming they had computers at home while they draw soft pencil circles on paper (Deutscher Städtetag, 1971: p. 109).

Rudolf Hillebrecht, on the other hand, referred to economic, and resulting social, structural changes that came about with the growth of service sector jobs in city centers.

And why is the debate about urbanity, which began partly in projection of the very same structural change in urban planning during the annual meeting of the

German Association of Cities in 1960 in Augsburg, why is it an unhappy debate? This discussion was promoted precisely by people like Jane Jacobs, H. P. Bahrdt and others, whom Mr. Funke admiringly refers to elsewhere as outsiders because they supposedly provided the only theoretical approaches to the city (Deutscher Städtetag, 1971: p. 119).

Hillebrecht points out that the meeting of the German Association of Cities in 1960 was held under the motto of “Urban Renewal” and that during the course of this meeting Edgar Salin gave a lecture on urbanity in which he referred to the need for the active participation of citizens to create a vibrant urban community. Calls by the cities for a scientific research institute led to the foundation of the German Institute of Urban Affairs in 1973.

In 1964, the German periodical *DER SPIEGEL* published an article entitled “Durchsonnte Sünden” [Sun-soaked Sins] about urban development and the trend towards suburbanization. Jane Jacobs was referred to in evidence:

It was not until the beginning of this decade, however, that the voices of the critics united to form a chorus of protest. Architects, doctors, sociologists and journalists all called for urban planners to change their thinking; it is not the cities, but the outdated ideas of urban renewal that need to be redeveloped. In 1961 the 48-year old journalist for the New Yorker Jane Jacobs published a sensational book entitled *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* [...]. In this polemic, she presents a particularly striking example of a city that is boundlessly sprawling into the countryside, Los Angeles. This stone desert on the west coast of the United States has now run rampant across an area of approximately 10,500 square kilometers – an area in which the greater metropolitan area of Hamburg would fit fourteen times. Max Frisch called it ‘a traffic system that never becomes a city.’ In his view, In Los Angeles (so Max Frisch) you always had the irritating feeling of having missed the city, of having driven past it. ‘You are never right in the middle because there is no center.’ The shapeless maze of streets, front yards, gas stations, detached houses and garages gives this city with six million residents the appearance of a single suburb.

*DER SPIEGEL* continues:

Using the example of this super-suburbia, Jane Jacobs also shows that reducing the density of cities, contrary to the expectations of urban planners, positively encourages criminality. Jacobs: ‘Los Angeles’ crime figures are flabbergasting.’ The city’s serious assault rate, for example, is twice that of New York or Chicago (Los Angeles: 185 cases annually per 100,000 citizens, New York: 90.9, Chicago: 79). Furthermore, the number of rape cases in Los Angeles is more than three times as high as in other US cities (rape rate in Los Angeles: 31.9, Chicago 10.1; New York: 7.4). Sociologists discern a surprising reason for the higher rate

of criminality in park cities. Inside the narrow apartment blocks of older cities people were aware of being watched over by their neighbors; the community provided a control mechanism of its own, which cannot be replicated in suburbs, housing estates and satellite towns where housing is spread among lush greenery. ‘I live in a lovely, quiet residential area,’ says an American woman in Jane Jacobs’s book. ‘The only disturbing sound at night is the occasional scream of someone being mugged.’

Back in 1969 the urban sociologist Henning Dunckelmann put forward the polemic question: “Is Jane Jacobs’s book merely a catchpenny ploy?” At that point in time 15,000 copies of her book had already been sold in Germany. Dunckelmann dissected the issues of neighborhood, public sphere, criticism of the zoning principle and “inductive urban planning as a method” and concluded that a change in Germany’s urban planning ideas and concepts had taken place even prior to the publication of Jane Jacobs’s book. Furthermore, urban planners like Rudolf Hillebrecht and Klaus Müller-Ibold would certainly agree with ideas of diversity (Dunckelmann, 1970: p. 265).

The urban researcher Juergen Friedrichs encapsulated it from the perspective of social science:

In her now famous book [...] Jane Jacobs does not start out from theoretical considerations, but from experience and a broad view of urban reality. She firmly believes in the vibrancy of the urban street with its many opportunities for contacts that do not lead to complications. Of course the street in Greenwich Village that the author has described and holds up as a model is particularly congenial. However, we may question whether it is possible to reproduce this vitality (Friedrichs, 1972: p. 105).

## **A Future for the Past**

The rediscovery and reappraisal of the past attracted increasing amounts of attention and this also applied to measures of urban renewal. In 1975 the “European Architectural Heritage Year” with the catchy slogan “A Future for our Past” found a great deal of resonance and triggered a whole host of activities. What in the 1950s was controverted as the desire by critics of modernization to preserve western urban structures was now interpreted as a concern for the preservation and restoration of historic building stock. The intensification of efforts to conserve and preserve historic buildings and to ensure the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the townscape are reflections of the changes in value standards.

By 1975, year of heritage conservation, the German government’s urban development report (Städtebaubericht) already spoke of other goals. It was time to take seriously the eccentric nostalgics and agents of backwardness.

Generally, urban renewal measures under the German Town and Country Planning Act resulted in large scale redevelopment that included the total demolition of old buildings and the reorganization and, where necessary, the reallocation of entire city neighborhoods. [...] The conservation idea (achieved A/N) a status that set it ever further apart from the barely comprehensible nostalgia movement of recent years and brought about verifiable criteria for its necessity and usefulness. [...] Given the current status of the discussions about and efforts made for conservation, it is obviously premature to speak of a fundamental reversal of urban policy. [...] This cannot mean that the construction of new buildings will cease to be relevant to urban development. [...] Furthermore the greater attention that we can see being paid to the redevelopment of buildings in the application of the Town and Country Planning Act is another indication of the transformation of urban planning objectives in terms of conservation (Federal Minister of Regional Planning, Building and Urban Development [Bundesminister für Raumordnung, Bauwesen und Städtebau], 1975: pp. 10, 11 and 69).

In 1979 Gerd Albers put it in a nutshell in a publication that accompanied the “Neues Bauen in alter Umgebung” (New Construction in Old Surrounding) exhibition:

The media are full of criticism of current architecture and urban design; everything is unsatisfactory, inadequate and atrocious. Naturally, they know precisely whom to blame; the architects and urban designers who, in their expert arrogance, hung on for decades to misconceptions, but who now, apparently, insofar as they are even capable of insight, seem to know no way out.

Albers speaks of weather changes, the transformation of priorities and value standards:

What yesterday still seemed in need of redevelopment or ripe for demolition, today is listed for monuments and may, at most, be modernized with the utmost of care (Albers, 1979: p. 1).

This brought to an end the period of planning technocracy and feasibility fantasies, which found expression in wide-ranging integrated urban development concepts for which special planning teams were assembled. It was not replaced by *the* new paradigm, or *the* new model, but by a phase of weakening and uncertain urban planning. This loss of status matched a skeptical attitude towards planning and the weakening influence of public planning which persist to this day.

The protests, rent strikes and squats that also emerged in other West German cities like Frankfurt and Munich forced new concepts for action and a more participative planning culture. Hamburg too was looking for new means of achieving urban renewal, and in 1981 the city hosted a major international

conference entitled “Das Wohnquartier in der Stadterneuerung” (Residential Districts and Urban Regeneration). On the initiative of Klaus Müller-Ibold, who by then had become Hamburg’s chief planner, Jane Jacobs was also invited to attend.<sup>14</sup> Her husband accompanied her. Her talk was a plea against wide-ranging integrated planning and for planning on a small scale. She raged against Daniel Burnham’s “make big plans” and advocated an incremental approach and small scale planning.

Jane Jacobs’s classic is one of the few books on architecture and urban planning that is continually reprinted, decade after decade. The German educational reformer Hartmut von Hentig recently identified it as one of the most important books of all times:

Progress has not been entirely good for children. There is this wonderful book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs, in which she describes how we have provided our children with a dead world in the wealthy suburbs. Quite the opposite is true in the slums where a lack of money meant there were no cars. Half of all trade took place on the street. Children were everywhere, they played soccer on the sidewalk, they did this and that and there was always someone looking out of the window; the *public eye* rather than educational theory was relied on to look after the children. In this way children rubbed against each other into adulthood (Hentig, quoted by Mayer, 2003).

### **Paradigm Shift on the Way to Sustainable Urban Regeneration**

When we look at Germany we can see that there have been radical changes in the practice of urban regeneration. The need for “catch up” modernization was radically put into question with the changes in practice that were introduced in the late 1960s. The “niches” that not long before had been considered as “in need of redevelopment” were now seen as worthy of protection. Diversity and asynchrony of architectural-spatial and socio-spatial structures were now seen as values that should not be bulldozed but instead needed to be developed as hallmarks of urban culture. Increasingly, the agents of renewal began to accept, verbally at least, that “gentle urban regeneration” would be the accepted model, even though concealed behind this model were a variety of, and sometimes even diametrically divergent, practices. Small scale development, gentleness, a concentration on local needs and interests, and strengthening endogenous potentials are only a few of the phrases that indicate a changed view of the problem and a different approach to the neighborhoods that previously had been defined as “problem areas.”

---

14 The author had the pleasure to hear her lecture during the congress held in the Congress Center in Hamburg on 12–14 October. The lecture was publicized as “Sense and Nonsense in the Concept of a Single, All-Embracing Plan,” and the paper was entitled, “Can big plans solve the problem of renewal?”

In West Berlin, urban regeneration measures, which mostly took the form of large-scale demolition and redevelopment, were undertaken even before the German Town and Country Planning Act of 1971 was passed.<sup>15</sup> Since the first urban renewal program was issued during Willy Brandt's term of office as Mayor of Berlin, it had been one of the senate's primary housing policy tasks. In 1960 the senate building director Werner Düttmann (1960–1970) was asking for the report by urban planner Professor Göderitz to be given due consideration. Göderitz had argued that refurbishing all homes would be cheaper than demolishing and rebuilding (Geist and Kürvers, 1989: pp. 580–81). In 1964 a Berlin newspaper reported that that 140,000 Berliners were “trembling” because 56,000 apartments were due to be demolished (Geist and Kürvers, 1989: pp. 597–8). Willy Brandt reassured that urban renewal would be gentle, but by 1965 nearly 9,000 homes had already been destroyed. Property owners, tenants and business people became increasingly resistant to renewal by demolition. The buildings' continual deterioration brought about a population exchange. As migrant households moved in, “long-time” German residents left the old residential districts. The social state-based redevelopment model of sweeping demolition followed by new construction was undermined by the oil crisis, budgetary slumps and a rapid rent increases.

Without wishing to overstate Jane Jacobs's influence, the following set of personal connections may not be without interest. The director of Berlin's senate, Werner Düttmann, and the architectural critic Peter Blake, co-editor of the *Architectural Journal* for which Jane Jacobs wrote articles, visited Jane Jacobs. Düttmann, who spoke good English as a result of being a prisoner of war, was greatly inspired by her ideas of the compact, mixed-use city. As early as 1967 he had referred to Jane Jacobs at the International Congress of the International Federation for Housing and Planning in Berlin where he had also posed some unusually critical questions. “Can our cities survive urban renewal? [...] Have we perhaps cleared too many slums and created too many green belts?” His polemic response to the Charter of Athens and rational planning dogmas was a sharp “save the slums” (Düttmann, 1967: p. 8). Düttmann was a representative of post-war modernity who played a key urban planning role in Berlin as the senate's building director (from 1960–1970) and was considered a “troublemaker.” He had previously been a major player in the large scale redevelopment of Berlin-Kreuzberg, although he had also launched the “Rettet das Stuck!” [Save the Stucco!] campaign, “what once looked like Schinkel, now looks like Lemberg-Ost” (Johnson, 1981, cited in Düttmann, 1990: p. 20). We will never know for sure whether Werner Düttmann's conversations with Jane Jacobs were an inspiration to him.

The policy of demolition and redevelopment continued until the end of the 1960s when it was gradually replaced by a modified urban renewal policy. Large-scale, newly-built housing estates became the subject of criticism shortly after

---

15 Starting in 1964, annual urban regeneration reports were published by the senator of construction and housing.

they were completed. The post-1968 zeitgeist is likely to have played a role in this, as well as the local constellations of agents, (party-) political disputes, the specific problems of the old building stock and outdated planning processes. During the European Architectural Heritage Year of 1975, Berlin's senate selected Block 118 in Berlin's Charlottenburg district as a modernization prototype based on new principles. Under the direction of Professor W. Haemer, the intention was that it should immediately become a popular model for "sustainable redevelopment" (Schubert, 1994: p. 49). The reputation of the International Building Exhibition (IBA) soon spread to New York. *The New York Times'* architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable wrote, "This is the moment of dramatic change: for whom we design!" (quoted by Ditzen, 1984).

From 1979 until 1987, the IBA Berlin marked a turning point for the Federal Republic of Germany with its themes of "gentle urban renewal" and "critical reconstruction." Whereas in the redevelopment area around the Kottbusser Tor in Kreuzberg, a district dense with nineteenth century tenements, evictions and demolitions were still the order of the day, the east of Kreuzberg was kept on stand-by for redevelopment. Neglect and lack of maintenance had caused the buildings' condition to deteriorate steadily (Bernt, 2003: p. 33). This was the uncertain situation in which local clergyman Klaus Duntze initiated an open competition for ideas ("Strategien für Kreuzberg"), conceived as a model of civic participation for broadly based renewal proposals.

The central mission was no longer the creation of large-scale housing projects on the periphery like the Märkisches Viertel and Gropiusstadt in West Berlin; now it was all about renewing inner-city neighborhoods. The plan for the freeways was significantly altered and reduced. Personnel changes were also made in order to promote a realignment of the discourse on urban planning (Schluche, 1997: p. 28). Before long, in an about-turn, the praises of mixed use were sung; building conservation and civic participation became central components of gentle urban renewal. Jane Jacobs would have had enjoyed the "Kreuzberg mix." As well as being promoted in publications, the urban integration of architecture, culture and commerce was strengthened, lived and implemented in practice by the IBA in 1984 (Fiebig, 1984).<sup>16</sup>

Peter Blake has described how Jane Jacobs's ideas and her book reached Berlin via Werner Düttmann and others. Although the radical nature of her criticism of urban redevelopment in North America has often been described as exaggerated, the key elements of her writings may have stimulated a change of thinking. The shift towards "careful urban regeneration" and rehabilitating the "world's largest tenement city" would make urban renewal history not only in Berlin but across Europe. She initiated the transition away from wholesale urban redevelopment and urban freeway planning and towards a new approach to the existing building stock. In the 1980s, the IBA's "old buildings" section contributed significantly to "rescuing

---

16 Berlin's local peculiarities and practical problems regarding mixed use are enlarged upon without reference to Jane Jacobs here.

the broken city” and with the adoption of the famous “12 principles for gentle urban renewal” it became a political program. “Gentle urban renewal” was considered the most progressive redevelopment and socio-political approach to stopping the decay of historic building districts, to renewing without destroying, to democratizing planning processes, to making procedures less bureaucratic and to creating space for experimentation. Cautious urban redevelopment was interdisciplinary, and it was also international. Similar programs were launched in Vienna, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Bologna and other cities. Concepts based on local requirements were developed in cooperation with residents and tailored to suit the peculiarities of the respective city and its inhabitants (Bodenschatz, 2009: p. 6).

Around a decade after the publication of her book, Jane Jacobs’s demand for the conservation and cautious treatment of existing buildings promoted a paradigm shift in Europe too. Increasingly, the grave consequences of the postwar modernization processes turned hopes into fears; although restructuring had resulted in (material) gains, it had also incurred (non-material) losses. More and more, “achievements” were reconstrued as a negative results, and starting in the late 1970s against the backdrop of economic and social upheaval, the “Fordism of urban regeneration” (Ipsen, 1992: p. 19) was called into question by radical forms of resistance like the squatter movements in England, the Netherlands and Germany.

### **Transatlantic Paradigm Shift: Are We All “Jacobseans”?**

Of course, the urban planning and regeneration paradigm shift and the post-1970 watershed are not solely attributable to Jane Jacobs and her book; the matter is far more complex. With reference to 1973, Peter Hall speaks of a “Great shift in *Zeitgeist*” (Hall, 2000: p. 29). The emergence of the baby boomer generation, the student movement and the anti-authoritarian currents that spread from Paris to Berkeley articulated the demands for participation and self-determination. In many industrialized countries, the dominance of technocrats and the military-industrial complex became an increasingly important subject for discussion. The civil rights, antiwar, women’s and environmental movements forced political changes. A structural change in the economy caused a dramatic break away of industrial jobs in Europe and North America and revealed the dream of perpetual prosperity as illusory.

Given the various national and local contexts that are discussed here it is not possible to assign a specific date to this paradigm shift. Complex ideological changes, diverse planning laws, a variety of planning cultures and stakeholder configurations as well as localized problems need to be reflected in setting dates for the paradigm shift. Since the 1970s the dominant functionalist form of urban planning with its monostructures and separation of uses has also been challenged in Europe, albeit under different circumstances and conditions. People bemoaned the loss of urban diversity and vitality which they experienced as “inhospitable.”

Order and zoning were no longer sought and instead there were demands for tranquility, community, city life, a functional mix and “urbanity.” Jane Jacobs considered urbanity to be a dependent variable that is formed by the components of size and density as well as a diversity of people and uses. The critical urban discourse initiated by Jane Jacobs and others was taken up by counter-cultural movements like the student movement, tenants’ initiatives, and squatters from Zurich and Berlin to Amsterdam and London. The transformation of many inner-city neighborhoods began as unplanned, multi-step changes initially brought about by artists, students, young academics and subcultural groups.

With regard the professionalization of urban planning this can only mean a welcome liberation from continuously changing fashions (which are often adaptations taken from other disciplines) and a reminder of the cumulatively developed tools, methods, processes, theories and concepts for action that make up the core of the discipline. Within the context of “New Obscurity,” it is also possible to refer back to a broad spectrum of generated knowledge that makes possible the kind of participatory and error-friendly concepts that are expected from a distinct profession. The professional perspective of “general specialism” reveals no clear core competencies and fails to open professional futures in competition with other disciplines.

### **Appropriations and (Mis)interpretations**

Jane Jacobs is often accused of black and white thinking, of conceiving only of “for” and “against” and denying nuance. Her sources were the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and books taken out of the public library. She used stories and anecdotes to make generalizations. Her early polemics were directed at planners. Despite a dearth of precise concepts, Jane Jacobs provided an influential critique of the “omnipotent” planners who conceive their plans “from above” and from the comfort of their “ivory towers.” She questioned the planners’ disciplinary identity, professional authority and vision, and challenged the discipline’s self-image in the decades that followed (Glazer, 1974: pp. 346–64).<sup>17</sup> Planning, in her view, was frequently ineffective, inefficient and unsuccessful and, despite its visionary ambitions, had contributed little to the recovery and visual enhancement of the cities. In her opinion, plans that had been drawn up with the noble aims of improving society and implementing “top down” efficiency and rationality had failed. The bewildered planners needed to find new allies as they saw themselves increasingly confronted by critical questions from the “bottom up” for which they had no adequate answers. A discipline on the road to being a profession found itself shaken to its foundations (Campanella, 2001: p. 146). The strengthening of

---

17 “The major professions are medicine and law; the minor professions all the rest. From these we have selected education, social work, town planning and divinity for the purposes of this paper” (Glazer, 1974: p. 347).

the position of campaigns and individuals connoted a weakening of professional competence.

This was a challenge to the notion of the urban planner as *the* expert. “The ethos of integrity gave authentication the ethos of the action” which appeared legitimized by “autoimmunization in the guise of transparency” (Etzemüller, 2009: p. 34). The “professional” training, expertise, quasi-ethical justification, “creative act,” work (for the greater common good rather than in favor of special interests), and legitimacy of the planner ceased to be recognized.

Many of the objectives of urban regeneration have a long tradition and are rooted in social reform. Various facts and data were accumulated and operational knowledge optimized over decades. Committed social reformers (“muckrakers”) described, photographed and documented the most wretched slums and repeatedly emphasized the need for action. Jane Jacobs blanked this out and simply denied the existence of squalid housing. She ignored the critics of poor housing and living conditions.<sup>18</sup> Instead, Jane Jacobs showed the positive side of local networks, social settings and functioning neighborhoods, and argued that these needed to be constantly (re)discovered. In the meantime a global initiative has taken root to “walk” urban neighborhoods and “develop” and understand these with local residents and initiatives in the spirit of Jane Jacobs.<sup>19</sup>

## **The Future of the Past**

With or without her help, Jane Jacobs mutated into a charismatic urbanist. Nowadays it is rare to find a planning submission that is not backed up by one of her quotes, hardly an article about urban planning without a bon mot by Jane Jacobs (Hospers, 2011: p. 83). The CEO of Europe’s largest European redevelopment project in HafenCity Hamburg explains:

The principal theoretical common ground we find in the idea of the city that the journalist and urban expert Jane Jacobs designed in 1961 because she saw that this city was disappearing in the USA. It is the idea of an intensive mix of uses and diversity, of small apartment blocks and streets with a social character that is appreciated (Bruns-Berentelg, n.d.: p. 2).

There is controversy about the “correct” interpretation of her theses and the interpretative power of her work. However, we should not confuse “Jacobsean”

---

18 Police reporter and social reformer Jacob A. Riis documented the misery in the tenement blocks and repeatedly demanded that the situation be improved. His study provides the classic background that illustrates the reasons for the need of reform and regeneration measures (Riis, 1971).

19 Jane’s Walk. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.janeswalk.net/> [accessed 6 May 2012].

and “Jacobean.” The latter perspective would be the defeat of freedom, a triumph of ideology in favor of dogma and “doctrinal purity.” That would certainly be the perverse opposite of Jane Jacobs’s ideas. Her notion of the intact, diverse and mixed-use neighborhoods she herself had experienced in the Village remains relevant even in our rapidly globalizing world. Jane Jacobs remains a pragmatic rebel against technocratic modernization. However, 50 years after her first published book there are many signs that the cities are no longer negated and considered problematic but that they are recognized as the bearers of hope for the future.

On 25 April 2006, a few days before her 90th birthday, the “incorrigible optimist” passed away – her mother had lived to 101. Her obituary in the *Deutsche Bauzeitung* states:

Like no other urban planning critic, the American author, analyst and activist left her indelible mark as an ‘intellectual fighter’ on the zeitgeist of the sixties when citizens’ movements took action against wholesale redevelopment in American cities (Meyer, 2006: p. 6).

The *Deutsche Bauwelt* described her as “an endearing, intellectual pioneer with a round face, mischievous smile, sneakers, bangs and huge glasses” and further commented that she was characterized by “steely hardness under a folkloristic surface” (Martin, 2006). One of the obituaries written for her powerful opponent Robert Moses in 1981 stated that:

He never drove a car. [...] He was an energetic, shrewd, missionary, jealous, power-hungry, tyrannical idealist. [...] He could no longer be dismissed, he was just too powerful. [...] Moses had lived long enough to see that more and better roads cause more and more traffic (Cullen, 1981: p. 1416).

Jane Jacobs was an intellectual on whose advice great value was attached throughout her life. The paradigm shift in urban planning that was promoted by Jane Jacobs, her books and work, as well as many other people will not be the last. However, the changes induced by Jane Jacobs still have an effect in and with other models and will continue to form an important element of democratic process and participatory culture in non-authoritarian states.

She saw cities with problems, but did not see the city as a problem. Beginning in the mid-1990s, Jane Jacobs replied to all requests for interviews and articles with a standard rejection which may serve as a kind of testament, “You don’t need me anymore. [...] Everything I might say on the subject of attitudes towards cities I’ve already written and I have nothing more to add” (Jacobs, n.d.). Soon after her death “our Jane” had already become untouchable by any public criticism; the attention she received posthumously was like the attention usually reserved for popular politicians, athletes and artists. The announcement that was published when she died read as follows:

What's important is not that she died but that she had lived, and that her life's work has greatly influenced the way we think. Please remember her by reading her books and implementing her ideas (Anon., 2006: p. 81).

## Bibliography

- Anon., *Der Spiegel*, 1964. Durchsonnte Sünden. 3 June 1964. [Online]. Available at <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-46174700.html> [accessed 6 May 2012].
- Anon., 1964. Stadtplanung braucht einen "Gehirntrust." *Hamburger Abendblatt*. [Online]. 58, 9 March 1964, p. 5. Available through: Hamburger Abendblatt Archiv [Accessed 6 May 2012, online: [http://www.abendblatt.de/archiv/article.php?xmlurl=http%3A%2F%2Farchiv.abendblatt.de%2Fha%2F1964%2Fxml%2F19640309xml%2Fhabxml64\\_9353.xml&pdfurl=http%3A%2F%2Farchiv.abendblatt.de%2Fha%2F1964%2Fpdf%2F19640309.pdf%2FASV\\_HAB\\_19640309\\_HA\\_005.pdf](http://www.abendblatt.de/archiv/article.php?xmlurl=http%3A%2F%2Farchiv.abendblatt.de%2Fha%2F1964%2Fxml%2F19640309xml%2Fhabxml64_9353.xml&pdfurl=http%3A%2F%2Farchiv.abendblatt.de%2Fha%2F1964%2Fpdf%2F19640309.pdf%2FASV_HAB_19640309_HA_005.pdf)].
- Anon., 2006. An Interview with Jane Jacobs (1999). *Urban Design International*, (11), p. 81.
- Anon., Urban Design International, 2006. An interview with Jane Jacobs (1999). 11/2006, p. 81.
- Anon., Jane's Walk. [Online] Available at: <http://www.janeswalk.net> [accessed 6 May 2012].
- Albers, G., 1964. *Urbanität oder das Problem der Mode im Städtebau*. Manuskript Hamburgisches Architekturarchiv der Hamburgischen Architektenkammer. Munich.
- Albers, G., 1979. Sind die Architekten an allem schuld? In: *Freie Akademie der Künste in Hamburg, Hamburgische Architektenkammer und BDA Hamburg*, (ed.) Broschüre zur Ausstellung Neues Bauen in alter Umgebung Hamburg Jacobikirche 1.-25.2.1979.
- Albrecht, H., 1984. *Das programmierte Chaos. Städteplanung in der Sackgasse*. Bremen: Schünemann.
- Allen, M. (ed.), 1997. *Ideas that Matter: The Worlds of Jane Jacobs*. Owen Sound, ON: Ginger Press.
- Auffahrt, S. and Dorn, R. (eds), 2010. *Ein Leben für Hannover*. Festschrift zum 100. Geburtstag von Rudolf Hillebrecht. Hannover.
- Bahrdt, H.P., 1973. *Humaner Städtebau, Überlegungen zur Wohnungspolitik und Stadtplanung für eine nahe Zukunft*. 6th edition. Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung.
- Bahrdt, H.P., 1974. *Die moderne Großstadt. Soziologische Überlegungen zum Städtebau*. Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung.
- Baues, N., 1991. Konkrete Stadtutopie – Alsterzentrum in St. Georg. In: U. Höhns (ed.), *Das ungebraute Hamburg. Visionen einer anderen Stadt in architektonischen Entwürfen der letzten hundertfünfzig Jahre*. Hamburg: Junius.

- Berndt, H., 1967. Der Verlust von Urbanität im Städtebau. *Das Argument*, 44.
- Berndt, H., 1971. Ist der Funktionalismus eine funktionale Architektur? Soziologische Betrachtungen einer architektonischen Kategorie. In: H. Berndt, A. Lorenzer and K. Horn (eds), *Architektur als Ideologie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, pp. 9–50.
- Bernt, M., 2003. *Rübergeklappt. Die „Behutsame Stadterneuerung“ im Berlin der 90er Jahre*. Berlin: Schelzky & Jeep.
- Bodenschatz, H., 2009. Behutsame Stadterneuerung: Ein Projekt von europäischem Rang. In: W. Eichstedt, K. Kouvelis and E. Pfothenauer (eds), *Leitbild Behutsamkeit, Texte zu Arbeit und Person des Stadtplaners Cornelius van Geisten*. Berlin: Regioverlag.
- Boeddinghaus, G., 1964. Bei uns unmöglich. *DIE ZEIT*, 31 January 1964, p. 35.
- Boeddinghaus, G., 1995. *Gesellschaft durch Dichte. Kritische Initiativen zu einem neuen Leitbild für Planung und Städtebau 1963/1964*. Braunschweig and Wiesbaden: Vieweg.
- Bruns-Berentelg, J., n.d. Unser Bild von Stadt ähnelt dem von Jane Jacobs. *HafenCity Hamburg News Extra*, p. 2.
- Bundesminister für Raumordnung, Bauwesen und Städtebau, 1975. *Städtebaubericht der Bundesregierung*. Bonn, Bad Godesberg.
- Campanella, Th.J., 2001. Jane Jacobs and the Death and Life of American Planning. In: M. Page and T. Mennel (eds), *Reconsidering Jane Jacobs*, pp. 141–60. [Online]. Available at: <http://places.designobserver.com/feature/jane-jacobs-and-the-death-and-life-of-american-planning/25188/> [accessed 5 May 2012].
- Conrads, U., 1967. Mehr als nichts. *Bauwelt*, 6/7.
- Cullen, M.S., 1981. Robert Moses 18. Dezember 1888 – 30. Juli 1981. *Bauwelt*, 33, p. 1416.
- Dähn, A., 1965. Städtebau- Wohnungsbau- Wohnungswirtschaft: Bericht und Auswertung einer Studienreise nach Montreal, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Chicago, Washington, Philadelphia, New York, vom 21. April-12. Mai 1965. *Band 9 von Studienreise der Norddeutschen Treuhandgesellschaft Hamburg-Altona*. Hamburg: Norddeutsche Treuhandgesellschaft zur Förderung des Wohnungsbaues m.b.H.
- Deutscher Städtetag, 1971. Rettet unsere Städte jetzt! Vorträge, Aussprachen und Ergebnisse der 16. Hauptversammlung des Deutschen Städtetages vom 25–27. Mai 1971 in München. *Neue Schriften des Deutschen Städtetages*. Stuttgart, Berlin, Cologne.
- Ditzen, L., 1984. Erneuern ohne zu zerstören. *DIE ZEIT*, 24, 8 June 1984.
- Dunckelmann, H., 1970. Jane Jacobs' Buch nur eine publikationswirksame Masche? *Stadtbauwelt*, 7, pp. 260–65.
- Düttmann, W., 1967. Urban Renewal and the Future of the City. In: *Urban Renewal and the Future of the City, International Congress of the International Federation for Housing and Planning*. Berlin.

- Düttmann, W., 1990. *Architekt für Berlin 1921–1983. Verliebt ins Bauen*. Basel, Berlin, Boston, MA: Birkhäuser.
- Etzelmüller, Th. (ed.), 2009. *Die Ordnung der Moderne. Social Engineering im 20. Jahrhundert*. Bielefeld.
- Fiebig, K.-H., Hoffmann-Axthelm, D. and Knödler-Bunte, E., 1984. *Kreuzberger Mischung. Die innerstädtische Verflechtung von Architektur, Kultur und Gewerbe*. Berlin.
- Friedrichs, J., 1972. Großstadtforschung in den USA. In: E. Pfeil (ed.), *Großstadtforschung. Entwicklung und gegenwärtiger Stand*. Hannover: Jänecke.
- Funke, H., 1963. Die Großstadt und ihre Planer. Unfreundliche Bemerkungen einer Dame. *DIE ZEIT*, 48, 29 November 1963.
- Geist, J.F. and Kürvers, K., 1989. *Das Berliner Mietshaus 1945–1989*. München: Prestel.
- Glazer, N., 1974. The Schools of Minor Professions. *Minerva*, 3, pp. 346–64.
- Grebler, L., 1964. *Urban Renewal in European Countries: Its Emergence and Potentials*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Gruen, V., 1962. Herzinfarkt der Städte. Diagnose und Therapievorschlagn des amerikanischen Architekten Victor Gruen. *neue heimat. Monatshefte für neuzeitlichen Wohnungsbau*, December, pp. 24–6.
- Gruen, V., 1968. Die Wiederbelebung unserer Stadtkerne. *neue heimat. Monatshefte für neuzeitlichen Wohnungsbau*, 8, pp. 3–10.
- Hall, P., 2000. The Centenary of Modern Planning. In: R. Freestone (ed.), *Urban Planning in a Changing World. The Twentieth Century Experience*. London: E&FN Spon, pp. 20–39.
- Heidenheimer, A.J., Hecllo, H. and Teich Adams, C., 1975. *Comparative Public Policy: The Politics of Social Choice in Europe and America*. New York, NY: St Martin's Press.
- Hillebrecht, R., 1965. Erfahrungen aus Amerika. Straßen für die Städte. Jetzt muß gehandelt werden! *Neue Schriften des Deutschen Städtetags*, 15. Cologne.
- Hillebrecht, R., 1975a. Städtebau von Ebenezer Howard bis Jane Jacobs. *Neue Schriften des Deutschen Städtetages*, 30. Berlin, Cologne, Mainz.
- Hillebrecht, R., 1975b. Wandlungen im Städtebau der Gegenwart. Städtebau als Herausforderung. Ausgewählte Schriften und Vorträge von Rudolf Hillebrecht, *Neue Schriften des Deutschen Städtetages*, 30. Berlin, Cologne, Mainz.
- Hospers, G.-J., 2011. Jane Jacobs in Dutch Cities and Towns: Metropolitan Romance in Provincial Reality. In: M. Page and T. Mennel (eds), *Reconsidering Jane Jacobs*. Chicago, IL: APA Planners Press.
- Ipsen, D., 1992. Über den Zeitgeist der Stadterneuerung. *Die alte Stadt*, 1, pp. 19–31.
- Jacobs, J., 1967. The Self-generating Growth of Cities. *Royal Institute of British Architects Journal*, 3(74), pp. 95–100.
- Jacobs, J., 1927–2007. *Jane Jacobs Papers 1927–2007*. [Archive and manuscripts] Subseries A. Boston College. John J. Burns Library.

- Jacobs, J., 1992 [1961]. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Klemek, C., 2011. *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal, Postwar Urbanism from New York to Berlin*. London and Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Martin, D., 2006, *Bauwelt*, 20.
- Mayer, S., 2003. S. Mayer im Gespräch im Hartmut von Hentig. *DIE ZEIT*, 49, 27 November 2003.
- Meyer, U., 2006. Note in: *deutsche bauzeitung*, June, p. 6.
- Mitscherlich, A., 1965. *Die Unwirtlichkeit unserer Städte. Anstiftung zum Unfrieden*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Moses, R., 1952. *Builder for Democracy*. New York, NY: Holt.
- Müller-Ibold, K., 1962. Umbruch in der Stadtplanung. *Der Städtetag*, July, pp. 373–6.
- Nell-Breuning, O., 1953. Die “familiengerecht” Wohnung. *Bundesbaublatt*, 4, pp. 144–9.
- Prokesch, A., 1964. Den Haß auf die Stadt begraben. *DIE ZEIT*, 17 January 1964. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.zeit.de/1964/03/den-hass-auf-die-stadt-begraben> [accessed 6 May 2012].
- Reiche, R., 1964. Buchbesprechung. *Das Argument*. Berliner Hefte für Probleme der Gesellschaft, 28–31.
- Riis, J. A., 1971. *How The Other Half Lives*. New York, NY: Dover.
- Schildt, A., 2007. Amerikanische Einflüsse auf den Wiederaufbau westeuropäischer Städte nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. *Informationen zur modernen Stadtgeschichte*, 1, pp. 48–62.
- Schlusche, G., 1997. Die Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin – Eine Bilanz. *Arbeitshefte des Instituts für Stadt- und Regionalplanung*, 59. Berlin: TU Berlin.
- Schmidt-Relenberg, N., 1968. *Soziologie und Städtebau. Versuch einer systematischen Grundlegung*. Stuttgart and Bern: K. Krämer.
- Schubert, D., 1994: Die Menschen sind anders ... Hardt-Waltherr Hämer und Erhart Pfotenhauer (S.T.E.R.N.) im Gespräch mit Dirk Schubert über Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft der behutsamen Stadterneuerung. In: Arbeitskreis Stadterneuerung an deutschsprachigen Hochschulen, (ed.), *Jahrbuch Stadterneuerung 1994*, Berlin.
- Schwedler, R., 1965. Die Aufgaben der Stadt- und Dorferneuerung. *Schriften des Deutschen Verbandes für Wohnungswesen, Städtebau und Raumplanung e.V.*, 62. Cologne, Mühlheim.
- Sello, G., 1964. Haben die Stadtplaner versagt? Zu Jane Jacobs Buch, Tod und Leben großer amerikanischer Städte. *neue heimat. Monatshefte für neuzeitlichen Wohnungsbau*, 4.
- Siedler, W.J., Niggemeyer, E., and Angress, G., 1964. *Die gemordete Stadt*. Berlin: Herbig.

- Siedler, W.J., Niggemeyer, E. and Angress, G., 1985. *Die verordnete Gemütlichkeit. Abgesang auf Spielstraße, Verkehrsberuhigung und Stadtbildpflege. Der gemordeten Stadt II*. Berlin: Herbig.
- Tamms, F., 1964. *Städtebau und Verkehr*. Cologne, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Uenk, A., 1963. *Shopping Centers aus amerikanischer und europäischer Sicht. Referate einer Vortrags- und Diskussionsveranstaltung am 27.3.1963 im Albert-Schäfer-Saal der Handelskammer Hamburg*.
- Warnke, S., 2011. Zur Kontextualisierung eines "Klassikers." Wolf Jobst Siedlers und Elisabeth Niggemeyers Essay-Foto-Buch "Die gemordete Stadt." In: V.M. Lampugnani, K. Frey and E. Perotti (eds), *Stadt & Text, Zur Ideengeschichte des Städtebaus im Spiegel theoretischer Schriften seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*. Berlin.
- Zapf, K., 1969. *Rückständige Viertel. Eine soziologische Analyse der städtebaulichen Sanierung in der Bundesrepublik*. Frankfurt am Main: EVA.

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

## Chapter 12

# Jane Jacobs and the Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal

Christopher Klemek

The staggering effects of industrialization on cities became evident in Europe and North America over the course of the nineteenth century, bringing unprecedented transformations in urban form, economy, politics, and society. From Great Britain (a densely urbanized nation) to Canada (with only a handful of large cities sprinkled across a vast continent), reformers searched for ways to channel disruptive urban forces and, increasingly, to refashion the industrial cityscape completely. The most influential comprehensive response initially saw full expression during the 1920s in German-speaking cities like Vienna, Frankfurt, and especially Berlin. Elements that in some cases occurred or even originated elsewhere first came together there: a popular sense of cultural break, thanks to the Great War and its aftermath, radical modernist designs for replanning the urban landscape, and progressive public patrons willing to support them.

Within a decade and a half, the ascent of Hitler had eclipsed some aspects of this constellation in Germany, particularly the more iconoclastic aesthetics and their leftist associations. But even Nazi urban planners like Albert Speer shared their predecessors' aversion to the metropolis as it stood. The Allies' victory in World War II swept away the Nazi regime in turn, but it also demolished Europe's urban centers more extensively than even the most extreme critics had dreamed. Modernist city planning, via the influence of exiles, returned with Germany's occupation. By the 1950s German planners had put an aggressive program in effect to deconcentrate urban centers, reorganize them according to segregated functions, and make them "automobile ready." Berlin in particular was to be modernized as a liberal capitalist show window of the cold war, and there was little room in the future thus envisioned for the "quaint and phony" vestiges of the older city.

Though ideologically apart from the turbulent politics of Berlin during the first half of the twentieth century, Britain's colossal capital, London, stood by the end of World War II at the center of a restructuring of British society along social democratic lines. These included the implementation of aggressive planning legislation to clear slums and decentralize the population, to construct modern housing, and to build highways. Interwar British design had initially expressed its own idiosyncratic style of modernism. Yet under economic pressures and shifting professional fashions, its forms came by the 1950s to closely resemble the urban

renewal visions afoot in Berlin. By 1965 these aims, shared across the ideological spectrum, were being executed on a vast metropolitan planning scale that dictated the course of the greater London region.

Wartime dislocations and post-war open immigration brought British and German influences across the Atlantic. Like Britons, Canadians also reacted against the hitherto laissez-faire development of their cities. Toronto led the way in 1947, adopting slum clearance and modernist public housing projects similar to those in Europe. And Torontonians also responded to the unplanned sprawl of the early twentieth century by creating a 1953 metropolitan government, analogous to the Greater London Council. But rather than implement an anti-growth boundary like the London greenbelt, Metropolitan Toronto used its far-reaching powers to pursue pro-growth policies that coordinated the schools, infrastructure, and transportation demands of booming suburbs. Thus, in a Canadian hybrid, expansive European-style regional public authorities were put to American-style privatist ends.

If we examine, for comparison, the north-east corridor of the United States – that megalopolis of cities whose industrial development matched Europe's – we can perceive the emergence, from roughly the 1930s through the 1960s, of four interlocking pillars within the American urban renewal order. First, Americans' tastes in architecture and urban design moved from the Beaux-Arts toward modernism, as seen in both public and private commissions, and throughout popular culture from world's fair exhibitions to Hollywood movie sets. By the 1950s, US corporate headquarters and government buildings alike were announcing that the once radical modernists' aesthetics had gone mainstream.

A second converging element was the professionalization and credentialing of experts in disciplines of "urbanism": modernist architecture, planning, urban design, and related social science. Rooted, like parallel developments in other fields, in the expansion of post-war universities (particularly graduate education), this undergirded the rising social prestige of technocratic elites, a significant number of whom set themselves to solving the "problem" of cities. At Ivy League centers of advanced research, cities became a growing focus of disciplinary interest. Urbanist experts, disdainful of cities' drift hitherto, were nevertheless optimistic about mastery through comprehensive analysis and planning. They saw themselves as agents for fundamental change in the nature of urban life.

In a third key component, during this period Uncle Sam came to town, as it were: Within the context of the expanding reach of federal government, and given the demographic dominance of cities for a generation already, Washington began taking increasing responsibility for urban affairs. Congressional appropriations for overlapping programs aimed at construction stimulus, slum clearance, housing provision, and road building mounted from 1934 through 1968. This urbanizing policy trend reached its pinnacle under Democratic legislative and executive dominance in the 1960s with the initiation of various task forces and programs, culminating in the 1965 creation of an executive cabinet department tasked with cities.

Washington's urban turn meshed with the fourth development, the advancement of ambitious redevelopment schemes by local public entrepreneurs, Robert Moses preeminent among them, who took advantage of new federal largesse and expanded statutory powers. But well beyond any single swashbuckling official, the real epochal shift at the municipal level can be seen in a wave of mid-century regime changes that positioned progressive reformers – usually anti-machine elites – who took modern city planning as their banner. Examples include New York mayor Robert Wagner (son of the senator who framed pioneering urban renewal legislation), Boston mayors John Hynes and John F. Collins, and Philadelphia's Young Turk reform movement, especially the architect-reformer who shaped that city's planning for three decades, Edmund Bacon.

These four distinct elements constituted the pillars of an urban renewal order in the United States – no less than in Germany, Britain, and Canada. Each interconnected tightly with the others, and frequently even combined in the person of a single individual. Many urbanists, particularly planners, moved among academic, federal, and municipal posts, often holding them concurrently. It was not rare to find a technocratic city expert in the position of not only designing projects, but also helping to author enabling legislation, campaigning for mayoral candidates who would support such, implementing plans as appointed municipal officials, and all the while training a new professional class to do the same. With urbanists thus helping stimulate the demand for their own expertise, the urban renewal order was rapidly built up into a seemingly impregnable edifice on the political landscape.

### **Converging Critiques of the Urban Renewal Order**

The urban renewal order was a formidable juggernaut, but its dominance also brought scrutiny and, gradually, a reevaluation of its assumptions. Some of the earliest critiques came from architects and designers who felt uneasy about the results of modernist urbanism, particularly the loss of a certain human-scale perspective and detail. German urbanists increasingly questioned the sufficiency of a rigid functional segregation and the assumptions of decentralization at the expense of a vital urban core. In the words of Werner Hebebrand, “a city has to be more than just functional, and it is precisely this ‘more’ that gives it the glitter and radiance.” In the case of Berlin, new redevelopments contrasted unfavorably against the civic and humane virtues embodied in the nineteenth-century urban fabric.

In the United Kingdom, such reservations found expression in a celebration of British urban vernacular. Particular small-scale elements, ignored by the didacticism of modernist planning, came to embody a sense of civic vitality and historical complexity. Decentralization policies, for example, threatened both the cosmopolitanism of the city and the distinctiveness of the countryside. Beginning in the late 1940s, Britain's Architectural Review championed the

“happy accidents” produced by “a laissez-faire environment” over the visual ideal imposed by an insufficiently sensitive official planning apparatus. By lovingly scrutinizing the vanishing minutiae of their British “townscape,” its contributors were perhaps the first to forcefully point to the gap between promise and reality in modernist redevelopment. Soon thereafter, the English architectural couple of Peter and Alison Smithson led a coup within the preeminent international organization of modern urbanists, challenging the cardinal tenets of functional segregation and questioning the value of new constructions when compared with the older cityscapes they obliterated.

Across the Atlantic, a successor school of urbanism was coalescing in Philadelphia, where the teachings of Lewis Mumford, Louis Kahn, and Robert Venturi moved design beyond modernism’s rigid formalism and ahistorical functionalism. And in that city of shrines to American history, a variation on the urban renewal order emerged, which preserved a place for older cityscape within redevelopment areas. Planner Edmund Bacon’s approach was notable for several reasons, including his partial shift in scale from the bird’s-eye perspective to renewal on a house-to-house basis. Bacon used public urban renewal authorities to take control of blocks designated slums of obsolete structures, and then, to attract private investment, he recast them as desirable for upscale rehabilitation. By thus luring the Main Line suburban elites back to the colonial Society Hill neighborhood, Bacon thereby preserved more residential architecture than any previous urban renewal project. Yet his process still dislocated just as many poor residents; it could even be said that planned gentrification was also born in that historic Philadelphia neighborhood.

As transatlantic émigré architect Denise Scott Brown would discover, design professionals were not the only members of the urbanist establishment voicing serious objections to the urban renewal order. Urban social scientists also linked the circles of critical architects in places like Berlin, London, and Philadelphia. In the later 1950s, when UK and US sociologists began looking at the human effects of urban renewal in London’s East End and Boston’s West End, they found reason for dismay in the pernicious aftermath of relocation and redevelopment. German social scientists expressed even broader misgivings about the authoritarian implications of technocratic planning, as well as the often inhuman scale of modernist urbanism. Theirs was an attempt to identify some legitimate basis upon which to build, literally, in a fledgling democracy. Urban sociologists in West Germany focused their discussion around the concept of the “public sphere,” as a way to get at something worth preserving in a society undergoing rapid structural transformations. At least for some of them, this idea engendered a renewed respect for older urban patterns.

The combined weight of this transnational collection of criticisms, misgivings, and reservations amounted to a nagging unease within the urbanist community during the 1950s. But they did not significantly affect public, or more precisely, official support for urban renewal policies. And though they prefigured practically all the major objections that would ever be made of the urban renewal order, they

were practically unknown beyond the academic, professional conversations of which they were a part. That changed when journalist Jane Jacobs examined urban renewal.

Married to an architect, employed by a leading architectural journal, and patronized by influential figures – particularly New Yorker architecture critic Lewis Mumford, Architectural Forum editor Douglas Haskell, Fortune editor William H. Whyte, Jr., and the Rockefeller Foundation's Chadbourne Gilpatric – Jacobs certainly had one foot firmly in the establishment camp. But she was also an untrained amateur with an anti-authoritarian streak and no intention of deferring to credentialed urbanists. Starting from 1956 with a series of speeches and articles, Jacobs assailed the urbanist establishment with increasingly harsh criticisms of the dubious expertise professed by planners and the counterproductive effects of redevelopment programs. Then in 1961 she published a broadside attack on the entire urban renewal order with *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. In it she blasted the tenets of modernist urbanism and advocated in their place a complete moral inversion, celebrating the underrated hodgepodge of dense, variegated, honeycombed, gradually accumulated urbanity.

Though her points were in line with many objections voiced by professionals during the 1950s, the urbanist establishment, including former supporters, fiercely attacked Jacobs, denouncing her for ignorance, oversimplification, and reactionary intentions. Jacobs's blunt irreverence pushed US urbanists into a defensive position, causing them to close ranks and defend the status quo more rigidly than during the debates of the previous decade. Jacobs's best-selling book came just as popular opposition was beginning to achieve critical mass. Urbanists' alarmed response reflected their awareness that the foundations of the urban renewal order were in fact weakening; for those invested in it, condemning Jacobs became a desperate and ultimately futile last stand.

At the same time, the reception of Jacobs's books outside the United States provides a telling contrast. Her ideas were even more in conflict with the popular, strong planning regimes entrenched in both Great Britain and West Germany by the early 1960s. Yet Europeans took her not as a reactionary anti-planner, but rather as a complement to indigenous conversations. On the one hand these included popular critics, often conservatives, whose attacks on urban renewal paralleled her own. On the other hand, by the mid-1960s, Jacobs was also embraced by powerful exponents of the European urban renewal order, including high-profile public officials. Despite the transatlantic influence of modernist orthodoxy, Jacobs's critique proved less heretical abroad than in the United States. Whereas American planners denounced her vision as naive, she shared some core concepts with urbanists in Europe. (Surprisingly, Jacobs saw her closest intellectual compatriots in the British journalist Ian Nairn and German planner Rudolf Hillebrecht.) This partly explains why the popular embrace of such attitudes subsequently proved so much more disruptive for the urban renewal establishment in the United States than elsewhere.

## **The Transatlantic Collapse of the Urban Renewal Order**

American cities led the way in political backlash against the urban renewal order. The first phase of the revolt took shape around opposition to freeways. Neighborhood groups in New York and San Francisco organized to oppose specific road proposals in the mid-1950s. By 1959 they had defeated arteries planned for Washington Square and the Embarcadero. In the mid-1960s, Philadelphia's crosstown expressway proposal stirred up a vigorous resistance from residents of the South Street corridor, galvanizing accusations of racist planning. As with many comparable US cases, these movements began with grassroots opposition from those directly affected by plans. Their ad hoc coalitions drew together long-term minority residents with white middle-class gentrifiers and gradually gained sympathy among some of the civic elite, including influential members of the media and legal professions. Eventually, publicity catalyzed a general opinion shift, wherein citizens stopped deferring to the authority of planning experts. While many opposition groups began by attacking the planning process directly via hearings, they ultimately succeeded in applying political pressure to elected officials by making dramatic appeals in the court of public opinion. As the 1960s progressed, more mayors abruptly began to overrule the elaborate highway proposals of their planning commissions, and these policy reversals indicated a major urban power shift.

Parallel anti-expressway movements erupted outside the United States. These also had grassroots origins and saw eventual success when elected officials swung behind the highway opponents' positions. Opening salvos in 1959 halted major projects in both London (the Piccadilly redevelopment) and Toronto (the Rosedale crosstown artery), and these emergent urban coalitions gained clout fighting freeways over the following decade. In 1971 a Conservative Ontario provincial government reversed the road-building agenda for central Toronto in response to public pressure; in London in 1973, the Labour Party made the issue central to its campaign platform and proceeded to enact a freeway moratorium upon election to the council majority.

The second wave of popular resistance against the urban renewal order challenged its broad slum clearance agenda. In principle, this came down to contesting the rhetoric of blight, defending maligned neighborhoods by redefining their characteristics as worthy of preservation. In practice, it was often a gritty fight by threatened residents against an entrenched redevelopment machine using every available professional, political, and legal means. Nowhere was this more clear than in the battle waged by New York's West Village neighborhood to lift its designation as a "blighted" slum eligible for redevelopment – terms of debate codified by city officials via new 1961 zoning laws that encouraged sharper segregation of property uses (residential, commercial, etc.), clearance to eradicate obsolete structures, and specific redevelopment proposals featuring high-rise construction.

Coincidentally, West Village resident Jane Jacobs was well prepared to defend the virtues of her community against its detractors, thanks to the arguments honed in her book. More important, she built upon the organizing tactics of the anti-road movement, successfully begun in Greenwich Village just a few years earlier. But the position of Jacobs's West Village community group was complicated by several countervailing pressures. Aside from the city's slum clearance proposal, the neighborhood faced two contradictory trends. First was disinvestment, in the form of dilapidating structures, the flight of white working-class residents, fears of minority immigration, and deindustrialization. At the same time, the community suffered affordability pressures due to speculators and some early signs of gentrification. Instability, much of it traceable to the uncertain aftermath of a collapsing centuries-old Manhattan waterfront transshipment economy, was their volatile lot.

Nevertheless, more than anything previous, the fight against a slum clearance proposal drew the neighborhood together and gave residents pride in a distinct community identity. Theirs proved a fierce battle for survival, confronting the urban renewal order directly with a multilevel strategy – vigorous grassroots organizing, legal challenges in court, effective use of public relations, savvy alliance building, and pressure on elected officials – which cumulatively staggered the “clearance-for-profit” approach pioneered by Robert Moses. Those citizens succeeded in driving a wedge, from the bottom up, into the alliance between planning experts, politicians, and private developers. The momentum of that success dovetailed with New York's nascent historic preservation movement (which had emerged separately out of concern for architectural treasures like Pennsylvania Station and Jefferson Market Courthouse) to enact district-wide protections.

In the wake of ad hoc freeway revolts and the emergence of pro-neighborhood groups like the West Villagers, the final phase in the fall of the urban renewal order was its rapid, systemic collapse on both sides of the Atlantic.

London witnessed a progression from anti-roadway and pro-neighborhood protests to a broad political sea change. A redevelopment proposal for the Covent Garden neighborhood (prepared in 1965–68) provoked grassroots resistance from residents. The resulting controversy touched off a crisis of faith throughout London's planning establishment, spurring hearings and even protest resignations across the spectrum, from a leftist planning officer to a Conservative borough representative. Authorities withdrew the plan in 1973 in favor of a new approach emphasizing preservation, at least as far as the neighborhood's architecture was concerned. This occurred against a backdrop of structural weakening for long-standing political coalitions; in particular, Labour dominance of the capital city was diluted by the amalgamation of the Greater London Council to include conservative, outlying areas. After Labour politicians regained control of the council on an anti-freeway platform in 1973, local leaders in both parties signaled a turn away from the urban renewal order. Legislation from the national government also moved toward neighborhood improvement after Labour's return to power in 1974. The election of Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1979

ushered in an unequivocal ideological break with strategic planning, urban and otherwise.

In New York as early as 1962, media portrayals and project reversals suggested a shift in the balance of power in the politics of planning. At the same time, federal legislative changes, incorporating more rehabilitation and resident participation, reflected pressures filtering up from the grass roots to Washington. While perhaps intended to blunt opposition, in practice the effect of these national policy responses was that highway and redevelopment projects increasingly bogged down, strengthening the hand of critics of the urban renewal order. After a rapid denouement, renewal regimes definitively fell in US cities: The Young Turk reform movement was marginalized from Philadelphia government, starting with a schism within the Democratic Party (during the 1963 primary), through the first election of a Republican district attorney in 15 years (Arlen Specter in 1966), to the rise of Mayor Frank Rizzo and the resignation of Edmund Bacon (1970–71). In Boston, Louise Day Hicks's emergence and near mayoral victory in 1967 as an angry neighborhood defender reflected common trends.

This new neighborhood empowerment, however, was criticized as incapable of anything but opposition and basic self-preservation, unable to advance any positive agenda. That criticism was not entirely fair, but as various local and national elements gave way to the backlash, few alternatives to urban renewal order appeared. This incoherence was at least partially an effect of that perennial wedge of US politics, race. The divisive mayoral insurgencies of Frank Rizzo in Philadelphia and Louise Day Hicks in Boston activated racial resentments among working-class whites, just as successful Republican congressional candidates and even the campaign of presidential nominee Richard Nixon began doing between 1966 and 1968. And though racial positioning and rhetoric were entirely absent from Jacobs's pro-neighborhood arguments, as the 1960s wore on even the New York liberal coalition she confronted was fractured by the animosities of a racially divisive teachers' strike, as well as violent undertones of rising street crime and fears of large-scale rioting. Racism proved a ubiquitous, corrosive presence in US urban politics, breaking down old coalitions but simultaneously inhibiting the formation of sound new ones.

By contrast, novel political configurations were precisely what materialized in Canada. Having exiled herself to Toronto in 1968, Jane Jacobs might have thought she had stepped through the looking glass: Conservative ratepayers' (i.e. property owners') groups forged a citywide, cross-class partnership with radical tenant organizers to protect Toronto neighborhoods from intensive private overdevelopment and insensitive public projects. This unlikely alliance, growing from 1969 to dominate the city council and mayoralty by 1972, gave a rebuke to the prevailing Metro planning priorities. As in the United States and Britain, an insurgent movement had pushed aside the urban renewal order. In a crucial distinction, however, Toronto's opposition unified behind a new civic coalition with an alternative urban *Leitbild* and eventually, a mandate to execute it.

## **Aftermath(s) Ideological Polarization and Political Struggle after the Fall of the Urban Renewal Order**

Keying off popular backlash, a circle of American policy intellectuals, based in Boston but influential in Washington, came increasingly to question the liberal project in cities by the mid-1960s. From the Joint Center for Urban Studies of Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, figures including James Q. Wilson, Edward Banfield, Martin Anderson, and Daniel P. Moynihan staked out a terrain of skepticism that eventually attracted the label “neoconservative.” Consequently, in addition to confronting a rash of anti-renewal protests and even race riots, the country’s first cabinet secretary on urban affairs found not only his mandate but also his intellectual rationale seriously challenged before even taking office in 1966. His academic critics, all former liberals, foresaw at best a bleak future of harsh law-and-order prescriptions.

Yet theirs was not the only proposed alternative to the urban renewal order. The New Left appeared on US college campuses in the early 1960s as a youthful impulse that included a rediscovery of poverty and various progressive politics generally submerged during the early cold war. And New Left criticisms infiltrated via social scientists into the training grounds of professional urbanists, first and foremost at the University of Pennsylvania, imparting a renewed, bottom-up social consciousness to questions of urban planning. Professor Paul Davidoff articulated a vision of neighborhood advocacy that inspired and radicalized a young cohort of planners. One of them, Denise Scott Brown, made early attempts to reconcile activism with urban design.

Neighborhood activists were not waiting around for theoretical frameworks or scholarly approval to realize that they might be their own best advocates in questions of urbanism. By the beginning of the 1960s, a number of New York City community groups had developed their own neighborhood plans, in contrast to the official ones from the city’s planning commission. The most elaborate, and ultimately most successful, was a plan for affordable housing developed by residents of the West Village immediately after defeating the city’s slum clearance proposal in 1962. The citizens produced a proposal that contravened nearly every practice of the urban renewal order. Their plan faced opposition from officials during the waning administration of Mayor Robert Wagner but eventually received a green light from a sympathetic Mayor John Lindsay in 1966.

After 1964, a vanguard of young urbanists started pouring into the neighborhood fray armed with New Left ideals, lending technical skills and professionals’ legitimacy to community groups seeking to challenge urban renewal proposals from Cambridge to Harlem to South Philadelphia. In the latter case, Denise Scott Brown assisted the “Main Street of black Philadelphia” to present itself as a neighborhood worthy of dignity rather than destruction. As a result, Edmund Bacon’s last major unrealized contribution to a reimaged Center City – the proposal to redevelop South Street – came to grief right on the doorstep of his flagship Society Hill project.

The flourishing partnership between New Left urbanists and community groups drew sustenance initially from private philanthropies, which provided seed grants for radical planners and architects to practice in poor communities. After 1964, such experiments relied on government support via the anti-poverty initiatives of President Lyndon Johnson's administration. By 1966, advocacy planning had been incorporated into the major professional and educational organizations of the urbanist establishment, despite its radical repudiation of the technocratic expertise on which those institutions were founded. This perspective even achieved (relative) popular recognition by 1968, when the university student movement invoked community-based planning during campus sit-ins.

By 1968, the neoconservative camp was increasingly espousing an interpretation of US cities as irredeemable, without hope of any effective government or intellectual response to their unraveling. That urban policy pessimism – expressed under the shorthand of urban crisis – became an important touchstone for conservative attacks on Great Society liberalism in general. Even before they found success at the ballot box in 1968, figures like Anderson and Moynihan shaped an urban policy for the Nixon campaign, emphasizing the withdrawal of federal engagement from cities. Thus, it would be the most cynical of responses that was empowered as the federal successor regime to the US urban renewal order.

One former official in the Johnson administration's Department of Housing and Urban Development described the period as "the Waterloo of planning." The New Left urbanist vision of an alternative withered, a fate decided not by the results of grassroots engagements but rather via an electoral silent majority, taken by President Richard Nixon's administration as a mandate for the top-down termination of Great Society urban programs upon which those experiments depended. Projects, careers, and whole neighborhoods that were invigorated during the heyday of New Left urbanism met disappointing fates by the early 1970s. Some, like the West Village housing plan in New York, were completed with difficulty and in a diminished form. Architects working with the Harlem community never witnessed the construction of any plans. Philadelphia's South Street neighborhood, after defeating highway and redevelopment proposals, found few public or private resources available for rehabilitation. The advocacy planners who assisted neighborhood groups subsequently found hardly any professional avenues in that direction, and most disappeared into other specialties.

In Britain, New Left urbanist experiments mirrored their American counterparts. During the mid-1970s, a radical planner who resigned from the London planning department organized architecture students to assist Covent Garden residents advocating reuse of abandoned industrial buildings; the council even adopted a plan for one such site that grew out of the community group. But after 1979, the Thatcher administration's free-market ideology offered only the harshest rebuff to liberal and leftist alike: the complete dissolution of a multilevel urban renewal order, going so far as the abolition of London's municipal government. As in the

United States, those who dreamed of a more sensitive version of urban renewal were left with none at all.

By contrast, Toronto in essence institutionalized many impulses of New Left urbanism, reconciling elements of the urban renewal order and its critics. In the mid-1970s, a new mayor and reform council undertook a massive core area study, aimed at protecting the central city while growing in a controlled way. Public authorities still executed large-scale, top-down, rapid redevelopments, such as the brownfield project that became the St. Lawrence Neighborhood. But even this provided a sharp break, applying a neo-traditional urbanism that rejected the high modernism of previous projects and reaffirmed the street patterns and mixed use of the existing city. Urban renewal would continue in Toronto, but the terms were completely transformed.

In Berlin, the old urban renewal order remained entrenched into the 1970s, with broad majorities welcoming a strong hand from planning authorities. While some German urbanists encouraged expanding resident participation, the same professionals expressly rejected the adversarial role of the Anglo-American advocacy planners. Despite some gestures toward preservation by architects in the late 1960s, complete modernist redevelopment predominated in renewal areas. But the grass roots became more restive over the 1970s, as radical protests and squatters, particularly in Berlin's Kreuzberg neighborhood, demanded that officials attend to residents' preferences for older structures. Citizens collaborated with urbanists between 1978 and 1984 to rehabilitate dozens of apartment buildings as models of "gentle urban renewal," showcased in an international architecture exhibition sponsored by the city. Their reaffirmation of Berlin's traditional cityscape provided officials with a template for the citywide "critical reconstruction" of the restored German capital following its reunification in 1990. Thus, in a remarkable set of bookends, the violent ruptures which scarred that tumultuous city in the first half of the twentieth century contrasted with a comparatively stable transition subsequently. The cradle of modernist urban renewal evolved into a model of humane urbanism.

## **Acknowledgment**

The author gratefully acknowledges permission to reprint excerpts first published in *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal: Post-war Urbanism from New York to Berlin* (© 2011 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved).

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

## PART V

“We are all Jacobseans” – Are We?

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

# Chapter 13

## Jane Jacobs 2.0 – Old Systems Need New Ideas: New Forces of Decline and Regeneration

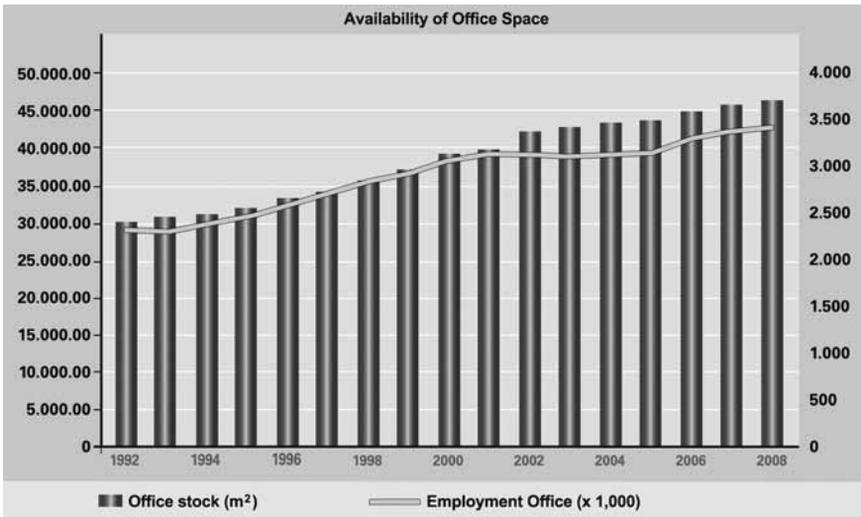
Birgit Dulski and Gerben van Straaten

After many years of seemingly unlimited development in Dutch cities, the market has become traditional and supply-driven, allowing no innovations. The financing of new projects is based on statistics and was, until recently, relatively easily obtained. However, reliance on statistics has led to backward-looking practices with little insight into the future, and even less insight into the changing needs of customers. This has resulted in inflated values and the needs of users being neglected. The long period of growth has come to a sudden halt. When the economic crisis struck, office and business markets as well as the residential market were hit. Real estate values dropped, sales decreased dramatically and vacancy rates went sky high. At the same time non-financial values such as sustainability, livability, safety, and ecology became more important. How well have we city planners, urban developers, researchers and politicians prepared our cities for the future? In our shortsightedness we overlooked resilience and went after building volume instead, which has resulted in the current crisis.

### **Forces of Decline**

In the Netherlands, as in most western economies, we have known decennia of flourishing markets, leading us to a traditional and cautious construction and development sector; if innovations and changes were ever introduced, their implementation was a slow and difficult process. They tended to be technical and cost-cutting measures, while real economical, social and other innovations fell short. There was simply no need to change processes or products. The suppliers market did everything right for the producers. The long-time bull market led to top-down behavior at all levels of the process. City planning, urban design and architecture, finance, and marketing, along with the city governments' practice of land banking – were all acting from the top down, ignoring the end-users of developments. It was simply not common practice to design the city for its citizens.

The following will demonstrate how supply driven we have become. Changes in the sector took place around the turn of the millennium, the full extent of which



**Figure 13.1 Office stock (dark) and office jobs (light) in the Netherlands during the period 1992–2008**

Source: © CBS, R. Brak.

has become apparent in the last two to three years. Although different statistics must have indicated that the need for new buildings had decreased since 2000, the same practice of using statistics in the financing of new developments, based on past track records, continued, thus preventing an effective reaction to market changes, as illustrated in Figure 13.1. Too many new buildings were supplied to the market – and we could have and should have known that demand was insufficient. The recent mortgage and banking bubble was bound to burst and an economic crisis imminent for us to realize that things may never be the same as they were a few years ago.

What happened? As in many other countries, the construction sector was strongly affected by the economic crisis. It could no longer escape anyone's attention: the value of real estate came to a halt, the rate of house and office building sales dropped dramatically, more and more buildings remained unused and vacancy rates went sky high. Consequently, far fewer new buildings are now being developed. The demand for architects and building contractors has decreased, resulting in a significantly higher number of foreclosures and bankruptcies. Simultaneously, we are facing an ecological crisis; people have become aware of the need to care about our environment and communities seek to live a more sustainable life. Dutch municipalities have set high standards aimed at reducing carbon emissions. Housing corporations fear that people living in houses without insulation will not be able to pay the rising energy costs in the future nor will be able to afford the cost of renovations. Moreover, people's behavior has changed:

more people work at home (for some of the time), shopping can be done over the internet, and the proportion of the working population is ever decreasing with the aging demographic bubble. In the wake of this crisis, it has become apparent that we did not plan our inner cities to meet the needs of the users. For many this has always been a known fact. Jane Jacobs already noted that there is not enough mixed use, we lack effective densities, authenticity has not been conserved, we have insufficient multi-use sidewalks, and there are too few eyes on the street. Most importantly, we have lacked bottom-up and gradual development. If we look at how this has affected our cities, we must conclude that there is a dire need for more Jane Jacobs.

Many new houses and business parks were built on the outskirts of Dutch cities, thus avoiding contact with the intricate urban fabric and mixed uses Jane Jacobs had advocated. Examples of the Dutch approach include new residential projects in the “VINEX neighborhoods.”<sup>1</sup> Most of these neighborhoods and monotonous business parks were built to inadequate architectural standards. Design concepts which had proved to generate profits were repeated over and over. No one asked the buyers and users what they really wanted. Variations were limited, as it was expected that changes to the design would cause unpredictable costs and no guarantee of recovering those costs.<sup>2</sup> These developments are examples of a perfect suppliers market. Looking at the “generators for diversity,” as described by Jane Jacobs (1961) in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* it can be seen that three of the four generators are missing. There are no mixed primary uses, no aged buildings and the concentration of people is not sufficiently dense. The only generator that, in some cases, was established, is small blocks. Are these the places living and working people dream of? Most people would probably disagree. However, they are not the neighborhoods that potentially will develop into the “lively, well-used streets and other public spaces” described by Jane Jacobs. Although the VINEX program had started in 1995 with high idealistic ambitions, its reputation had degenerated significantly by 2011. The main criticism was that the VINEX neighborhoods lacked the density and diversity of cities. Again, there was too little focus on the needs of potential buyers.<sup>3</sup> Most VINEX neighborhoods

---

1 The “Vierde Nota Extra” (VINEX) is a memorandum on spatial planning by the Dutch Ministry of Housing from 1991. In the VINEX memorandum principles for the construction of new housing areas are described for the period 1995 and beyond. For a number of Dutch cities the sites for the new neighborhoods were included in the memorandum, although formally the regions and municipalities had to determine these locations. The locations for large housing developments, in many cases on the outskirts of the cities, are called “VINEX-wijken,” which means “VINEX neighborhoods.”

2 Private owners were, after years of growth, confronted with decreasing values: According to the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS) 30 percent fewer homes were sold in 2009 compared to 2008. The price of private houses decreased 2009 at 5.6 percent.

3 These two criticisms are mentioned in an evaluation of the quality of VINEX neighborhoods, carried out by Rigo in 1999. More information about the evaluation can be found at: [http://www.vinex-locaties.nl/Infocorner/vinex\\_kwaliteit.htm](http://www.vinex-locaties.nl/Infocorner/vinex_kwaliteit.htm)

lack lively street life, diversity, convenience, and vitality. Jane Jacobs was well acquainted with this type of neighborhood. “To wish a vital urban life might somehow spring up here is to play with daydreams. The place is an economic desert” (Jacobs, 1961: p. 145). This is how she describes the neighborhood of Mrs. Kostritsky, who complains about the residential monotony of her area. In February 2011 Dutch experts warned in the daily newspaper *Algemeen Dagblad*:

VINEX neighborhoods risk turning into ghettos. If municipalities do not invest soon in the VINEX neighborhoods, highly-educated inhabitants will leave and the neighborhoods will die ... The VINEX neighborhoods on the outskirts of the cities are popular with two-income families with young children, but older youths are bored in these neighborhoods and cause problems. In many neighborhoods inhabitants complain about burglaries, threats, vandalism, and nuisance (NU.nl, 2011).

When Jane Jacobs wrote *Death and Life* populations in most western countries were growing and expected to grow further. In 2011 we are facing an aging population in the Netherlands, as are many other western countries. In the near future we will be confronted with a shrinking population instead of a growing one. The expected shrinkage will affect people’s choice of where to live, probably increasing the options, of which a pleasant neighborhood will be an important criterion. Positive elements such as well-run neighborhood parks (with additional facilities for swimming, boating, sports, etc.) and cultural heritage buildings increase the residents’ satisfaction in their neighborhood, according to research by the former Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM, 2002). The question of which improvements inhabitants wished for in their neighborhoods covered a wide range of interventions. Notably, housing improvements were not frequently mentioned whereas improving neighborhood facilities and street safety were of greater concern. Not surprisingly, in neighborhoods where vandalism and damage occur in public spaces, residents criticized the lack of public safety. Similar criticism applied to office buildings. For decades business parks were built in isolated locations on the outskirts of Dutch cities, monofunctional and inaccessible by public transport. Many of these buildings are now vacant because they do not meet office workers’ requirements for their places of work. According to Maurits de Hoog, professor of urban design at the TU Delft’s Faculty of Architecture, amenities are given more and more priority (Versluis, 2011). People want to shop, work and enjoy attractive surroundings. Work and leisure mingle more and more. The historic centers of Dutch cities attract entertainment as well as workplace uses, so freelancers and small enterprises prefer to settle there instead of in the recently built sterile business parks. Dutch city center rents are high and, even though they offer less space or comfort, more and more office workers choose these locations instead of spacious buildings in the outskirts. To have lunch around the corner with a

client in a nice restaurant, to take a bike for visiting customers, a railway station within walking distance – all these are greater deciding factors for this group than size or comfort of the spaces in which they work. The number of freelancers in the Netherlands has doubled within the past ten years and is expected to rise further. As a result, the requirements for office space are changing. Furthermore, it is anticipated that more large companies will prefer city locations. They, too, want to be amidst restaurants, museums, and historic buildings or in close proximity to a major railway station.

We have shown in Figure 13.1 that, until the turn of the millennium, office space supply and office employment demands in the Netherlands were increasing equally. About ten years ago the situation changed. Office employment stagnated while office space continued to grow at the same rate (or higher) as before. This situation only became obvious when the economic crisis hit us, and now panic in the marketplace is rising. The amount of vacant office space has become a significant threat to our economy. Recent clippings from Dutch newspapers include the following statements. “EIB [Economic Institute for Building]: Almost 10 percent of offices structurally empty” (*Vastgoedmarkt*, 10 July 2010); “CBRE Group: Absorption of office market still declining” (*Vastgoedmarkt*, 8 November 2010); “Amsterdam cancels building plans for houses and offices” (*Vastgoedmarkt*, 7 October 2010); “Taskforce: Build no more new offices in the Netherlands!” (*Vastgoedmarkt*, 30 November 2010); “Cities demand tax breaks from central government” (*Volkskrant*, 22 March 2011); “Make (the rules for) conversions from offices to homes simpler” (*Financieel Dagblad*, 23 March 2011); “Empty offices pose enormous risk for banks” (*Financieel Dagblad*, 22 March 2011); “25 percent of offices unused by 2015” (*Financieel Dagblad*, 25 March 2011).

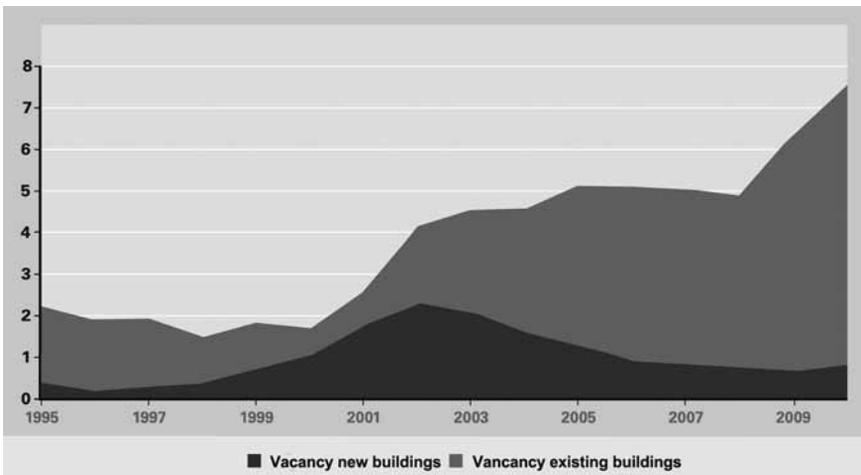
On the Dutch market for office and business space structural vacancy is a fast growing problem.

The solution of structural vacant buildings in our country will only be effective if more scarcity can be created. Therefore only a limited number of new business areas and office buildings should be allowed and only under strict conditions (NVM, 2009).

The year 2010 was a bad year for the Dutch market for commercial space. In 2010, no less than 13.5 million square meters of commercial space was available for rent or sale, 13 percent more than the year before. This became manifest through a survey by NVM Business. As a result of the enormous supply, the rental price for new spaces as well as existing spaces has gone down. Especially in the Randstad region prices have plunged. At the same time new supply has increased by 13 percent. The agglomerations of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Tilburg were the prime contributors to the oversupply. A general problem is

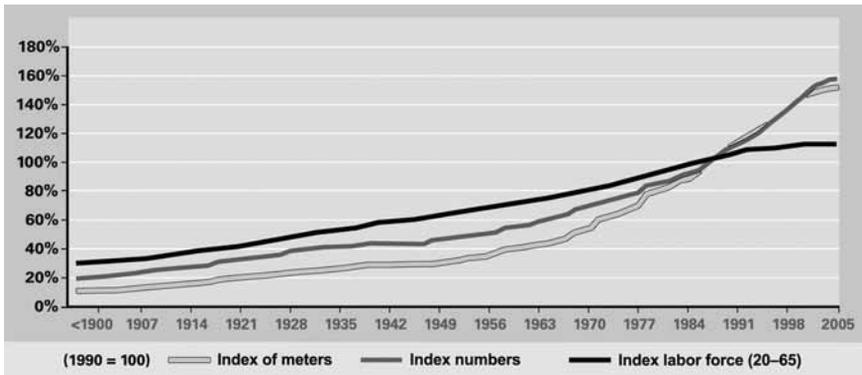
caused by the empty and outdated buildings. It is expected that these lots will only find temporary uses, which will have a negative effect on the surrounding area (NVM).

While this clearly describes the state of affairs on the Dutch real estate market and in the realm of urban development, the concluding sentence by the NVM, the Netherlands' largest association of real estate agents and experts, is not something Jane Jacobs would have agreed with. To create new impulses for the urban economy we have already learned that "Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings" (Jacobs, 1961: p. 188). Unfortunately, industry is inclined to demolish old buildings to make room for new construction rather than reuse old buildings. Many developments are still being built, irrespective of growing vacancies and in defiance of the need for scarcity. This is counterproductive for the general vitalization of local economies. However, it is not only the real estate industry that seems to be stuck in the rebuilding mode instead of adopting a mindset of reuse. Cities build their budgets by monetizing land, and their traditional approach is to achieve this through new developments. Scarcity is affected negatively on the demand side as well. There is less demand for big office complexes as more and more independent professionals work from home or from meeting places. The average size of a workspace has decreased in parallel to the need for office and business space due to new economic and technical developments. Thus, the effects of information and communications technology solutions are manifest.



**Figure 13.2** Vacancies of new buildings (dark) and existing buildings (light) in the Netherlands in the period 1995–2009

Source: © EIB 2010.



**Figure 13.3 Illustration of a 100-year bull market: Unused new buildings (dark) and unused existing buildings (light)**

Source: © Dataland, Van der Gijp, CBS.

The effects of reduced demand for office space were already clear, but it took the industry too long to react.

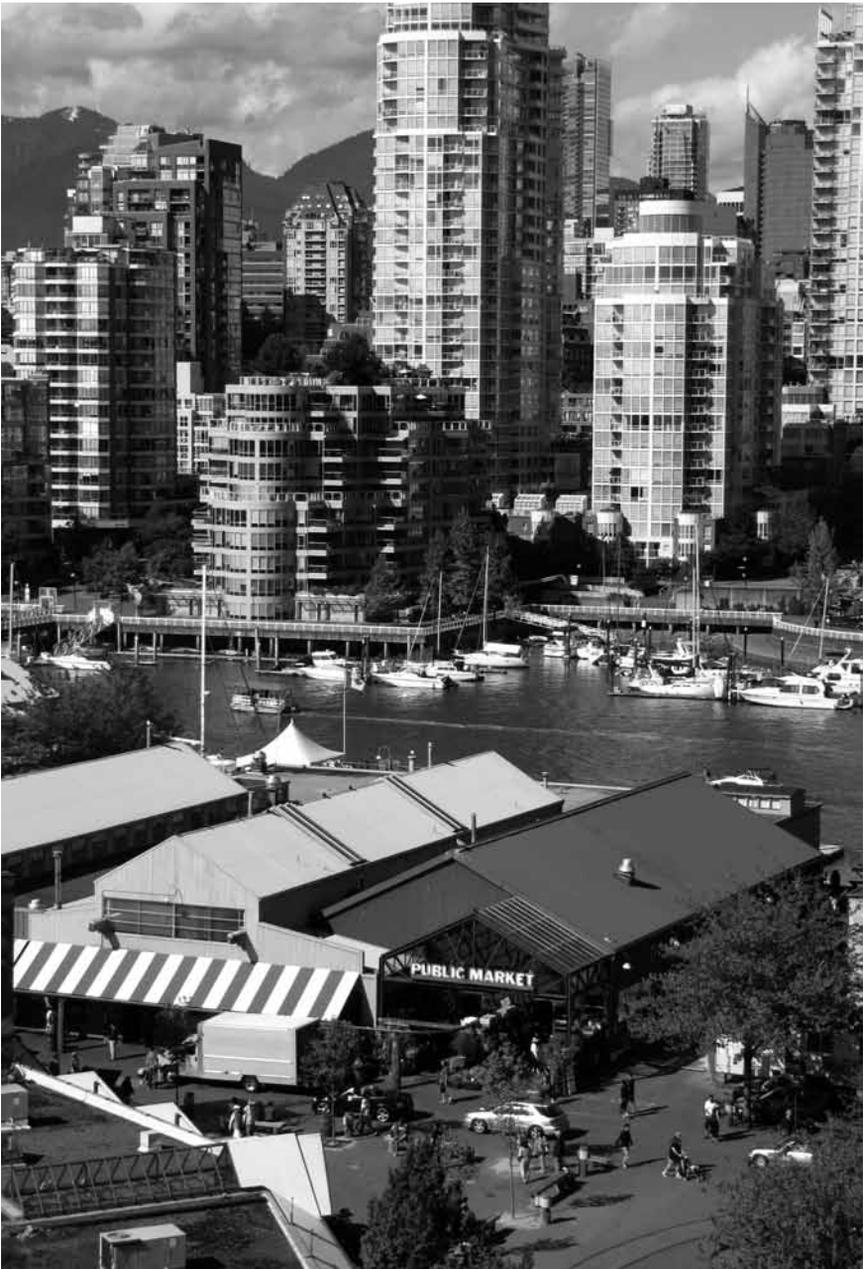
The real risk of the vacancy rates is not associated with the effect on rates. Many (institutional) investors have put their money into buildings that are now vacant and do not deliver positive performance of their portfolio. This holds back the value development of all our pensions and securities, which creates a lot of the stress on the banks, as the vacancy rate has a large impact on the loan performance of their big clients. If vacancy rates go up, our banks may go down.

### New Forces that Require New Attitudes

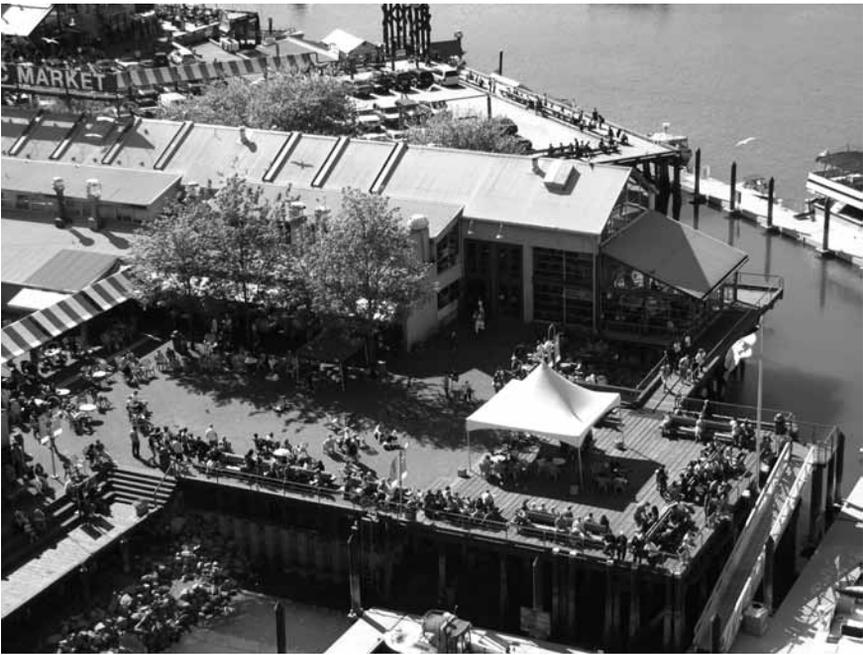
Liveable and resilient cities have become the new target since the market is more demand-driven. However, our cities do not answer the needs of the users; they need to become more efficient. Presently cities do not have enough mixed uses, effective density, authenticity, and multi-use sidewalks as well as bottom-up and gradual development. According to Jane Jacobs, “Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody” (1961: p. 238).

Furthermore, sustainability and environmentally sensitive development has become a necessity since Dutch municipalities are setting high standards for carbon emissions and other issues.<sup>4</sup> It is clear that the goals cannot be reached,

4 In line with other European countries, the Dutch government aims to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions by 20 percent by 2020 compared to 1990. By then 14 percent of the energy demand has to be produced in a sustainable way. Many Dutch municipalities have set even higher targets. The municipalities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, for instance, have the



**Figure 13.4** Setting Granville Island Vancouver, with view towards downtown  
*Source:* © Gerben van Straten.



**Figure 13.5 Granville Island Vancouver, activities under the bridge**

*Source:* © Gerben van Straten.

unless considerable effort is also made with regard to the existing building stock. The Dutch target of reducing CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions from existing buildings can only be achieved in a multi-party approach, requiring cooperation between several stakeholders such as property owners (both private owners and housing corporations), governmental bodies and tenants/users. Unlike in the past, many Dutch companies now consider the realization of sustainability ambitions to be inevitable. They want to present themselves as companies that take responsibility and employ sustainability to create a positive image of themselves. They also recognize the business opportunities sustainability has to offer. This can be illustrated by the results of a recent study that focused on the direct effects of investments in energy-saving measures on the rental prices and the value of Dutch office buildings (Kok and Jennen, 2011). The analysis of 1,100 transactions shows that the average rental price of non-sustainable office buildings (energy label

---

ambition to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions within the city limits by 40 percent by the year 2025 compared to 1990. The municipalities of Utrecht and Den Haag aim at a reduction of 30 percent by the year 2020. As in other European countries, the Dutch regulations for energy performance in new buildings are getting stricter year by year, in line with the standards set by the European Union.

D or lower) is 6.5 percent lower than the prices fetched for comparable office buildings with a “green label” (energy label A-C). Another conclusion was that higher rental prices are paid for office buildings with a wide range of facilities within walking distance. This is another factor contributing to the sustainability of a business, as traffic is reduced. The importance of facilities and amenities is increasing. Not only companies but also people in their private lives have become more environmentally aware and are realizing the need for a more sustainable lifestyle. Higher costs are mainly anticipated due to rising energy prices in the coming years. These conditions offer a great opportunity for a multi-party approach towards more sustainable cities, an issue that was not foreseen by Jane Jacobs but which plays an important role in current city planning and rehabilitation projects. The Center of Sustainability of the Nyenrode Business Universiteit supports companies and government bodies to achieve their sustainability ambitions. For this, special research projects are being conducted and “learning networks” established.<sup>5</sup> A common characteristic of all these initiatives is an approach that is based on the (deferred) needs, interests, and desires of people, which is called a “Merger of Interests” (Hal, 2009). The idea behind the Merger of Interests is that sustainability measures cannot be enforced. Instead, solutions must be sought that offer win-win situations. Therefore, all proposed sustainable measures should contribute to something people seek for themselves, no matter whether this is driven by financial expectations, environmental awareness or any other motivation. If people really want something, they will do their best to ensure that they can get it funded and find solutions to create the necessary financial budgets.<sup>6</sup>

### **Three Principles**

In the Netherlands, as in other western countries, the recent conditions for urban development (economic crisis, ecological reset, changes in people’s behavior) will force profound changes on the construction and development sectors. Based on the analysis described above, Walas Concepts and the Center for Sustainability of the Nyenrode Business Universiteit suggest three founding principles:

---

5 In 2010 the CfS launched the “Sustainable Cultural Heritage” three-year network which involves the participation of local and regional government bodies. In the same year, and based on a similar formula, the “Smart and Quick” network was initiated by the CfS with a focus on sustainable rehabilitation of houses built in the period 1950–1970. Members of this network are housing corporations and companies. The members of both networks exchange experiences and discuss the results generated by the joint research projects so that these can be implemented in their future strategies.

6 The American marketing expert Godin calls this “otaku,” which describes something that is more than a hobby but a little less than an obsession. Also, the vision of Dan Ariely, the American professor on behavioral economics, is in line with that idea. He notes that people who are emotionally aroused (e.g. “greedy”) react totally differently than they would expect for themselves in an unexcited situation.

- Results of the past are not a guarantee for the future: We do have to find other ways to reflect on the economic situation – taking account of the new circumstances we can no longer base our top-down decisions on statistics and quantitative aspects but have to look for new financial systems, qualities, and new values in which sustainability will play an indispensable role.
- Make cities more effective economically and ecologically: We must stop building office buildings and houses outside cities, discontinue with new buildings in our city areas, when there are so many unused and vacant buildings around. More and more recent projects in the Netherlands have been concentrated in the city. Many Dutch cities have historic centers that are appreciated by inhabitants and visitors. It is unlikely that unused office buildings and unwanted houses will be found there. People want to experience a city; they want to combine working, shopping, recreation, meeting friends, etc. Many historic centers offer these possibilities. Let us now concentrate on optimizing our existing potential.
- Rethink gentrification: Recently we have seen processes of gentrification in many cities. Less attractive neighborhoods may be interesting for artists, students, and small business because they offer suitable buildings at affordable prices. Once those pioneers have created their own infrastructure, other people will follow. The value of properties will increase, unused



**Figure 13.6 Blacksmith at work, Tilburg Smederij 013 re-use of industrial area**

*Source:* © Gerben van Straten.



**Figure 13.7 Public at Spoorzone Tilburg, Netherlands**

*Source:* © Gerben van Straten.

buildings given new functions and refurbishments are carried out. How can we encourage those renewal processes in a way that does not push out the old inhabitants? We may have to rethink the gentrification processes instead of gentrifying the neighborhood and its buildings, we might rather focus on the gentrification, improvement of the existing community that lives there. This will only be achieved with more bottom-up projects and increased participation.

In this context Jane Jacobs's ideas are highly up-to-date.

### **Gentrifying (with) the People, Not the Structures**

Under the seeming disorder of the old city, wherever the old city is working successfully, is a marvelous order for maintaining the safety of the streets and the freedom of the city. It is a complex order. Its essence is intricacy of sidewalk use, bringing with it a constant succession of eyes. This order is all composed of movement and change, and although it is life, not art, we may fancifully call it art form of the city and liken it to dance – not a simple-minded precision dance with everyone kicking up at the same time, twirling in unison and bowing off en masse, but to an intricate ballet in which the individual dancers and ensembles

all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce each other and compose an orderly whole. The ballet of the good city ... never repeats itself from place to place, and in any one place is always replete with new improvisations (Jacobs, 1961: p. 50).

This quote from *Death and Life*, and others like it, lets us appreciate what Jane Jacobs would protest about in cities today. The top-down behavior and the supply driven market, and with it top-down planning, financing, legal structures, and planning processes as well as design and programming, are contradictory to what a city should provide. Relying on the past, in fact on statistics, does not guarantee any success in the future. To the contrary, it may throw sand in our eyes and we may realize too late that cities need new ways for their regeneration. Those old traditions are too self-serving. The cities we are developing are too much of a construct; we do not let them develop as organisms. We need to change our ways. Radical new thinking has to start somewhere. Today we are searching for it in many different places when, in fact, radical new thinking had started in 1961 with the ideas of Jane Jacobs. Among other things, she has taught us that the following specific focal points need to be addressed:

1. Mixed use.
2. Short blocks.
3. High density (effective density).
4. Eyes on the street, no eyes from the street.
5. Safe sidewalks, public space for everyone.
6. Bottom-up community planning.
7. Authenticity and heritage.
8. Cities as ecosystems.
9. Local economies.
10. Gradual finance, slow growth.

## Lessons Learned

It is expected that the focus in Dutch cities will shift to existing neighborhoods in the future. Clearly people prefer the existing well-functioning neighborhoods as both their work and their living environments. The amenity of the neighborhood will become an even more important criterion for choosing where to work and live. There will be much less new construction in the coming years, and if new buildings are constructed, then mostly they will be in existing neighborhoods, instead of in new suburbs, as would have been the case in previous years. For all future developments we will have to keep in mind that there is no guarantee that the new or renovated buildings will be directly sold or tenants found for them quickly. In order to avoid them being vacant we have to pay more attention to the interests of (future) owners and tenants, whether they be residents or other users.

Conditions have changed since 1961, but still the ideas of Jane Jacobs can help us to create attractive, diversified neighborhoods. The three principles and ten focal points may be the start of a “Jane Jacobs 2.0” approach, to help us bring her ideas into current practice. The future will show whether we have learned our lessons. However, the first promising initiatives have begun.

## Bibliography

- Hal, A. van, 2009. The Merger of Interests: On Sustainability and the Building Sector. Speech pronounced in acceptance of the Professorship for Sustainable Building and Development, 27 August 2009. Breukelen: Nyenrode Business Universiteit, Center for Sustainability.
- Jacobs, J., 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Kok, N. and Jennen, M., 2011. De Waarde van Energiezuinigheid en Bereikbaarheid. Een analyse van de Nederlandse Kantorenmarkt. [Online]. Available at <http://www.duurzaamvastgoedportaal.nl>.
- Financieel Dagblad*, 22 March 2011.
- Financieel Dagblad*, 23 March 2011.
- Financieel Dagblad*, 25 March 2011.
- NVM Nederlandse Vereniging voor Makelaars, 2009. Marktinformatie, 2009. Structurele leegstand toenemend probleem. [Online]. Available at: <http://nieuws.nvm.nl/business/marktinformatie/leegstand.aspx>.
- NVM Nederlandse Vereniging voor Makelaars. [Online]. Available at: [http://nieuws.nvm.nl/business/marktinformatie/aanbod\\_bedrijfsruimte\\_naar\\_recordhoogte.aspx](http://nieuws.nvm.nl/business/marktinformatie/aanbod_bedrijfsruimte_naar_recordhoogte.aspx).
- NU.nl. 21 February 2011. Algemeen/Binnenland. Vinex-wijk dreigt getto te worden. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.nu.nl/binnenland/2451610/vinex-wijk-dreigt-getto-wordsen.html>.
- Vastgoedmarkt*, 10 July 2010.
- Vastgoedmarkt*, 7 October 2010.
- Vastgoedmarkt*, 8 November 2010.
- Vastgoedmarkt*, 30 November 2010.
- Verluis, K., 2011. Thuiswerken verandert de stad. *Intermediair*. 23 February 2011. Available at: <http://www.intermediair.nl/artikel/het-nieuwe-werken/226828/thuiswerken-verandert-de-stad.html>.
- Volkscrant*, 22 March 2011.
- VROM, 2002. Ministerie voor Volkshuisvesting Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieu. WoonOnderzoek [Housing Research].

## Chapter 14

# “That is the way the cookie crumbles” – New Paradigm Changes in Times of Globalization and Deregulation

Friedhelm Fischer and Uwe Altrock

Many books and articles have recently drawn our attention to a number of paradigm changes surrounding the Jane Jacobs phenomenon. This chapter begins with a brief look at the notion of paradigm changes as such and then continues with observations on recent developments in this field in the context of accelerating centralization of capital and globalization.

### **On the Nature of Paradigm Changes**

So we first turn to the question: What is the nature of paradigm changes? Why do we have the recurring experience of suddenly seeing the world in a new light, from a new perspective, out of a new window? And what can we say about the view we had before? “Was everything wrong?” as Hannover’s planner of the post-war period, Rudolf Hillebrecht, asked in a speech and an essay in 1965 (Hillebrecht, 1965; the full title read: “From Ebenezer Howard to Jane Jacobs – or: was everything wrong?”). Do the new revelations and insights contradict and reverse what looked like conventional wisdom, at least to some, or do they complement and enrich our understanding and simply empower us to act more effectively from the perspective of an advanced understanding for the whole?

From the perspective of planning theory we may also ask: Are the paradigms and ways of acting expressions of radically different phases, possibly in the sense of Copernican turnarounds, one phase terminating the previous? Or are we dealing with layers, one resting

What the authors of this chapter are finding useful in this context, is the famous passage in Henry James’s preface to the 1908 New York Edition to his novel *The Portrait of a Lady*:

The house of fiction has [...] not one window, but a million [...] At each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes [...] He and his neighbors are watching the same show, but one seeing more where the other sees less, one seeing black

where the other sees white, one seeing big where the other sees small, one seeing coarse where the other sees fine. And so on [...] (James, 1908: p. xi).

In his essay, James praises the great variety of possible approaches to dealing with “reality” – whatever that may be (that of Robert Moses or Jane Jacobs, that of planners, architects or residents). While for the fiction author Henry James the important message is that there is no limit to the number of windows that can be opened, this is different for planners and architects, who have to be able to construct buildings or to develop strategies. When they open new windows, they are guided by a pragmatic interest. Each newly opened window may contribute to better understand the whole and to potentially act more efficiently, possibly also to make more money, or to act in a more just, a more sustainable way – well, depending on the cognitive interest, the “Erkenntnis-Interesse.” If “the house of fiction” should be part of a perimeter block with windows providing us with views into an imaginary inner courtyard, then it may even be possible to complement the impressions gained from looking through the window in front of the object by the view from behind, discovering what is “behind the bush.” In this sense, the house metaphor is more useful than the metaphor of putting on different spectacles. We can easily understand why “where one sees black [...] the other sees white.” Neither Jane nor Robert has managed to motivate the other to look through their window. They stand as representatives for an enormously important paradigm change, which is associated with the paradigm change from modernism to post-modernism. It might actually be preferable to call it “after-modernism” (as exemplified in the German term “Nachmoderne” instead of “Postmoderne”), in order to avoid the narrow architectural connotation of the term “post-modernism” (Fischer, 2012: p. 179). And if we consider this as a paradigm change, then it is obvious that we are simultaneously talking about a broadly based cultural change, not a paradigm shift limited to the scientific community such as discussed by Thomas Kuhn (1981). From this perspective, let us open a number of windows upon the Jane Jacobs phenomenon.

### **Jane Jacobs – Structures and Icons of an International Success Story**

First window: Jane Jacobs’s success and her fight can be classified as heroic at more than one level. The most obvious is her fight against Robert Moses and his likes – the housewife against Goliath (Flint, 2009). Simultaneously (and seen through a different window), this was a fight against long-term basic principles evident in societal evolution, principles which had run amok in her time – not for the first time and not for the last. As a matter of fact, the principles of the division of labor, of specialization and rationalization have been at the basis of urbanization since the beginning of urbanization. Connected with economies of scale, they have been with us ever since, and they have repeatedly run amok, as myths such as that of the tower of Babel and Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times* illustrate.

In times of rapid (economic) growth, these trends accelerate and sometimes appear to get out of control – yet we might also ask: whose control? Anyway, rapid jumps in the economies of scale and the observation of upheavals of revolutionary dimensions have of course been a concern of societies from ancient to medieval times, and their frequency and dimension have increased rapidly with industrialization. Thus, plot sizes increased as the size of buildings did, from the early manufactures to factory production, from single houses via small modernist estates to large-scale housing estates. Skyscrapers introduced new dimensions as did buildings, roads, and structures in the inter-war decades, which then went through yet another set of quality changes in the long economic upswing after World War II until they came close the fate of the dinosaurs: Too big to survive; too inflexible to adapt. Ronan Point, the 22-storey tower block in London, which collapsed in 1968, and the demolition of the housing estate Pruitt Igoe in St. Louis, which the architectural critic Charles Jencks rhetorically used as a symbol of the “death of modern architecture,” became the negative icons for this development. And there is another factor which tends to gain importance with the size and complexity of the interest blocks: The likelihood of corruption (Power, 1993: p. 135), as a cartoon lampooning the image and realities of the German housing organization “Neue Heimat” has pinpointed.



**Figure 14.1 Image and reality: Capitalist profiteering in the cloak of a non-profit housing association (1986)**

Source: © With kind permission of the cartoonist, Walter Hanel.



**Figure 14.2** Berlin: Bourgeois and punk in church united against urban renewal through demolition (1984)

*Source:* © With kind permission of the photographer, Hans-Peter Siffert.

It is this unimpeded pursuance of the fundamental long-term trends running amok in the urban renewal stampede of the post-war decades that Jane Jacobs tackled with considerable success – a truly heroic undertaking in the classic Greek sense. The chapters in this volume have explored the basic principles of the Jacobsean approach from many angles and have been succinctly summarized by Dirk Schubert (2012); so there is little point in enumerating and repeating them here. But we have seen that, in every country, very special local circumstances played a role in the manifestation and implementation of the principles Jane Jacobs propagated. Careful urban renewal took different paths in Amsterdam, in Rotterdam, in Vienna, and in Berlin, where an almost unique element can be seen in the surprising coalition between the church and the squatters' movement as a factor of success.

A study group convened by the Reverend Klaus Duntze came to the conclusion that urban renewal was not oriented towards “providing a better quality of life for people, but was in fact a process of capital realization (*Kapitalverwertung*), a field for the acquisition of lucrative jobs for the building industry and a playground for architects and planners,” and that there was no interest in finding out the real needs of people. “People were not considered as partners but as a factor in the planning process” (quoted in Berger, 1984: p. 168). This interaction of “interest blocks” (Bodenschatz, 1987; Fischer, 1990: p. 91) was most aptly visualized in a protest



Plakat der Protestausstellung »Diagnose zum Bauen in Berlin«, 1968.

**Figure 14.3** Protest poster analyzing the interaction of Berlin interest coalitions (1968)

Source: © Collection of Harald Bodenschatz.

poster of 1969, which showed four interlocking arms of architects, speculators, building associations, and politicians (the Berlin Senate).

It has to be added though, that also in the fight for London's Covent Garden (Home and Loew, 1987), a man of the church, the Reverend Austen Williams, played a significant role in leading the protest movement (Esher, 1981: p. 142).

There are two outstanding, as it were, iconic examples for the success of community planning in London. One is the Covent Garden turnaround in 1973, which clearly marked the turn towards post-modern modes of urban development (Fischer, 2005: p. 42). The other can be seen in the Coin Street campaign, which culminated in a historic victory halting a major office development and gave co-operatives a home on prime real estate on the South Bank. There is a wealth of literature which has documented and celebrated this triumph (e.g. Self, 1979; Cowan, 1979; Brindley, Rydin and Stoker, 1992; Tuckett, 1992; Newman and Smith, 2000).

In Berlin, the resonance of Jane Jacobs's principles came to full fruition in the context of the International Building Exhibition (IBA) 1987 (Autzen, 1984; Schlusche, 1997). This happened in two different fields, in the two different branches of the IBA. As is well known, the branch of "IBA Old" developed its own approaches to careful urban renewal (Hämer, 1987), while the branch of "IBA New" (Kleihues, 1987) invented the concept of the "critical reconstruction" (Kleihues, 1984), which aimed for an orientation towards the historic pattern of streets and public spaces, building parcels, urban density and design, social mix as well as a mix of actors and architects (Bodenschatz, 2010). It is from this context that this "parcel theory" linked to the inventor of the "critical reconstruction" and developed further by Hoffmann-Axthelm (1990) spread into planning practice all over Germany, sometimes continuing in the guise of "critical reconstruction" as in the case of Kassel's Unterneustadt (Fischer, 2008), and in the field of brownfield redevelopment as in Tübingen (Feldtkeller, 2001) and Freiburg Vauban, but then also in greenfield development such as in Freiburg's Rieselfeld (Jessen et al., 2008). While Kleihues himself did not go in for participation very much (Sewing, 2004), the emphasis on community and process in planning was widespread in discussion and practice. The set of Jane Jacobs's ideals taken into consideration thus appeared by and large complete in this phase.

Seen through the window on the big picture of urban development, Jane Jacobs's success has been enormous, and it has had long-term remedial effects. The seemingly benevolent steam roller of urban renewal has indeed been stopped through careful urban renewal. Jacobsean ideas have been implemented in a context of upgrading neglected inner-city neighborhoods in West Berlin with remarkable success – at least up to German reunification. Large parts of the housing stock have been saved for good and so have urban structures all over Europe and beyond. The Coin Street Community Builders are still a co-operative enterprise today, and Covent Garden has not become a multi-level high-rise concrete monster. At the physical level, this has turned out a sustained success.

### **The Way the Cookie Crumbles**

However, opening a window on the smaller-scale view upon the actors and processes in the game, things may look quite different. "Where some see white,

others see black.” Looking through that window, we observe that the path of the original community-oriented principles has changed considerably over time. On the South Bank, the spell of community planning of the 1970s, which had spurred that iconic Coin Street development, changed in character in the mid-1980s. Initially, the GLC-supported local authority strategy had clearly been one of “promoting community development and resisting property speculation that would lead to the displacement of an essentially working-class population” (Newman and Smith, 2000: p. 18). The same was valid for Butler’s Wharf, a former shipping wharf and warehouse complex near Tower Bridge, which had been an artists’ colony through the 1970s. But with the advent of Conservative rule culminating locally in the abolition of the GLC in 1986 and the consequent termination of community-based development as a government policy (Baeten, 2001), the regulatory regime changed significantly. The transformation on the South Bank began as early as 1981 with the creation of the London Docklands Development Corporation, which redrew the local authority boundaries and removed Butler’s Wharf from the jurisdiction of the Southwark Council. In the property boom of the 1980s and as a consequence of the post-modern value shift towards the commodification of historic buildings, the artists there were “used as a means of raising the cultural image of the area” and to convert the wharves into luxury apartments.

This type of development was the antithesis of that promoted by Southwark Council. It did not create jobs for local people and it did not supply affordable social housing (Newman and Smith, 2000: p. 17).

By the mid-1980s, the winds of change had Coin Street firmly in their grip, too. Already the commencement of its co-operative housing scheme had transformed the local community “from a grassroots movement to a housing development organization.” They were soon:

torn apart between “realos” and “fundis,” who were disillusioned about the abandonment of basic democracy principles and left.’ But then, the abolition of the GLC meant that the South Bank, which had been the Community Area Policy’s showcase, saw its public financial support cut off (Baeten, 2001: p. 295).

In the face of the new political and economic realities, the local community took up “an entirely new ‘big business’ role as owner and property developer of one of the most wanted Inner London sites” (Baeten, 2001: p. 298). Standards were raised and various forms of control including CCTV surveillance guaranteed a secure and clean environment (Baeten, 2001; Newman and Smith, 2000), not only for the demands of the stylish restaurant on top of the OXO tower. Today, as has been observed:

grassroots movements in the area, which have stayed more faithful to the initial objectives of the Coin Street campaign, overtly accuse the Coin Street

Community Builders and its allies of ‘stealing’ the land it acquired through community action from the residents’ community and handing it over to power brokers whose regeneration objectives and ideology are no longer compatible with the initial cause (Baeten, 2001: p. 298).

Faster and more drastically, the community movement in Covent Garden responsible for the Jane Jacobs type victory changed character. Covent Garden soon moved in a spiral of gentrification of smart boutiques and restaurants. Brian Anson, a Greater London Council planner, who lost his job over his attempts at resisting this kind of development, later published a book on the experience of the original activists entitled “I’ll fight you for it” (Anson, 1981). He did indeed continue fighting for his convictions as the caterpillar of gentrification burrowed its way into the Hoxton Square area. Covent Garden has become a model of gentrification processes (Polinna, 2007: p. 192). As it turned out, the conglomerate of what appeared like Jacobsean ideal concepts centered on a return to small-scale buildings in an environment with historic appeal, with vernacular elements and an ambiance of functional and urban design mix was eminently suited for the real estate market. No surprise that real estate prices skyrocketed even more drastically in the favorable location of Jane Jacobs’s old neighborhood in booming New York. Christopher Klemek (2007: pp. 20–23) and Sharon Zukin have analyzed the problem, and Anthony Flint has neatly summarized the process:

The pattern ... is dreary and inexorable: Middle-class ‘pioneers’ buy brownstones and row houses. City officials rezone to allow luxury towers, which swell the value of the brownstones. And banks and real estate companies unleash a river of capital, flushing out the people who gave the neighborhoods character (Flint, 2011: p. 9).

### *This is How the Cookie Crumbles*

Things got going at a slower pace in shrinking Berlin. Introducing a personal case study element on Berlin’s careful urban renewal we can report that two of the first author’s children, now at the end of their university studies, live in one of the apartments which was once saved from demolition by the students’ movement, and which the university accommodation service is still renting out to students on restricted terms (Duwe and Johaentges, 1987: pp. 39–42). But here too, the majority of the apartments have gone into private ownership, some of the owners being former squatters or their beneficiaries, whose income and hence lifestyle and tolerance levels have changed considerably. In many German cities, the stock of pre-war housing has indeed been saved through careful urban renewal. While this strategy tried to save even the local communities and protect less affluent residents from exploding rents, the overall increase in attractiveness of the late nineteenth-century neighborhoods initiated by comprehensive regeneration efforts ultimately

spurred reurbanization. Even for benevolent municipalities, sustainable policies to avoid gentrification trends are scarce. German planning law did endeavor to limit the pressure on tenants in an upgrading environment. But there is hardly any means against the windfall profits house owners could gain by refusing to cooperate until the end of the formal urban regeneration process without any investment into their decaying buildings. This would then be followed by “luxury renovation” and sharp increases in rents no longer affordable for ordinary middle-class people.

It appears that this post-modern phase, for which the European Heritage Year 1975 can be seen as the turning point, changed in character by the end of the decade. Following German re-unification, the concept of critical reconstruction too was transformed under the influence of market forces in an environment of globalized real estate capitalism getting a hold of reunified Berlin in the early 1990s – although many of the planners and their ideas had remained the same. The best-laid plans and attempts of the Berlin municipality and former IBA staff at encouraging individual owners to build houses with a variety of architecture on individual parcels ran into trouble, even in times of moderate growth – especially in office blocks. In the face of the interest of the concentrated real estate capital in developing entire blocks, buildings such as *Kontorhaus Mitte* in Berlin’s center



**Figure 14.4** Berlin’s *Palazzo Farnese*: Aldo Rossi’s icon of postmodern façade mimicry (1993) – How mixed and historic can you get?

Source: © Friedhelm Fischer.

(Kleihues et al., 1994) provided no more than a visual impression of variety already in its first design sketches in 1991. Similarly, Aldo Rossi's famous block in Berlin Schützenstraße built in 1993 (Burg, 1995: pp. 52–9) was facade mimicry at its purest, conjuring up the image of a mixed late nineteenth-century neighborhood with remains of older historic periods.

It even contains a sixteenth-century building, albeit neither exactly historic nor vernacular in the proper sense of the word. In fact it is a copy of the Palazzo Farnese in close-by Rome – well, almost vernacular as global tourists might say.

Thus, just as all symbols of protest movements have been sucked up by the market, from blue jeans with holes to attributes of punk culture to be worn at cocktail parties, the elements of the Jane Jacobs set of ideal concepts came to be “instrumentalized,” intentionally deployed and in fact exploited by precisely the forces which the “Jacobseans” had set out to rein in.

This was of course by no means a new phenomenon. To take a classic example from planning history, Ebenezer Howard's proposals for a “Path to Real Reform” on the basis of communal ownership of land and a regional city concept got watered down as early as Raymond Unwin's design for “the Garden City Principle Applied to Suburbs” translated it into the practice of the garden suburb. All following generations of planners and real estate agents just kept cherry picking the elements they wanted from Howard's rich, complex concept. Each of them opened new windows according to their inclination – or to be more precise, according to the respective conventional exploitation interests of society (*Verwertungs-Interesse*), which may have been good or bad. This might range from the negative extreme of the National Socialist application of the garden city model in the regional development concepts for conquered Poland to positive connotations, as for instance the interest of the 1990s in the process-oriented nature of Howard's ideas (Fischer, 1999a).

In a similar way, Jacobsean principles have been open to interpretation and exploitation. It may appear crazy or unbelievable, but even the monstrous 1971 concept for the redevelopment of Covent Garden claimed to be following Jane Jacobs's ideals, since it was providing an urban mix and it was offering new housing for the dislocated residents (Esher, 1981: p. 143).

But in the following phase, the start of which was marked by the Covent Garden turnaround (1973) and more broadly by the European Heritage Year (1975), even London experienced a retreat to a smaller scale accompanied by growing criticism of modernist design (Fischer, 2005: p. 42). This was not to last very long, however. By the 1980s and increasingly in the 1990s, we can see a new development phase embedded in the mode of “*Stadtumbau*” (urban conversion). This represents yet another “turn of the screw” beyond the post-modern mode, into a mode for which we suggest the term “hybrid,” because it combines elements of the phase of modernist urban development with the attitude of the small-scale, vernacular design, the appearance of people-orientation and principles such as functional mix. The unbroken trends towards increasing economies of scale at the economic and organizational levels have since been producing mega-structures of

ever increasing dimensions – partly in the form of a proliferation of modernist skyscrapers enjoying new popularity, partly in the form of multifunctional shopping and entertainment destinations covering large areas camouflaged as small-scale, vernacular, and history-oriented – and, as we are repeatedly told, in close co-operation with the local community – Jane Jacobs’s ideals at their best? No – Jane Jacobs commodified.

In the following, we are going to take a closer look at the ways in which the cookie crumbles, and in which the transition from the modern mode to the hybrid mode of development has been occurring. We are going to analyze these processes by taking brief glimpses at a number of concrete case studies. At a more generalized level of interpretation we observe how the ideal concepts, which have gained currency through and following Jane Jacobs, have been commodified and deployed – i.e. without proclaiming that the actors behind the commodification of Jane Jacobs type thinking have necessarily quoted her influence.

### **“Critical Reconstruction” – From Stimulating to Defensive Planning Concept**

In the first case study, we trace the concept of critical reconstruction after reunification. We show how it changed completely in nature under the influence of the market forces in an environment of globalized real estate capitalism getting a hold of reunified Berlin in the early 1990s – although many of the planners and their ideas had remained the same.

Before reunification, West Berlin was a walled city enclosed by socialist East Germany, cut off from the global markets in real estate development. Parts of the city that were severely damaged in World War II had undergone urban renewal, largely in the form of large-scale clearance. In particular, the borough of Kreuzberg in the inner-city periphery next to the Berlin wall became a hotspot of resistance against the modernist social housing programs that required erasing much of the residential buildings which had survived the war. The International Building Exhibition (IBA) 1984/1987, founded as early as 1979, was set up in order to revitalize the neglected neighborhood and to stimulate a renaissance of “urban” inner-city life (IBA 1987). In this context, the eastern part of the borough of Kreuzberg became the birthplace of “careful renewal” in Germany, a strategy that can be seen as the implementation of Jacobsean ideas in full.

This breakthrough of “post-modern” ideas was complemented by a second strategy, also part of the IBA (Schlusche, 1997). Upgrading the western part of Kreuzberg, an area still characterized by the baroque grid of the Southern Friedrichstadt area that had been much more severely destroyed in World War II and turned into a modernist agglomeration of large-scale housing projects, could not rely easily on Jacobsean ideas, which were better suited to the regeneration of mixed-use neighborhoods dating from the late nineteenth century. Still, the IBA tried to revitalize the area with the help of the approach of “critical reconstruction.”

Since the large-scale housing projects had failed and there was no major developer who could have rebuilt greater parts of the still derelict area, critical reconstruction was supposed to come back to the traditional plot structure and to find relatively small-sized individual projects for the redevelopment of each one of them. This plot-wise reconstruction did not only have to follow the street pattern but also to restore the historic building lines and heights in the hope of establishing a great variety of different functions and thus both to revive the area and to create a sequence of streets, squares, and other public spaces according to pre-modern urban design patterns. This reconstruction was termed “critical” because it did not intend to rebuild each one of the lost buildings but to leave room for a new interpretation of the pre-modern urban design and to adapt the interior of the perimeter blocks to the needs of the late twentieth century. Since there was no pressure on the land market, the strategy could be used by the IBA to carefully design each building, to contribute to the intended variety of buildings and concepts, and to gradually promote compact inner-city living. One can say that this approach led to quite a substantial implementation of Jacobsean ideals even though there was no major nineteenth-century neighborhood left it could resort to in this area.

When the wall finally came down in 1989, the part immediately to the north of the area later called Northern Friedrichstadt in former socialist East Berlin, quickly became an arena for real estate speculation driven by globalized capital in search for investment options that seemed to be missing elsewhere in London and other parts of the world at that time. The area had been one of the most important commercial centers of Berlin before World War II and seemed to be an attractive point of entry for developers now that this part of Berlin was accessible for them. The area had also kept its baroque street grid and some pre-war buildings. Besides the opportunity to turn them into representative front offices, a substantial number of vacant plots seemed to offer the chance to maximize profits by building attractive office towers right next to the historic ambience of Berlin’s famous Unter den Linden boulevard. Less than half a decade after the IBA experience, Berlin’s planners now came back to the concept of “critical reconstruction” that had led the development in the other half of Friedrichstadt. Very early visions by Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm, an important IBA protagonist, to direct profit maximization away from Friedrichstadt by limiting floor area ratios to values much lower than before World War II, were shattered by influential politicians and planners. Nevertheless, Hoffmann-Axthelm was able to launch a revival of the concept of critical reconstruction at least at the ideological level (Altrock, 2003, 2007; Bodenschatz, 2005).

The Berlin Senate and Hans Stimmann, its deputy minister for building and housing affairs, decided to use the concept inspired by Hoffmann-Axthelm as the masterplan for the Northern Friedrichstadt and the area around Unter den Linden to manage inward investment and to reconcile it with the historic fabric found in the area. Attempts by the major German developer of (mostly suburban) shopping centers to connect three blocks by building a shopping mall over the streets between them did not get permission by the Senate, and the alternative

underground shopping mall concept of Friedrichstadtpassagen was developed as early as 1991 (but finished no earlier than 1996). It was one of the first projects that led to a definition of the new defensive principles of critical reconstruction:

1. **Subdivision:** The aim still was to subdivide the area into a number of plots to allow for a certain variety of architecture and functions, yet Stimmann decreed that the largest plot size could also extend over an entire block thus allowing for a more investment-friendly, more coarse-grain structure. When the Senate had the chance to develop a block in some form of public-private partnership, thanks to the legal situation following the transition from socialist land ownership after the German reunification, it organized masterplan workshops or urban design competitions that integrated a number of favored architects who designed one portion of a block each. Despite being a comprehensive development of an entire block, this led to facades that simulated individualized plots where the entire courtyard was managed by one company and that had underground parking garages linking major parts of the block and sometimes more than one block. At times assembling different architectural “languages” became a post-modern game that may in the best case serve the production of a differentiated supply of small units in one development project, in the worst it is just a trick to simulate authenticity in a historic quarter that does no longer exist, a strategy of “Disneyfication” by smart developers in the experience society.
2. **Medium-rise/high density:** The history of the area with its baroque street pattern and a typical building height of around 22 m (Traufhöhe) had shaped an image of the neighborhood somewhat similar to the urban design of Haussmannian Paris before World War II. After reunification, the Senate came back to this rather traditional pre-modern pattern and limited building height (without limiting the number of floors) and setbacks so as to create a similar compact yet medium-rise pattern again. The density in the blocks was not regulated so that the shape of the blocks and general building regulations determined the final floor area ratio (FAR) that sometimes reached values of around or even beyond 5.0. Developers exploited the freedom to build glass roofs over traditional courtyards and to use the new spaces created this way as additions to the buildings, while the number of underground levels led to the development of a sort of sunken skyscraper.
3. **Traditional public spaces:** By defining building lines and limiting building heights, traditional streets and squares were restored as public spaces. Arcades were used as traditional urban design elements to help create additional space for pedestrians. Although contemporary office architecture created an environment completely different from the pre-war era, the Senate tried to establish stone facades where possible to make the buildings look more “solid.” New squares shaped in the socialist era to reduce density and to engender “modern” spaciousness were sometimes built over to recreate traditional patterns and to allow for higher densities.

Where streets had been narrower with lower building heights before World War II, the new buildings were allowed to reach the general building height in the area irrespective of street width. Those measures were originally inspired by the area's pre-war urban design features, but ultimately led to creating a valve for the enormous development pressure after 1990 that had been somewhat rigidly contained by the limitation of building height.

4. Mix of functions: The developers going for a maximum amount of office space that seemed to lack in Berlin at that time and that offered the highest rents (while other places in the global office market such as London were in crisis) were reluctant to allow for anything else but some additional retail in their buildings. However, the experience of critical reconstruction and post-modern planning in Berlin before 1990 made the Senate advocate a better functional mix that would also contain some housing. An increase of the number of inhabitants in the inner city was thought of as a measure to create more vibrant neighborhoods which would not be abandoned in the evenings and on the weekends. The Senate did not use the opportunity to define specific areas that had to contain higher shares of floor space reserved for residential purposes, probably since it did not dare to interfere in a market characterized by skyrocketing land prices. However, its strategy was to clearly define the overall percentage of housing in every project to reach 20 percent. This was severely fought by the developers, and the Senate sometimes had to give in and accept a mere five percent of housing space (Lenhart, 2001). Nevertheless, the top floors of most of the new buildings at least contained some apartments (which were often used as boarding houses or other forms of temporary housing).

A comparison of the two types of critical reconstruction clearly shows a direction away from the "pure" post-modern principles under the increasing influence of private developers. Individual plots as basic unit of variegated development have given way to the simulation of variety by developers of entire blocks or even greater areas. Public spaces get increasingly commodified, densities are increased to an extent that allows for maximizing private profit while the newly created centers lack vibrancy due to the low amount of apartments that could be realized in the end. To sum up, the principles of post-modern urbanism that were established to create vibrant neighborhoods were utilized selectively by private developers, who were in fact operating in a modernist fashion.

### **Redevelopment of Derelict Inner-city Brownfield Sites: From the Production of Pedestrian-friendly Mixed-use Neighborhoods to Multifunctional Shopping and Entertainment Destinations**

In this collection of case studies, we analyze the diverging redevelopment patterns on brownfield sites under an increasing influence of large-scale developers. We

contrast different patterns that stand for the “post-modern mode” and the “hybrid mode.” While there is no clear temporal sequence that led from the one to the other, one can identify how the share of private capital and influence on a project is related to the degree of “hybridness.” For that purpose, we compare three examples of decreasing public and, respectively, increasing private influence on planning and development that are to demonstrate how the hybrid mode strategically combines post-modern and modern features of urban design based on “hybridness” in the socio-economic forces behind them and in governance. The three examples are Französisches Viertel in Tübingen, Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, and Liverpool One.

The neighborhood of Französisches Viertel in Tübingen has been developed on a former military compound since the early 1990s (Feldtkeller, 2001). The area is located in the southern fringe of Tübingen, a booming university city of around 80,000 inhabitants in south-western Germany, which is in bitter need of housing space, but cannot resort to conventional suburban growth due to its topography. In the early 1990s, an ambitious head of the urban regeneration department with experience of several decades of careful renewal of Tübingen’s historic old town launched the post-modern redevelopment in the neighborhood after the city obtained full control of the area from the Federal State when the French barracks were closed. His idea of turning the area into a compact “city of short distances” (*Stadt der kurzen Wege*) perfectly resonates Jacobsean ideas, yet it was one of the first cases of fully implementing them into a new development in the outskirts of a city instead of trying to use them as inspiration for the upgrading of an existing inner-city neighborhood. The challenge of actually creating a Jacobsean neighborhood from scratch could evolve with the help of favorable circumstances that cannot be discussed in detail here; one of them has certainly been the “alternative” academic environment that produced a substantial demand for “urban” lifestyles and homes. The area having become an urban development zone according to German planning law managed by the city’s urban regeneration department and the high and constant demand for housing in the city secured public influence on both planning and implementation. The masterplan for the area preserved almost all the former military buildings including horse stables and a tank deposit; by adaptively re-using them for various forms of residential purposes, services, craftsmen’s and artists’ workshops, and even smaller manufacturing, they laid the foundation for a mixed-use neighborhood in which virtually all other houses had to reserve space for workshops and small-scale retail in the ground floors of the buildings. Those were arranged in traditional pre-modern blocks mostly developed as an addition of individual tenement buildings managed by co-housing groups. After about 15 years of development, the area has turned into an “ideal” Jacobsean neighborhood that is not only vibrant and mixed-use, but also cares for a wide-ranging mix of social strata, has pedestrian-friendly public spaces and an enormously high density. This could only be achieved in the periphery of a middle-sized city since the loss of huge private gardens for the households in the area is compensated by the building associations’ far-reaching influence on the design of their plots and the cost reductions compared to single-family homes



**Figure 14.5 Tübingen, Französisches Viertel – an “ideal” Jacobsean neighborhood: Vibrant, socially and functionally mixed, pedestrian-friendly**

*Source:* © Stadt Tübingen.

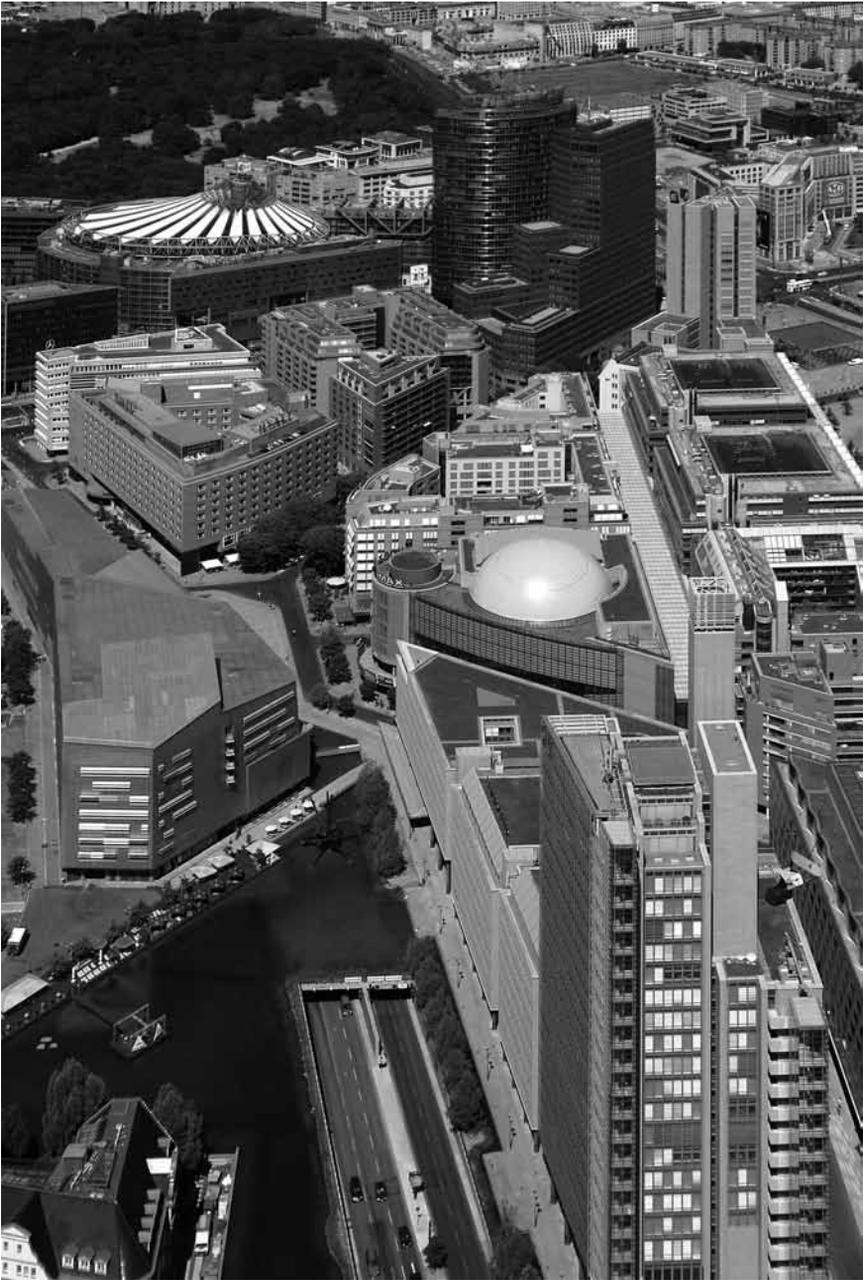
they can realize thanks to the reduced plot sizes the households have to finance in a relatively expensive region.

The second example, the redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz in Berlin after the German reunification in the early 1990s, is deeply embedded in an environment of post-modern thinking – the IBA 1987 had just taken place at walking distance a few days before (Bodenschatz, 2005). The area having been urban wasteland due to its location on the border between the two systems in the Cold War immediately became a hotspot for urban development in a joint public-private planning effort. The main partners were the Berlin Senate and Daimler-Benz, one of the leading German companies then headed by Edzard Reuter, the son of West Berlin’s mayor in the 1950s, who intended to build a headquarters for a subsidiary of the company as renewed symbolic concession to Berlin. For that purpose, he struck a controversial deal to buy a substantial part of the area around Potsdamer Platz, which came under control of his and only three other companies (Sony, Beisheim/Metro, A+T, the latter backed by ABB). The Senate, however, wanted to live up to its ideals of producing a compact, mixed-use, diverse, vibrant inner-city neighborhood in line with the idea of the “European city,” a concept oriented more in the pre-modern

urban design found also in Paris or Vienna doing mainly without the “American” type of central business districts (CBDs) that rely heavily on high-rise office towers. The much-debated result of a series of urban design competitions and the subsequent negotiations between the key players reflects some of the post-modern ideals the Senate was keen to implement. Therefore, the area can now be seen as one first and interesting case of a hybrid between modernist and post-modern design features related to the respective socio-economic and political background. While the entire area has a limited building height resembling the model of the “European city” (Siebel, 2004), a composition of four office and hotel high-rise groups around Potsdamer Platz is itself paying tribute to modernism. The area is built on a rather traditional street grid integrating the Potsdamer Straße boulevard, the only major section of the pre-war era that had survived. This allowed for a subdivision into small blocks to be developed individually by different architects and that should give the area a diverse character. Some of the blocks are reserved for residential use, while movie theaters, shops, hotels, and restaurants add to the overall impression of an urban entertainment destination around the office blocks that forms the heart of the area. Thus, quite a substantial number of post-modern ideas could be implemented, some against fierce resistance by the developers.

However, as the area was only subdivided into four plots, the design is explicitly not based on plot-wise development. Not only do the architects’ designs and the arrangement of land uses simulate variety while managed by a few developers, but there is also a huge parking garage underneath, which serves the entire quarter and handles all of its transportation of goods and refuse. One major street was built over by an indoor shopping mall that intersects the street grid and thereby accentuates the integrated character of a huge development managed by a global player rather than a variety of smaller plot owners. Besides, it is interesting to note that a design proposal by Renzo Piano successfully merged the “cultural forum” (Kulturforum), an icon of post-war modernist urban design that had lacked integration within the urban fabric around it, with the new development around Potsdamer Platz by placing a musical theater between the two, which was able to bridge the most distinct urban design patterns of both areas.

The brand new development of the Liverpool One district in the southern center of the English city, formerly characterized by shipbuilding and manufacturing but having witnessed a major economic crisis from the 1970s on, can be seen in the context of other efforts to reinvent the city in the global economy. Whereas some of the earlier projects such as the revitalization of Albert Dock represent a trend towards urban renaissance catering for the needs of young urban professionals with the help of rather traditional urban design, the latest development is different in some respect. Again, a huge redevelopment area is mainly realized by one company that intentionally mixes land-uses and thereby exploits all conceivable possibilities of compact development in the inner city. As a shopping and entertainment destination, the area is built on traditional street patterns and the simulation of variety, with winding pedestrian streets and the like. As parcels do not matter as organizational and ownership features, different land uses can be



**Figure 14.6** Berlin Potsdamer Platz

*Source:* © Phillip Meuser.

superimposed in ways hardly seen before. The parking garage attached to the different floors of the shopping area can no longer be underground, so a park was designed on top, blurring the post-modern distinction of public and private space. High-rises are no longer limited to offices or hotels, but now apartment buildings like those known in modernism have come back, though no longer a product of social housing but reserved for the better-off “re-urbanizer.” They are built on top of the parking garage and on the waterfront to make living as convenient as possible. A private plot or even private open space is no longer needed for the clientele that enjoys the view of the Mersey, the park on top of the parking garage, and the shopping quarter itself. One may assume that the new residents live a life that is completely embedded into the commodified world of the development, limiting privacy to the apartment and maybe its roof terrace or balcony. Obviously, residents are no longer active producers of the city as in the traditionally post-modern case of Tübingen’s redevelopment, but live in a symbiotic relationship with other city destinations assembled, spatially organized and managed by the developer that runs the entire quarter. Parts of the urban design therefore make use of post-modern patterns, while others such as the use of high-rises, the superimposition of different functions, and the organization of the plots, integrate modernist features made possible by the organizational scheme that reflects the ongoing reign of globalized division of labor and economies of scale.

A brief look at more recent exemplars for the hybrid mode taken from three very different contexts may reveal where the journey is going: The examples are located in Coventry, Sydney, and Dubai.



**Figure 14.7** The Coventry City Center Master Plan as an exemplar of hybrid mode development

Source: © The Jerde Partnership.

The first example is a masterplan, designed in 2007 by the Californian architecture firm of Jon Jerde, for the redevelopment of the city center of Coventry in England (Fischer, 2010). Looking at an investment of well beyond 1 billion pounds, an alliance of developers together with the Coventry City Council commissioned Jerde on the strength of his Roppongi Hills project in Tokyo, “Japan’s biggest shopping development,” and of the Zlote Tarasy shopping center in Warsaw to help “re-establish Coventry as a world-class city with a vibrant and integrated urban [center]” (Jerde, 2008) – whatever that may mean. As an exemplar of privatization and commodification of public space, the new centrally managed Coventry Center covers more than ten hectares of the town center. It is essentially one block consisting of a shopping and retail complex with parking underneath which is covered by a “green roof,” connoting closeness to un-spoilt nature, and surrounded by a sequence of “vibrant,” urban pedestrian-friendly public spaces and boulevard-type corridor streets with entertainment, restaurants, cinemas, and a futurist-looking library. Yet the development suggests historicity with the re-natured local creek running in a neat arc along the pedestrian promenade. How historic can you get? The other component of the hybrid rests upon principles of modernist planning including grade separation, large-scale, high-rise building masses on common large-scale plots of land and a set of luxurious residential skyscrapers which are not far from Le Corbusier’s radiant city vision (Fischer, Altrock and Bertram, 2011). All has been “planned in a sustainable way ... that fits the desires of the community ... in the best consultation process in the 30 year history of the company” (Glass, 2009). How Jacobsean can you get?

In Sydney, the recent huge central waterfront redevelopment site has been following similar principles. It is situated on the headlands opposite the Pyrmont peninsula, which had been developed in the 1990s (Fischer, 1999b, 2000). In 2009, an international competition was held for the site named Barangaroo (after an aboriginal woman). The competition brief included the objective of designing a multi-functional district that would be suitable for attracting global business by providing a range of life style opportunities through the physical structures for a global financial center complete with hotels, entertainment, retail, culture, and high-class housing. The brief also included the application of high sustainability criteria in the fields of energy, water consumption, and waste management. Modeled on Singapore’s Marina Bay, Barangaroo is to be Australia’s largest development since the Olympic Games in 2000.

Without going into the details of the highly contentious development process (see Searle 2013), we could say by way of a brief summary that the competition was won by a local architecture practice. This was, however, set aside in the process in favor of the second prize, a Richard Rogers and Lend Lease design based on a substantially increased building volume. Rogers’s design consists of a high-rise core with some low-rise restaurant buildings at ground level, a hotel tower protruding beyond the historic peninsula into the harbor and a large tract of green land on top of a huge underground car park. This headland park is the brainchild of the former Prime Minister John Keating, who is aiming to thereby

restore the historic green character of the shoreline as it was before the advent of European settlers. The arbitrary selection of the period to be “re-constructed” (why not go back to the situation before industrial development in the harbor?), the fantastical character of the “re-constructed” coastline and the lack of public discussion concerning this issue were only some of the points of criticism. The design has been further modified following criticism by Jan Gehl, who had been invited to Sydney, by the addition of more of Borneo/Sporenburg type “small-scale” housing crocheted at ground level on to the high-rise blocks.

As an aside, we can only briefly hint at the fact that major paradigm changes tend to have a range of actors working together at the levels of policy, design, politics, sociology, etc. As for the Jane Jacobs turnaround, the actors in the social-political field in the various countries are well known. They were complemented by architects who laid strong systematic and theoretical foundations such as Christopher Alexander, Kevin Lynch, and later Colin Rowe. Contributors during the time of the hybrid phase were figures like Richard Rogers, Richard Florida, and Jan Gehl.

Taking the hybrid model of exploding skyscraper dimensions coupled with small-scale, pseudo-vernacular buildings to an extreme, the last example in this sequence of case studies is the Dubai Marina development embedded in Rem Koolhaas’s overall masterplan. This has been underway since 1998 and therefore was quite advanced by the time of the Global Financial Crisis. The masterplan and first building group is by the Toronto firm of HOK (Hellmuth Obata Kassabaum). Crocheted on the bottom of the monstrous manifestation of Dubai’s real estate bubble is a re-invented vernacular Arab village or medina made up of neo-traditionalist alleyways and courtyards of Disneyland qualities. The contrast between the appearance of this “Disneyfied” artificial world of human scale, intricate pathways, courtyards, etc., designed essentially for a transient population (Bodenschatz, 2009) could not be bigger.

## **Conclusion: Signs of Hybridness, Explanations, and Perspectives**

The examples that we have presented clearly show that Jacobsean principles had some success. That success was a relative one, though. Seen through one window, it was great. Seen through another, we get a different, more complex picture, which has been changing over time. In most cases, the building stock has been saved for good, a “sustained victory,” while the social setting has changed drastically. We can see how the cookie began to crumble within a decade following the Jacobsean victory; how the opposition movements produced the gems and models for later commodification and replication; how the radicalism of late 1970s community action was:

suffocated in endless ‘Covent Gardens’ everywhere, [...] while the forces of darkness quietly spirited away those former residents who got in the way (Hannay, 2011).

We can see that in the next phase, hybrid modes of development allow private developers to optimize their commodification strategies by maximizing densities for affluent inner-city users that are willing to live in environments with invented historicity and the artificial liveliness of Truman show characters. The vision of vibrancy they are presenting makes their far-reaching control alluring for increasingly weak municipalities that lack the economic means, the will, and the ideas to invest more resources into the regeneration of their downtowns. It will depend on local demand whether those strategies are successful at all. Where they are, they present an ambivalent “instrumentalization” and commodification of Jacobsean principles: On the one hand, they contribute to making dense, and therefore potentially more sustainable urban designs attractive. On the other, they are intentionally deployed in a process of increasingly handing inner cities over to private developers that control the degree of commodification and the types of communication which can develop in that context. One may have some doubt if they will be the integrative ones that Jane Jacobs once had in mind.

## Bibliography

- Albers, G., 1993. Über den Wandel im Planungsverständnis. *RaumPlanung*, 61, pp. 97–103.
- Altrock, U., 2003. *Büroflächen in Berlin. Städtebau und Politik*. Berlin: Reimer.
- Altrock, U., 2007. Stadtentwicklungspolitische Suchbewegungen des kooperativen Staats: Hans Stimmann als autoritärer Strippenzieher oder negative Projektionsfläche einer hyper-pluralistischen Fachwelt? In: U. Altrock, S. Güntner, S. Huning, D. Peters, (eds), *Städtebau als Chefsache? Die Debatte um die Nachfolge von Hans Stimmann als Senatsbaudirektor von Berlin*. Berlin: Institut für Stadt- und Regionalplanung, pp. 129–63.
- Anson, B., 1981. *I'll Fight You For It: Behind the Struggle for Covent Garden*. London: Cape.
- Autzen, R., 1984. *Stadterneuerung in Berlin, Sanierung und Zerstörung vor und neben der IBA*. Schriftenreihe: Berliner Topografien, 2. Berlin: Reimer.
- Baeten, G., 2001. From Community Planning to Partnership Planning: Urban Regeneration and Shifting Power Geometries on the South Bank, London. *GeoJournal*, 51, pp. 293–300.
- Berger, J., 1984. *Kreuzberger Wanderbuch*. Berlin: Goebel, p. 168.
- Brindley, T., Rydin, Y. and Stoker, G., 1992. *Remaking Planning: The Politics of Urban Change in the Thatcher Years*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bauausstellung Berlin GmbH (IBA) (ed.), 1987. *Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1987, Projektübersicht*. Berlin.
- Bodenschatz, H., 1987. *Platz frei für das neue Berlin*. Berlin: Transit Verlag.
- Bodenschatz, H. (ed.), 2005. *Renaissance der Mitte. Zentrumsumbau in London und Berlin*. Berlin: Verlagshaus Braun.

- Bodenschatz, H., 2009. Dubai – Krise eines Weltwunders. *Bauwelt*, 100(23), pp. 16–33.
- Bodenschatz, H., 2010. *Berlin Urban Design – A Brief History*. Berlin: DOM Publishers.
- Burg, A., 1995. *Berlin Mitte. Die Entstehung einer urbanen Architektur*. Berlin, Basel, and Boston, MA: Birkhäuser.
- Coin Street Community Builders, 2002. *There is Another Way*. London: CSCB.
- Cowan, R., 1979. Fun and Survival in the Inner City. *Town and Country Planning*, April, 48, pp.5–6.
- Duwe, P.F. and Johaentges, K., 1987. Neu in Alt - Stuk. Architektengruppe am Wassertorplatz. *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, 121(4), pp. 39–42.
- Esher, L., 1981. *A Broken Wave: The Rebuilding of England 1940–1980*. London: Allen Lane.
- Feldtkeller, A. (ed.), 2001. *Städtebau. Vielfalt und Integration. Neue Konzepte im Umgang mit Stadtbrachen*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.
- Fischer, F., 1990. Berlin – Myth and Model: On the Production of German Planning Ideology in Berlin. *Planning Perspectives*, 5, pp. 85–93.
- Fischer, F., 1999a. 100 Jahre Gartenstadt. *Berichte des Werkbund Sachsen*. H 3. Leipzig: Passage Verlag.
- Fischer, F., 1999b. Learning From Australia – Pyrmont Peninsula, Sydney und Stralauer Halbinsel, Berlin – ein deutsch-australischer Vergleich. *Jahrbuch Stadterneuerung 1999*. Berlin: Technische Uni Berlin.
- Fischer, F., 2000. Die Planung für Sydneys Olympische Spiele 2000 – Ein Prozess der Stadterneuerung unter grünen Vorzeichen. *Jahrbuch Stadterneuerung 2000*. Berlin: Technische Uni Berlin.
- Fischer, F., 2005. Zur Städtebaugeschichte des Londoner Zentrums. In: H. Bodenschatz (ed.), *Nachmoderner Zentrumsumbau in London und Berlin*. Berlin: Verlagshaus Braun, pp. 15–42.
- Fischer, F., 2008. Die Unterneustadt in Kassel. In: *Architektur. Generalistisch. Für A. Eichenlaub*. Kassel: Kassel University Press.
- Fischer, F., 2010. Anmerkungen zu aktuellen Entwicklungen der Innenstadt von Coventry. In: I. Lübke (ed.), *Kooperative Stadtentwicklung durch kooperative Projekte. Erfahrung aus europäischen Stadtregionen*. Berlin: Reimer, pp. 145–9.
- Fischer, F., Altrock, U. and Bertram, G., 2011. Die Neustrukturierung der stadregionalen Politik und das Forschungsfeld “von der Stadt der Moderne zur nachmodernen Stadtregion.” In: U. Altrock, J. Aring and U. Hahne (eds), *Gewinnen, Verlieren, Transformieren. Die europäischen Stadtregionen in Bewegung*. Berlin: Reimer.
- Fischer, F., 2012. Umbau in modernen und nachmodernen Zeiten. In: A. Eichenlaub and T. Pristl (eds), *Umbau mit Bestand: Nachhaltige Anpassungsstrategien für Bauten, Räume und Strukturen*. Berlin, Reimer, pp. 305–20.
- Flint, A., 2009. *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York's Master Builder and Transformed the City*. New York, NY: Random House.

- Flint, A., 2011. An Urban Legacy in Need of Renewal. *Boston Globe*, 12 November 2011.
- Glass, B., 2009. *New Plans for a Greener Coventry*. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.itsallaboutcoventry.co.uk/newsstory\\_newplans.shtml](http://www.itsallaboutcoventry.co.uk/newsstory_newplans.shtml) [accessed 7 April 2010].
- Hall, P., 2011. Social Ideal Ends in Yuppy Ghettos. *Planning*, 3 June 2011, p. 40. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.planningresource.co.uk/Community\\_Renewal/article/1072803/in-context-social-ideal-ends-yuppy-ghettos/](http://www.planningresource.co.uk/Community_Renewal/article/1072803/in-context-social-ideal-ends-yuppy-ghettos/) [accessed 14 July 2011].
- Hämer, H.-W., 1987. Behutsame Stadterneuerung. In: J.P. Kleihues (ed.), *750 Jahre Architektur und Städtebau in Berlin. Die Internationale Bauausstellung im Kontext der Baugeschichte Berlins*. Stuttgart: Hatje, pp. 244–63.
- Hannay, P., 2011. Postmodernism: Style and Subversion 1970–1990. *Times Higher Education*, 22 September 2011. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=417536&sectioncode=26> [accessed 23 September 2011].
- Hillebrecht, R., 1965. Von Ebenezer Howard zu Jane Jacobs – oder: War alles falsch? *Stadtbauwelt*, 8, pp. 638–40 and 656–8.
- Hoffmann-Axthelm, D., 1990. Lob der Parzelle. *die tageszeitung*, 16 June 1990.
- Home, R. and Loew, S., 1987. *Covent Garden, Westminster City Council: West End Public Spaces*. London: Surveyors.
- James, H., 1908. *The Portrait of a Lady*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Jerde, J., 2008. *Coventry City Centre Master Plan*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.jerde.com/projects/project.php?id=205> [accessed 9 August 2011].
- Jessen, J., Meyer, U.M. and Schneider, J., 2008. *stadtmachen.eu. Urbanität und Planungskultur in Europa*. Stuttgart: Karl Krämer Verlag.
- Kleihues, J.P. 1991. *Kontorhaus Mitte. Lotus 80*, 1994, p. 32.
- Kleihues, J.P. (ed.), 1987. *750 Jahre Architektur und Städtebau in Berlin. Die Internationale Bauausstellung im Kontext der Baugeschichte Berlins*. Stuttgart: Hatje.
- Kleihues, J.P., 1984. Die IBA vor dem Hintergrund der Berliner Architektur- und Stadtplanung des 20. Jahrhunderts. In: V.M. Lampugnani (ed.), *Schriftenreihe zur Internationalen Bauausstellung Berlin. Die Neubaugebiete. Dokumente Projekte. Modelle für eine Stadt*. Berlin: Siedler Verlag.
- Klemek, C., 2007. Jane Jacobs's Urban Village: Well Preserved or Cast Adrift? *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 66(1), pp. 20–23.
- Krüger, T., 2007. Alles Governance? *PNDonline IV/2007*, pp. 2/8–8/8. Available at: [http://www.planung-neu-denken.de/images/stories/pnd/dokumente/pndonline%204%202007\\_krueger.pdf](http://www.planung-neu-denken.de/images/stories/pnd/dokumente/pndonline%204%202007_krueger.pdf) [accessed 14 July 2011].
- Kuhn, T.S., 1981. *Die Struktur wissenschaftlicher Revolutionen: Mit einem Postskriptum von 1969*, 5th edition, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Lenhart, K., 2001. *Berliner Metropolis: Stadtentwicklungspolitik im Berliner Bezirk Mitte nach der Wende*. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.

- Newman, P. and Smith, I., 2000. Cultural Production, Place and Politics on the South Bank of the Thames. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 3/2000, pp. 9–24.
- Polinna, C., 2007. *Städtebaulicher Paradigmenwechsel in London*. Dissertation, Technische Universität Berlin.
- Power, A., 1993. *Hovels to High Rise: State Housing in Europe Since 1850*. London: Routledge.
- Schlusche, G., 1997. *Die Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin – eine Bilanz. Planung und Durchführung 1979–1987 und Einfluss auf die Berliner Stadtentwicklung*. Berlin: Technische Uni Berlin.
- Schubert, D., 2012. Jane Jacobs Infragestellung der Stadtplanung – oder: benötigen wir (neue) Paradigmen? *Jahrbuch Stadterneuerung 2012*. Berlin: Technische Universität Berlin, pp. 21–40.
- Searle, G., 2013. Discourse, doctrine, habitus – redevelopment contestation on Sydney's harbour edge. In: G. Young and D. Stevenson (eds), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Planning and Culture*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Self, P., 1979. The Siege of Coin Street. *Town and Country Planning*, 48, pp. 149–50.
- Selle, K., 1995. Phasen oder Stufen? Fortgesetzte Anmerkungen zum Wandel des Planungsverständnisses. *RaumPlanung*, 71, pp. 237–42.
- Sewing, W., 2004. Nachruf – Pluralistisch und innovativ – Zum Tode des Architekten Josef Paul Kleihues. *Die ZEIT*, 19 August 2004.
- Siebel, W., 2004. *Die europäische Stadt*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Tuckett, I., 1992. Coin Street: There is Another Way ... In: J. Montgomery and A. Thornley (eds), *Radical Planning Initiatives*. Aldershot: Gower, pp. 137–49.
- Welsch, W., 1987. *Unsere postmoderne Moderne*. Weinheim: VCH Acta humaniora.

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

# Chapter 15

## Urban Ecology as the New Planning Paradigm: Another Legacy of Jane Jacobs

Stephen A. Goldsmith

When Jane Jacobs typed the foreword to her Modern Library Edition of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1993) she wrote, “[...] I realized I was engaged in studying the ecology of cities.” Her self-reflection and observation was prescient. Since then, thinkers in the emerging field of urban ecology have assembled a body of knowledge poised to transform the way we think about and practice the arts and sciences of city building. This perspective shift is transforming the pedagogy of urban planning and design. Governance and policy in several of the world’s cities and regions has led to substantive change, such as in Freiburg, Germany, where local government’s commitment to reducing their reliance on fossil and nuclear fuels has made the city a world leader in renewable energy. While there are warehouses filled (and empty) with reasons to believe there are dark days ahead, this chapter will illustrate how an act of restorative urbanism at the University of Utah foreshadows broad acceptance for the new planning paradigm of urban ecology. The case study is a clear example that we are in the midst of what Johanna Macy (2007) calls “the great turning.” This shift, as Macy believes, “from the industrial growth society to a life-sustaining civilization,” is central to our new way of thinking about planning processes, pedagogy and city building – or city ecology.

In the same 1993 foreword, Jacobs explores her emerging ideas about city ecology: “By city ecology I mean something different from, yet similar to, natural ecology as students of wilderness address the subject. A natural ecosystem is defined as ‘composed of physical-chemical-biological processes active within a space-time unit of any magnitude.’ A city ecosystem is composed of physical-economic-ethical processes active at a given time within a city and its close dependencies.”

One can sense Jacobs’s excited curiosity in the staccato prose of her foreword when she describes the “fundamental principles in common” between natural and human ecosystems, almost grappling with the elegant parallels. She writes of carrying capacities, scale, hybridization and mutation. She concludes this new beginning of the 1993 edition of *Death and Life* with a hope that readers “will become interested in city ecology, respect its marvels, and discover more.”

Jacobs’s observation of how she was studying the ecology of cities has inspired new pedagogical explorations. In the United States, a group of students at the

University of Utah's Department of City & Metropolitan Planning studied public space and its complex relationships with people, environment, materiality, and social systems. Their work resulted in the actual transformation of a campus plaza that exemplifies what the Brazilian architect and pioneering mayor Jaime Lerner (2010) calls "urban acupuncture." This example, described herein, of a pedagogical shift from an urban planning (object) perspective to an urban ecology (relationship) perspective is noteworthy. The story illuminates how self-organizing systems have begun to not only reshape pedagogy within higher education, but through it reshape thinking around planning policy on a campus of 48,000 people – a sprawling complex that can be seen as a city within a city, surrounded by a metropolis of more than one million people.

Jacobs's early observations about the built and natural environment were couched in a binary of "natural" and "city ecology." Yet just six years later she wrote in the foreword of her book *The Nature of Economies* (2000), "[...] human beings exist wholly within nature as part of a natural order." Somewhere along the way Jacobs observed connective tissue rather than a bridge between binaries. She invited us to "... accept this unity ..." rather than see humans as "interloper[s] in the natural order of things." This seemingly minor shift in thinking has huge importance in the way we see urban ecologies today. No longer is there a bridge between natural and urban ecologies. As Jacobs hoped, many of us are interested in city/urban ecology, discovering more and more about the elegant relationships among spheres of life on our planet.

Urban ecology has emerged as the new paradigm for understanding and managing our cities and regions. It is now a discipline in its own right. Non-governmental organizations such as the *Centre for City Ecology* in Toronto, Canada, *The Urban Ecology Centre* in Brussels, Belgium, and the pioneering non-profit organization *Urban Ecology* in Oakland, California, whose mission is "... dedicated to building ecologically and socially healthy cities [...]" are precursors to the global transformation of integrated planning processes. While urban planning still remains the dominant discipline under which we design and manage human settlements, the evolution of knowledge and consciousness about the complex ecologies that make up our social, environmental and economic systems is shifting. This "turning" as Macy and others suggest, is occurring at a rapid pace. While some argue that it is not occurring fast enough to reverse the effects of climate change, there is a cascading flow of substantive change occurring that represents a convergence of thinking among planners and non-planners alike.

One of the best chroniclers of this phenomenon is Paul Hawken, whose book *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Social Movement in History is Restoring Grace, Justice and Beauty to the World* (2007) describes how emergent, self-organized citizens around the planet are finding new ways to transform and manage our cities and regions. What is profoundly hopeful about Hawken's research is that there are more than a million – maybe even two million – non-profit and community based groups organizing, Hawken argues, like immune systems to defend our once healthy planet. This self-organizing, global response to reverse decay and restore

healthy systems is one measure of how urban ecologies mimic other biological systems. As Arlene Goldbard (2011) suggests, the millions of global actions that Hawken chronicles may be a form of biomimicry, “[...] enacting patterns of energy and organization that mirror the natural world.”

Jacobs was deeply interested in the ideas of Janine Benyus, whose path finding book *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature* (1997) found its way into Jacobs’s book *The Nature of Economies*. Following upon Benyus’s observations, Jacobs’s character Hiram has a clever grasp on how ecologies and planning might become urban ecologies. Hiram says that within an ecosystem,

[...] plants and animals pursue what amount to plans for the future. They do this even though they lack consciousness of the future, at least in the same sense that we are aware of it. They construct nests, dig burrows, establish families, locate food sources, put down roots, and germinate fruits. Together they compose an ecosystem, much as collections of enterprises with their plans for the future compose a settlement’s economy. The ecosystem doesn’t and can’t impose hierarchical command over the ensemble, which is self-organized and is making itself up as it goes along (Jacobs, 2000: p. 138).

Urban ecologists understand that these parallel and integrated systems are the key informants of how we must understand the relationships in *our* natural world. This place of integration, where *relationships* are understood to be the underlying principles for managing our destiny are, to paraphrase a title of another of Jacobs’s books, systems for understanding survival.

The need to understand and reverse the downward spiral we can readily measure from the effects of climate change, resource distribution, water quality, economic and social inequity, loss of species and so many other measures that can create hopeless visions for our future, a future Jacobs (2004) describes in her final book, *Dark Age Ahead*. Urban ecologists Vitousek, Mooney et al. (1997) point to the observation that:

[...] these seemingly disparate phenomena trace to a single cause – the growing scale of the human enterprise. The rates, scales, kinds, and combinations of changes occurring now are fundamentally different from those at any time in history; we are changing Earth more rapidly than we are understanding it.

One of the reasons the new planning paradigm is shifting toward urban ecology is that without an integrated understanding of the systems that compose our Earth, we will continue to see our resources as objects to be harvested and consumed. For example, the language of land *use* planning is evolving into a language of land *relationship* planning.

This shift to systems thinking, or web thinking as Jacobs described it, de-objectifies the world and how we use it, and instead defines it as a series of relationships within which we participate. Instead of seeing the world as parts

we see the world as a complex, interconnected, whole system. “Our view,” notes pioneering urban ecologist Marina Alberti (2008), “is that the interrelated processes among the subsystems (spheres) must be studied and understood to understand the ecology of a city. This is what modern Urban Ecology strives to do.” The deep roots of this elegant way of thinking can be found across cultures and disciplines. As John Muir (1997) observed in 1911, “When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

During a study abroad symposium in 2009, students from the University of Utah’s Department of City & Metropolitan Planning travelled to Germany to observe ways that planners have implemented effective strategies to reduce energy use, improve mobility and enliven places for people. Among the students was the senior class president, whose curiosity about cities was growing with each new destination on the journey. After staying at the Bauhaus in Dessau and discovering how the roots of modernism had transformed architecture worldwide, the students were on a train to Freiburg when the young class president asked why the social spaces, the streets and plazas she was seeing in Germany were so alive and animated in comparison to the desolate, concrete deserts she had seen in the modernist architecture of her university campus. She wondered what might be done to transform one of these bland, lifeless places on her campus, and on this train between Dessau and Freiburg an idea was born.

The students had been introduced to urban ecology as a way of thinking in their course, titled “Green Communities.” This course was developed using case studies of places where transition strategies had effectively transformed planning practice and implementation. Seeing the pioneering work of Wulf Dasseking and Rolf Disch in Freiburg was our primary destination. Freiburg and the city where these students lived in the United States had similarities in scale and geography, and for them to see the transferability of solutions from Freiburg to Salt Lake City made the destination a great case study in transitional, restorative, and green urbanism.

The idea born on the train led to a design competition to restore a roughly 550-square meter plaza (6,000 sq. ft.) to a place for people. The site was a vast concrete surface devoid of even the simplest amenities, such as places to sit. Bordered on one side by a newly remodeled library that serves as central common space for the entire campus, and a large water feature on the opposite side, this plaza is a nexus where thousands of people pass each day as they traverse the 620-hectare (1,534 acres) campus. It is a site that Jacobs’s friend, mentor and colleague William H. Whyte might have chosen for analysis in his film *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980). Surrounded by the handsome library, the well-scaled and joyful water feature and with vistas of mountains and valleys, the students’ curiosity about the dysfunction of this urban space inspired the project’s ultimate success.

The class president, displaying leadership around issues of sustainability and the importance of diversity, created the design competition as the formal way to provide the customary senior class gift for the campus. Rather than leave a legacy such as a new banner for the marching band or an inappropriately bolted down

stone bench with an inscription of memory, she pushed for restorative urbanism, creating what Jan Gehl (2004) describes as “places for people.” Using a vocabulary of community engagement inspired by Jacobs (1958), she proved that a citizen “[...] does not have to be a planner or an architect, or arrogate their functions, to ask the right questions.” The president’s persistence and perseverance to work through administrative hierarchies and bring the university’s economic and bureaucratic systems together toward a common goal was a model for community based, participatory practice. As Glenna Lang (2009) wrote of Jacobs and could just as easily fit this young leader, this was her “genius of common sense” in action.

The campus-wide design competition invited *all* members of the campus community to submit their ideas. Informed by Jacobs’s (1958) statement that places have “... the capability of providing something for everybody only because [they have] been created by everybody,” students, faculty and staff were invited to collaborate on design solutions. With a promise to build the jury-selected winning solution as well as provide a substantial cash prize to the winning entry, the competition, titled “Re-imagine the Plaza,” netted 13 collaborative designs for display in the library gallery. A jury of architecture faculty, campus planners and other campus citizens selected the winning entry. Not surprisingly but not by design, the winning entry was prepared by a group of students enrolled in a course titled “Urban Ecology.”

The course professor elected to use the plaza as a case study for students, to “[...] ask the right questions [...]” about how an urban ecology perspective might restore health and vitality to this underutilized plaza. The students’ proposal was titled *Restore Utah*, offering a deliberately prophetic nuance as an example of how, if brought to a larger scale, their solution as urban ecologists could inspire a restorative urbanism throughout the state. Using an urban ecology perspective, their proposal utilized a systems thinking approach using social, environmental and economic systems as points of departure. As a result of their whole systems approach, their design:

- Restores a measure of hydrologic health by removing impervious surfaces to allow storm water to percolate and recharge a depleted aquifer;
- Conserves water by adding native, drought resistant plant material to the plaza;
- Conserves energy by keeping storm water out of the metropolitan storm water recovery systems;
- Reduces the urban heat island effect by bringing shade to the plaza;
- Reduces maintenance costs associated with landscape maintenance;
- Establishes new policies allowing *moveable* tables and chairs to be placed on campus;
- Re-uses material (concrete) for other amenities to expose a “no-waste” approach to design and construction;

- Introduces affordable, locally prepared food with the addition of a food vendor on the plaza;
- Creates a social space at a nexus where students and faculty across many disciplines converge; and
- Provides a laboratory for students to explore the social life of this small urban space.

The integrated approach in the students' design process exemplifies an approach that engaged relationships rather than imposed objects on the plaza. As an evolution of knowledge and planning pedagogy, this service-learning project resulted in a tangible lesson of restorative urbanism and urban ecology. Importantly, when asked why her project to re-imagine the plaza was so important, the young leader responded that it was her hope that a diversity of people would begin congregating on the plaza and, through their accidental conversations, innovate new solutions that wouldn't otherwise emerge within the isolation of their single-discipline colleges.

The class president's wise (more genius of common sense) understanding of what are referred to as "Jacobs Spillovers" punctuates the interrelated outcomes of this exercise in urban acupuncture. Less about materials and more about relationships, the re-imagined plaza is now a place for people. In a further demonstration of the unexpected gifts of spillovers, her project has spawned two other significant re-imaginings.

Inspired in part by the 2008 Symposium at the University of Pennsylvania titled *Re-imagining Cities: Urban Design After the Age of Oil*, spillovers from the plaza project led to the creation of a campus-wide initiative under the heading *Re-Imagine the Campus*. In the Penn symposium, which marked the 50th anniversary of the 1958 University of Pennsylvania/Rockefeller Foundation "Conference on Urban Design Criticism" that included Jane Jacobs as well as Louis Kahn, Kevin Lynch, Ian McHarg, Lewis Mumford, and I.M. Pei, an exhibition of innovative case studies from around the world was launched. In a cascading series of spillovers, from re-imagining the plaza and the campus at large, inspiration from the 50th anniversary of the 1958 event attended by Jacobs has spawned yet another initiative at the University of Utah titled *Re-imagining Undergraduate Education*. This campus-wide, interdisciplinary project has its roots in systems thinking, and is being led by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, herself an architectural historian influenced by the work of Jane Jacobs.

In the book this author co-edited with Lynne Elizabeth (2010) titled *What We See: Advancing the Observations of Jane Jacobs*, there is an essay co-written by Pierre Desrochers and Samuli Leppala titled "Re-thinking 'Jacobs Spillovers,' or How Diverse Cities Actually Make Individuals More Creative and Economically Successful." In their chapter, the authors explore Jacobs's ideas about spillovers, introduced in her favorite book (1970) *The Economy of Cities*, and advance our knowledge about urban diversity and its effects on creativity and innovation. Among the discoveries they made in their research about spillovers, they concluded that

“[...] collaborating, formally or informally, with individuals possessing different skills, [...] results in the development of new or improved products or processes.” Whether applied to a spillover resulting from studying abroad that inspired the plaza project, or the spillover effect from the Penn symposium, to a complete re-imagining of undergraduate education in a highly-ranked public university, one can see new paradigms emerging.

Emergent thinking in the field of urban planning and design points to urban ecology as the new planning paradigm. Anything less than understanding our relationships with the natural world of which we are part “of the natural order” as Jacobs observes, will deepen our crisis in managing the very systems that sustains us. This is a profound turning point and one that that we cannot shy away from as we establish new ways of teaching and practicing the arts and sciences of city building. Unless we quickly embrace this new planning paradigm and engage citizens and practitioners in this new ecoliteracy, we may not be able to reverse the devolution we observe today. As Jacobs invited us to do in her seminal foreword, we must remain “interested in city ecology, respect its marvels, and discover more.”

## Bibliography

- Alberti, M., 2008. *Advances in Urban Ecology: Integrating Humans and Ecological Processes in Urban Ecosystems*. Seattle, WA: Springer.
- Benyus, J.M., 1997. *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature*. New York, NY: William Morrow Paperbacks.
- Gehl Architects, 2004. *Places for People*, City of Melbourne. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.gehlarchitects.dk/files/pdf/Melbourne\\_small.pdf](http://www.gehlarchitects.dk/files/pdf/Melbourne_small.pdf) [accessed 17 September 2013].
- Goldbard, A., 2011. Think Globally, Act Globally: Annals of the Culture of Politics, Part 2. [Online]. Available at: <http://arlenegoldbard.com/2011/10/17/think-globally-act-globally-annals-of-the-culture-of-politics-part-2/> [accessed 17 September 2013].
- Goldsmith, S.A. and Elizabeth, L., 2010. *What We See: Advancing the Observations of Jane Jacobs*. Oakland, CA: New Village Press.
- Hawken, P., 2007. *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Social Movement in History is Restoring Grace, Justice and Beauty to the World*. New York, NY: Viking Penguin.
- Jacobs, J., 1958. Downtown is for People. *Fortune Classic*. [Online]. Available at: <http://features.blogs.fortune.cnn.com/2011/09/18/downtown-is-for-people-fortune-classic-1958/> [accessed 17 September 2013].
- Jacobs, J., 1993 [1961]. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 3rd edition. New York, NY: Modern Library.
- Jacobs, J., 1970. *The Economy of Cities*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Jacobs, J., 2000. *The Nature of Economies*. New York, NY: Modern Library.

- Jacobs, J., 2004. *Dark Age Ahead*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Lang, G. and Wunsch, M., 2009. *Genius of Common Sense*. Boston, MA: David R. Godine.
- Lerner, J., 2010. Reviving Cities. In: S.A Goldsmith and L. Elizabeth (eds), *What We See: Advancing the Observations of Jane Jacobs*. Oakland, CA: New Village Press, pp. 184–91.
- Macy, J., 2007. *World as Lover, World as Self*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.
- Marzluff, J.M., Shulenberger, E., Endlicher, W., Alberti, M., Bradley, G., Ryan, C., ZumBrunnen, C., and Simon, U. (eds), 2008. *Urban Ecology: An International Perspective on the Interaction Between Humans and Nature*. Seattle, WA: Springer.
- Muir, J., 1997. *Nature Writing: My First Summer in the Sierra and Selected Essays*. New York, NY: Library of America.
- Vitousek, P.M., Mooney, H.A., Lubchenco, J. and Melillo, J.M., 1997. Human Domination of Earth's Ecosystems. *Science*, 277, pp. 494–9.

## Chapter 16

# What Would Jane Jacobs Have Said and Her Relevance for Today and Tomorrow

Klaus Brake

In the 1960s and 1970s Jane Jacobs's specific idea of the city was inspiring. It was a city enlivened and emotionally charged by its users: mixed use, parceled, dense, active public spaces, neighborhoods, identification, engagement, communication, responsibility, solidarity. Connected to this notion was a concept of city production and appropriation that went hand in hand with a small-scale urban economy, its agents, and the way in which they shaped space; with industrial-economic activities at the time still dominated by manufacturing and handcraft, the city was locally anchored and tended to be nationally oriented. This was the situation in the large European or transatlantic cities experienced by their creators. Identifying this urban economic base was a considerably more important aspect of Jane Jacobs's findings than her occasionally romanticized perception of city life.

Jacobs's theses about the city developed at a time when these very structures were being questioned by those shaping the city in the context of new spatial demands. The power of her ideas of urban development withered in the 1970s and 1980s reciprocally with the advancing superimposition of a large-scale, international economy of headquarters and chain stores – as Jacobs lamented – and the spatial culmination of Fordism in regards to the organization of work and free time, commercial and residential spaces. This shift, which ultimately took place after World War II, majorly reshaped Western cities; functional divisions, forced (auto)mobility, and suburbanization contributed to a reduction in the complexity and attractiveness of inner cities and thus assisted in their desolation and loss of meaning. However, there are now signs of a countermovement: a renewed and simultaneously new kind of meaning being attributed to (inner) cities (“reurbanization”). Once again it seems to be desirable to work and live in mixed-use districts like the historic areas in inner cities. This shift of orientation has found expression in emphatically urban residential neighborhoods as well as in “creative quarters.”

Phenomenologically we seem to be back in Jane Jacobs's city, but have we also returned in substance to that (earlier) city? In reality, the current logic driving the selection of locations and the appropriation of urban space is fundamentally different; these choices coincide – again, as Jacobs herself analytically argued – with the different demands of those using the space.

The recent increase in importance of inner cities, which has a dynamic all its own, continues to be based on the thematic spatial performance of consumption and culture, entertainment and tourism, each with its own synergy mediated by “experience.” What is new, however, is a renewed inner-city commodification driven by residential real estate and above all – though recently also hindered by – new types of work/economy. These types of work include fields in the “knowledge-based” economy, which straddles smart production, research and development, strategic consulting services, and creative industry. With their division of labor and resultant specializations these industries must be understood as an element of the current structural shift. Just as in each of its phases over the centuries, this transformation also entails changes to local parameters – and thus also involves new kinds of spatial configurations.

In its current form, this economic/cultural structural change represents the interaction of optimized possibilities of communication, division of labor, and a transcendence of space and time among technologies, the organization of work, and reproduction paradigms. Recent decades have experienced an epochal surge. At the moment, the central attributes of its effects on spatial structures can briefly be described by three partial processes.

The central process in this transformation is an accelerated surge in globalization’s centuries-long process. With entirely new communication media, both the physical transportation (as it concerns people and goods) and a virtual presence (as it concerns data) as well as its systemic integration, it is possible to react “in time” – which is qualitatively new – and not only manage the division of labor operationally but also now globally integrate its sophisticated processes. The result is that comparative advantages of location can now be used – or exploited – in a new, unforeseen intensity.

The breakdown and new, variable composition of activities usually rigidly organized in space and time – work located in one place, defined by one enterprise and one labor relation – go hand in hand with this shift. Today’s deepened division of labor, a new kind of “flexibilization,” makes it possible to optimize the organization, effectiveness, and even location of each individual activity. The results of being oriented toward such things as “core businesses” or outsourcing show that added-value segments are less frequently executed in a fashion we recognize.

Flexibility, however, simultaneously goes hand in hand with a relaxation of the rules according to which one must operate. While particular economic activities provided by structural continuity have become volatile, comprehensive deregulation has also called traditionally organized patterns and assumptions into question. The dissolution of boundaries between working and private life, temporary projects, work mobility, and increased job turnover question long-ingrained rhythms and cultural norms such as “normal employment,” one’s career biography, and the classic model of life.

The productive use of knowledge is now quintessential in the structuring of space. This can be explained by the fact that the current structural change again

greatly deepens the division of labor, encourages further tertiarization, and distinguishes individual areas of occupation. More independent occupations that are especially reliant on their knowledge base thus have the potential to optimize their division of labor as well as to make their own choices pertaining to location.

In today's extremely intensive global competition, these knowledge-based occupations are subjected to a nuanced necessity to achieve advances in knowledge – that is, to perpetually and very quickly generate new ideas for as-of-yet-unknown products and services – in order to keep up with the manifold needs of the economic, social, cultural, and political spheres of this fragmented structural change. Achieving such advances requires stimulation of the highest originality, the source of which cannot be anything already known. Quite the opposite: the source of this stimulation is the hitherto unknown knowledge of others, of strangers and their specific cultural and social experiences, perspectives, and attitudes. This, of course, is not identical to information, knowledge already coded and on the market, always increasingly extensive, directly accessible to all, with which everyone can work everywhere. Advances in knowledge that go beyond pure information rely on that slumbering, elusive, implicit knowledge. Implicit knowledge must first be lifted from physical agents, whose tacit knowledge is bound in locality. In order to be able to spontaneously encounter and exchange with these people, the places in which they can manifest and represent themselves become very important: equivalently complexly structured “Optionsräume,” flexible spaces of manifold options.

Yet another aspect of the current structural change is quintessential in its effects on space. The very rapid surge of globalization, flexibilization, and deregulation amplifies what one might call the “transgression of boundaries,” the dissolution of unified space-time or culture-perception structures and paradigms to which we have long been accustomed (such as a coherent career trajectory, consistent relationships, the predominance of one “home,” etc.). This has been described as the erosion of the normal work-life relationship with its clear and straightforward delineations, a breakdown that incites elementary needs to be “re-embedded” – anchored in networks and milieus defined by proximities – not only in order to anchor oneself culturally in the face of rapid globalization (in order to anchor one's own individual identity) but also primarily in order to find stability in the face of fundamental insecurities about the future and irregularities in one's career and daily life. Some kind of foundation is necessary just to be able to organize and achieve all those things necessary to reproduction: getting to work, buying goods, childcare, recreational time, new jobs, further qualifications, and so on – and all of that in the (indeed finite) 24-hour day. In this context, work-life balance thus becomes something very concrete and a question of proximity. Particularly for those involved in knowledge-based occupations, deregulated operational forms take very specific shapes.

In this context, knowledge-based economies can be explained by their observable affinity for complexly structured Optionsräume – be it on the stage of the metropolitan region or in urban neighborhoods – and identified as new

agents of urban transformation. These types of structural attributes can especially be observed in the creative economy, a specific segment of the knowledge-based economy.

The creative economy is typically described as fields related to fashion, art, advertising, communication, architecture, and media; occupations that are unique in continually coming up with brand new ideas for services and products (content) and for their communicative performance (design). These fields make up a segment of creative processes defined by a division of labor, specialization, and often independence, processes whose actual phases of materialization and/or production are many times removed, to the extent that their creations do not also constitute a use value or brand of their own.

What they do is strongly shaped procedurally by the continual generation of new ideas in open interaction primarily with others' more implicit knowledge. In practice this means a specific, distinctively experimental approach to interweaving material and social components (contrary to routines), to generating often individual products (contrary to mass production), and by being very mobile. Staying up to date and rotating project organization force the rapid transformation of related tasks, topics, and locations. Organizationally this corresponds to expressly open, largely informal forms of operation: a small scale, relatively high percentage of self-employment, relatively little fixed-capital infrastructure, and low production depth. Operational structures in these kinds of economic fields, which are new and conspicuous in cities, are generally conceived in strongly discrete terms: short-term contracts and cyclical demand (modes of demand) correspond with volatile, deregulated, and compartmentalized structures. The necessity to cooperate with others in business, to be continuously present on the scene, paired with the need to balance work and private life, are consciously compensated for in networks of primarily close proximity.

Knowledge-based/creative jobs are shaped in a starkly situative manner by the spontaneous interaction of knowledge, experimentation, and identification, which corresponds to an affinity to spaces that inspire, hold manifold options, and encourage communication and cooperation. These spaces, in turn, correspond to compartmentalized operational structures' need to be rooted: on the one hand mentally, socially, and culturally, as it pertains to a sense of "home" in a communicative and experiential milieu (a particular "scene"), on the other hand in how it relates to the organization of work and, more specifically, to the production of creations. High network intensity, essentially an illustration of the externalization of multiple job components and the appropriation of infrastructures as general production requirements, can be observed in the extreme focus on core competencies and the reduction of one's own operational complexity. Spontaneity and experimentation – parallel to typical web-based communication – orient themselves around proximities. "Working in a café" and office sharing are forms of work that seem collective or even cooperative, and they assume the urban structure of an individual's surroundings to be extension of an office; the neighborhood becomes the production space where products and services are

honed by the inspirational and cooperative environment, which boasts high levels of diversity and the continual dynamics of a work in progress. The neighborhood acts as a kind of sounding board for surplus symbolic capital and has the effect of a physically self-reflecting “production milieu,” the mechanism and powers of which have long been recognized in regional configurations of successful niches (“hidden champions”). Clearly such non-urban characteristics are now moving into consciously urban structures; as a result their use no longer corresponds to the local organization of the many individual functionally defined, division-of-labor-based, and complementary production functions (factor optimization) of industrial or Fordist enterprises.

The relationship to everyday life and its tasks lends momentum to the knowledge-based/creative economy’s affinity to expressly complexly structured places. Start-up companies, self-employed-cum-self-exploiting occupations, high levels of identification with these, nurturing contacts for follow-up work, and patchwork relationships force us to organize life and work equally in Optionsräume; work-life balance shifts from a form of freedom to an unconditional imperative.

If these are the reasons for the new use of complexly structured urban spaces, their forms demonstrate a high density of encounters, inspiration, and facilities as well as the possibility to establish flexible and frequently small-scale and simply equipped uses of the space. This is commensurate with neighborhoods that enable small-scale mixed use (diversity) and temporary use (experimentation) and are easily accessible thanks to their spatial proximity. As concrete urban structures, they have the turn-of-the-century rebuilding of European/Atlantic cities to thank for the qualities we today consider typical of the inner city. In this respect it is not surprising that such urban spaces are being reevaluated and shaped and can be found in many cities’ inner districts. The attractiveness of physical proximity has revived “neighborhoods” more generally, albeit it with a new kind of logic: an area can be considered close-knit to the extent that it distinctly fulfills various respective functions for these new urban-savvy tasks and agents, in particular:

- Organizational functions that facilitate a kind of cooperation within close physical proximities, a function previously inherent above all to larger factories/companies: the neighborhood as extension of the workshop, atelier, workspace.
- Compensational functions that, in the sense of relaxation and security, counterbalance certain pressures that correlate with a high degree of flexibility: the neighborhood as a place of retreat.
- Identification functions that help mentally/culturally stabilize individuals in the face of generally intensifying multi-local or globalized forms of communication: the neighborhood as “home.”

Even in urban spaces such as these, we could again wrongly imagine ourselves to be in Jane Jacobs’s city phenomenologically. Despite the sheen of a post-industrial and more pronounced knowledge-based/creative economy, such an urban affinity

also looks familiar since the especially productive use of knowledge has indeed already been long connected to external conditions that we could call “urban.” The social components of division of labor have historically manifested themselves in our cities while tertiarization simultaneously forced further differentiation; cities since the Middle Ages, in their expansion of handcraft and trade into trade fairs, banks, arts, technology, and scholarship, have been the labors of such tertiarization, which today finds its predominant shape in knowledge-based economies. Thus our cities, with their experience explicating and implementing ideas, continually qualify themselves anew. We can draw a historical analogy to the explicitly urban (re)concentration of particularly non-routine (or even innovative) activities over the course of earlier communication technology breakthroughs (be it the locomotive, the car, or the telephone) and their potentials for geographic dispersion.

Externally, today’s small-scale, dense, mixed-use urban spaces truly do arouse a sense of *déjà-vu*. And what makes them attractive, useful spaces is again increasingly the special advantage of urban agglomeration, as Jane Jacobs the economist already concluded. In substance, however, the development is quite contradictory. The advantages of complex structured spaces are owed to different space-users from new economic fields characterized by division of labor, which have little or no remaining connection to industrial fields. The small- to middle-sized structures of a knowledge-based/creative economy are not identical to the industrial remnants and leftover Fordist structures that once shaped inner cities. After a phase during which economic structures little determined inner-city locations, we are now experiencing a nuanced use of complexly structured (urban) areas in their new guise of “production milieus.” This is a causally and structurally essential new aspect. The city is being produced by a whole new variety of creators.

This also affects the kind of city directly linked to this phenomenon: the appropriation of the city results in very individual qualities of interaction. The current structural transformation shapes the relationship.

A central criterion of the new economy is openness: in the conditions of action (flexibility) as well as in the quality of the structures (an urban “feeling”). And openness is a concept with a generally positive connotation; the knowledge-based/creative economy in practice, however, cannot be simply understood as an idyll. There are sufficient theoretical and empirical reasons to assume a critical stance, as this new use of urban resources is being executed in ways that are scarcely open and are indeed very selective.

It is again the formidably strengthened concurrence of competition and division of labor that forces the broader individualization of an agent’s self-image and actions. One expression of this is structural, the dissipation of overarching affiliations with class, family, and so on, in favor of accordingly broader “modern” arrangements; at the same time, individualization encourages the rivalries (reflected in acceleration and aggregation), tension, and individual interests that accompany competition. Compared to a *res publica*, simple common sense is hardly self-evident. Three dimensions seem especially worth discussing in the context of the new urban character.

The first is fragmentation. A stronger knowledge-based social economy strains the level of cohesion of urban structures. The following phenomena have become plausibly and empirically evident:

- **Polarization:** More creative, knowledge-based occupations tend to correspond to both higher criteria of talents/qualifications and social competencies as well as to elaborately structured urban space. A low degree of formalization, regarding qualifications and working conditions, contributes to higher disintegration of work situations or of yields. The line between lucrative and exploitative positions is thin. Knowledge-based/creative skills or qualifications also do not necessarily diffuse in the local economy and labor market as broadly as in manual industries due to their structures of added value. So what becomes of a city's places and people who are not first pick in the new economy?
- **Selectivity:** The patterns of appropriation of urban structures, as conveyed by the mandatory generation of new knowledge and ideas, correspond to distinctly situational priorities, to accordingly obligatory values, and to the individual fulfillment of these, generally and in the physical city.
- **Mobility:** The accelerated crystallization of and variety among respectively important operational conditions and the comparatively minimal amount of fixed capital of many, mostly creative, service providers principally prove – if measured by time and place – the city's low level of continuity and its variform transformations and movements. The new economy zeros in on and accordingly elevates individual eligible areas just as quickly as it later abandons them for new areas when the milieu changes (nomadic).
- **Gentrification:** The reliance on very specific surroundings, the further upgrades it implicitly will undergo, and the professionalization of certain jobs stimulate the appreciation of attractive places in the city. In the appropriation cycle from urban pioneers to established denizens, we now expect the displacement of not only the original users but also the first phase of "new" users.
- **Closed milieus:** Rearranging the urban fabric is accompanied by further segregation. Anchoring both professional and private operational structures relies on cluster logic and cluster mentalities as well as on an affinity for thematic and atmospheric scenes. As open as one may want or need to be in one's communication, cooperation, etc. (keyword: options), the basic environment seems conspicuously insular, homogenous and concerned with itself, occupied with habitus and codes.

The second dimension is aggressiveness. Pronounced competition also contributes to a greater tension in one's own actions and allows emphatically individual interests to become more strongly and abruptly determinant in further dealings. In overcoming insecurities in both professional and everyday life, latent volatility and potential precariousness might find expression in pronounced aggressiveness.

Those expecting today's urbanite to be an incarnation of the flâneur shouldn't be surprised when the urbanite turns out to be an egoist of urban appropriation, in fact the embodiment of a "new intolerance of the creative class."

The third dimension is conflict. Dealing with urban resources in such ways is a new expression of contention. Historically these conflicts seem to be occurring more frequently, mediated by individual but numerous events and users of urban space, while now demonstrating an individual, and in this sense also surprising, relationship to the city and a new way of interacting with it.

Deregulated patterns of work and private life and a new remove from comprehensive state services help to explain an unusually new aspect of self-organization. Agents allied ad hoc and by common objectives attend more and more to partial aspects of their community – from schools to transportation to parks. Implemented and more avidly participatory politics and community involvement is equally due to a new sense of self-reliance as it is to a shift in perception of the state's exercise of functions. This kind of responsibility-driven intervention in community matters, however, is born of conspicuous self-interest. Negotiations go hand in hand with various conflicts, as is often evident in a district's appreciation; conflicts continue among the agents of the creative industries themselves, as when the phase of established users questions or displaces the urban pioneers, such as has been the case in Berlin's MediaSpree development or Hamburg's conversion of the Gängeviertel. Meanwhile such conflicts have ignited throughout Europe, often under the militant banner of "To whom does the city belong?!" – a solution that was last advanced in the 1970s and 1980s. The result is a latently less cohesively appropriated city.

Urban spaces similar in structure to those Jane Jacobs described are today accompanied by an urban economy that follows a completely different logic and manifests completely different characteristics. We should accustom ourselves to the idea of a city driven – economically and spatially – more strongly by competition, one typically not collegial and in turn segregated: indeed the very opposite of the city Jacobs championed.

Jacobs's vision of the city has been outstripped both in the collective imagination as well as in its concrete foundations; however, in her explanations' propagated approach – that the urban economy determines the respective type of city – she remains pathbreaking.

## Chapter 17

# Jane Jacobs's Hamburg Lecture, 1981

Jane Jacobs was invited to speak at the “Residential Areas and Urban Renewal” conference in 1981. On the occasion of the Council of Europe’s campaign for urban renewal, held under the umbrella of the Federal Minister of Regional Planning, Building and Urban Development, the “role of new housing development and modernization by urban renewal” was due to be discussed at the conference. The topic seemed tailor-made for Jane Jacobs.

Federal minister Dr. Dieter Hack explicated in the conference brochure:

Renewal policies that are in touch with the people require planning in small steps. Urban renewal is no longer possible at city or district scale. It needs to be approached neighborhood by neighborhood. [...] The European campaign for urban renewal can only fulfill its purpose if the concept of sensitive urban renewal is carried forward and implemented in practical policies,

Hamburg’s tenants’ groups and neighborhood initiatives criticized the event for being a “glorification conference” to which tenants were not invited.

As in her first book, Jane Jacobs refers back to “the architect” Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846–1912), his Plan of Chicago published in 1909 with E.H. Bennett, and his influential and much quoted “make big plans” theory. The project being described (“patching up small holes”) is the St. Lawrence Neighborhood in Toronto. Rudolf Hillebrecht invited Jane Jacobs to Hanover for the Constructa Fair in 1967, not 1966 as she herself noted.

The diction of the lecture and its original translation have been kept. Typing errors have been corrected. A German version of her lecture was published in the journal *neue heimat monatshefte* (1/182: pp. 50–55) under the title “Können großangelegte Planungen die Probleme der Stadterneuerung lösen?” [“Can large scale plans solve the problems of urban renewal?”].

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Jane Jacobs**

#### **Can Big Plans Solve the Problem of Renewal?**

Some plans have to be big, detailed, and stretch for years into the future because of their substance. A mundane example is a plan for building a city subway system.

Or to take a more romantic illustration, when a trip to Saturn is proposed the planning has to be very comprehensive, very detailed and very much in control until the whole scheme is complete and the aim is finished. The plan has to be big or it is useless.

It seems to me sometimes that many city and town planners must be frustrated space-travel planners. But pieces of our cities, or for that matter suburbs or even New Towns, are not going to take off for Saturn. They aren't going to take off for anywhere. The substance doesn't mandate big, comprehensive, tightly controlled planning the way either a subway system or a spaceship does. Little plans are more appropriate for cities than big plans. First I am going to mention some of the disadvantages of big plans, then suggest how we can treat our cities in ways appropriate for their renewal.

To begin with disadvantages of big plans, let us think for a moment about boredom. Making big plans doesn't bore planners. Indeed, the bigger and more comprehensive the plans, the more it engages all their faculties and so the more it interests and engrosses them. But the results bore everybody else. A scholar who retired some years ago after a lifetime of work in the American Museum of Natural History told me he had been spending a good part of his new leisure exploring post-war housing projects and suburban tracts. What he saw appalled him. Consider, he said, the value that human beings throughout the ages and in all cultures have placed on visual diversity and elaboration. Man is the animal that decorates himself and all manner of things he makes and builds. If we were to find a trait so persistent and widespread in any other species, he went on, we would take it seriously. We would conjecture that so striking and universal a trait had some connection with the success of the animal. His own surmise was that our busy human brains demand a constant flow of extremely diverse impressions and information to develop in the first place, and thereafter must be fed with constant and diverse flows or they are genuinely deprived. In sum, he said, boredom has to be taken seriously, and especially visual boredom. Hatred of boredom may be a healthy revulsion against sense and brain deprivation. Paradoxically, he went on, it is thus probably logical for us to behave illogically, even destructively, if that is what we must do to escape boredom.

Whether his analysis is correct or not, his own revulsion against the terrible visual monotony he found in the carefully planned city is not unusual. I myself had assume the monotony was hard on adults, and perhaps hardest of all on adolescents, and least bothersome to little children. He disputed this. Little children in genuinely rural or in wilderness surroundings, he pointed out, are inundated with a rich diversity of natural details during their formative years. So are little children brought up amid richly diverse streets of cities and towns where many kinds of activities and sights come to their attraction. But in the planned city and suburban precincts he said, especially these of large scale, small children are being deprived of diverse everyday visual impression as few children anywhere have ever been deprived before.

Thinking of his words I sometimes wonder whether the hunger for television we see in so many of these little children is a struggle to fill the visual vacuums of their lives. Their homes and playgrounds, so orderly looking, so buffered from the muddled, messy intrusions of the great world, may accidentally be ideally planned for children to concentrate on television, but for too little else their hungry brains require.

There is no way of overcoming the visual boredom of big plans. It is built right into them because of the fact that big plans are the products of too few minds. If those minds are artful and caring, they can mitigate the visual boredom a bit, but at the best, only a bit. Genuine, rich diversity of the built environment is always the product of many, many different minds, and at its richest is also the product of different periods of time with their different aims and fashions. Diversity is a small souls phenomenon. It requires collections of little plans.

Big plans, in theory, are justified as being gifts to the future. Planning is foresight, the future is what it is all about. Yet big plans, in which everything has been foreseen as far as possible, stifle alternative possibilities and new departures. To plan for the future, and at the same time stifle fresh possibilities, is a contradiction in terms.

Where do the fresh ideas about planning itself emerge and prove themselves? In the planned precincts? No, that is the last place to seek them. The fresh planning and architectural ideas of our own time have emerged in unplanned places, or amid collections of many little plans, and we may expect that the same must be true of the future, true of planning ideas we can't foresee today.

Planning has its styles and its changing rationales, just as surely as clothing design does, or as any other industry or profession does that is concerned with design and function and the relationship between the two. Nowadays the new fashion in planning is to plan or mixed uses. This new fashion didn't arise in the city housing projects, suburban tracts and New Towns that exist today. They were not only the product of a different fashion; they stifled any other fashion in planning thought from incubating there. Thus, ironically, new ideas concerning planning itself had to emerge, if they were to emerge at all, where planning had less influence. Here and there, among muddled collections of little plans in parts of cities that predated modern planning, people found loopholes in zoning and they also found food for imagination. In old industrial buildings, strange new architectural flowers blossomed. Here an abandoned spaghetti factory, there an obsolete chocolate factory, yonder a fine old warehouse took on new life as shelters for skylighted garden restaurants, dance rehearsal halls, little shops, small workshops, all muddled together, sometimes with an office or an apartment sneaked in. Here and there people began surreptitiously moving themselves and their families into left buildings, manufacturing space, because they liked what they could do with the grand, raw spaces they could transform by grace of their own little plans.

To be sure, in one sense this was nothing new. People in previous generations had converted carriage houses to dwellings, inserted stores into houses, turned

former mansions into schoolhouses. But fresh ideas did emerge, especially in former industrial buildings. The architectural adaptations were often stunningly imaginative and humanistic. The very muddles of activities that took to co-existing within buildings, as well as in adjoining buildings, seemed to stimulate architectural imaginations grown weary and stultified under the iron hand of big planning. Finally, after enough of the new little aberrations had emerged, architects a few years ago began taking boldly of planning new buildings too for mixed use. The idea of mixed uses, muddled together has now begun to sink even into the consciousness of big planners and developers.

The principle at work here embraces more than fresh ideas about planning itself. It embraces ideas about fresh possibilities in general. All new ideas start small and all new ideas, at the time they emerge, flout the accepted ways of doing things. By the time an idea of any sort is risked in big planning, it is already middle aged or old as an idea. Big plans live intellectually off of little plans. Big plans precisely because they are big, are not fertile ground for fresh, different possibilities. The deficiency, like their boredom, is built right into their bigness and coherence. "Renewal" shouldn't imply fossilization. The two are again a contradiction in terms. It is absurd to think of big plans as appropriate tools for city renewal, of all things.

My third and final objection to big plans is that once in place, they are so inflexible. The greater the scale of the planning, the more inflexible the result. When change impinges itself on big plans, adaptation to change comes hard. And again the deficiency is built in. It is a price of comprehensiveness and coherence. The United States, for example, has become woefully inflexible with respect to transportation, not accidentally but by plan. The country's great highway program was a 20-year plan adopted in 1956. It was a big plan both in geographical and in time scale, and into it was dovetailed almost all the country's suburban planning and the cities' master plans too. Now, too late, with alternatives long stifled, the side-effects of this grand planning can be seen: exorbitant energy use, pollution, land waste, and costs impose for personal transportation on people who can no longer afford the costs. But the suburbs built to coordinate with this transportation, and the cities rebuilt to coordinate with it, are unadaptable to alternative ways of moving people and goods, precisely because they were so well planned for the automobile instead.

Big plans make mistakes, and when the plans are very big the mistakes can be very big also. But the objection I am raising when I speak of flexibility and adaptability goes beyond saying that big plans can turn out to be bad plans. In their very nature, big and comprehensive plans are almost doomed to be mistaken. This is because everything we do changes the world a bit. Everything has its side-effects and repercussions. Everything others do changes the world a bit too. We can't anticipate all the effects and repercussions of change. Big plans render us unadaptable because we can't adjust to the changes not foreseen in their making, we can hardly even acknowledge the changes as they become evident. We become too committed, in a big way, to our big plans.

Life is an ad hoc affair. It has to be improvised all the time because of the hard fact that everything we do changes what is. This is distressing to people who would like to see things beautifully planned out and settled once and for all. That cannot be.

Does all this mean that trying to plan is useless? No, of course not. Trying to use foresight, which is what planning is, is obviously so necessary and useful that most of us are practicing it constantly. We plant daffodil bulbs in October and set the alarm clock at night. We can plan for our renewal of cities too, but what I am proposing is that we practice making little plans for that purpose, not big ones. I think we need to relearn the art of doing that, and that there are ways to relearn the art of doing that, and that there are ways to relearn it.

To explain what I mean, I will tell how the practice of renewal planning has gradually changed in my own city, Toronto. I am using Toronto not because it is necessarily *avant garde* or has all the answers. It doesn't. Nobody does, and no place does. But we have been getting a glimmer there of how to plan for little plans, even for large collections of little plans on big sites, and for that reason and because I have watched the change come first hand, I'll tell a story about Toronto.

The story begins in 1973, when citizens' anger against big planning there boiled over, one chilly spring morning before dawn, on a dilapidated street where, the day before, employees of a building wrecking company had erected a high board fence around 20 old houses that were to be demolished, and had begun crashing holes in the roof of the most beautiful house right in the center of the group. These houses, although they were neglected and run down, were interesting and human looking in comparison with what was to go up in their place: six identical apartment towers planned by the province's housing ministry for low income tenants. Actually, the plan for the new housing was not a big plan, as such things go. It occupied not quite half of a single long city block. But it looked like a big plan. It shouted monotony, stultification, inflexibility.

The people gathered in the predawn dark that morning to protect what was planned came from neighborhood organizations far and wide across the city. They weren't against low income housing; they were against big plans and things that looked like big plans which, bit by bit of had been destroying the fabric of the city. They had no plan for how to stop this scheme, except to plead with the wrecking workmen to stay their hands. But as they stood talking together and stamping their feet in the cold, waiting for the workmen to come, somebody mentioned that it is illegal to wreck buildings unless a fence has been put up around them. The remark was repeated from person to person, and group to group, and without another word everyone began taking action. You would be amazed at how rapidly and purposefully several hundred men, women and children, with no one directing them, can dismantle a sturdily built fence and turn it back to neatly stacked piles of lumber. When the workmen arrived, just as the last boards were being stacked, they couldn't do anything until they had rebuilt the fence.

The mayor of Toronto, when he learned what had happened, used the few hours of grace the protestors had won to persuade the provincial housing authorities

to hold their plan in abeyance while he explored alternatives. The provincial authorities agreed, provided that an alternative cost no more than their scheme and would provide as many housing units. They did not expect those provisions to be met, because big planning had stifled their own imaginations and sense of ingenuity. But over the next few weeks the Mayor, the city's commissioner of housing, and one of the city's most brilliant firm of architects did plan what was supposedly impossible. Their alternate scheme saved all the old houses and converted their interiors onto new flats. The rest of the housing required, which was most of it, was put into new buildings inserted in the backyards. The new buildings had to be ingeniously, even a little crazily, worked into the space and so did lanes and little courtyards. Furthermore, to make the thing fit, the apartments couldn't be more or less duplicates of each other. The scheme, because of the very limitations the site imposed when the old buildings remained, had to embrace a great variety of accommodations, from dwellings for families with children on lower floors, to apartments for single people, for elderly couples, and even – in one of the old houses a boarding house for elderly men. Standardization of any sort wouldn't work on a site so difficult, but variety would.

Getting this alternative accepted was not easy. Even after the provincial authorities agreed to it, there were struggles with the federal bureaucracy, the lender of the building funds. The width of every courtyard and lane had to be defended, and even the size and placement of some of the windows. Nevertheless, the city by standing firm won its points. The thing was built. It has now been occupied for almost six years, and it fits so well into the neighborhood, and so much adds to its interest instead of detracting from it, that the old houses across the street, which had also been run down and dilapidated, have now been bought up and rehabilitated privately. No such renewing effect as that occurred on streets bordering the city's big planned projects. The builder of a luxury project in another part of the city so much liked what was being done in this poorer section that he too set his project behind a row of old buildings, linking the two with lanes. This is the only instance I know of in North America in which an expensive building copied a low-income building.

The success of this first public financed infill housing plan led the city to seek out other awkward sites for scattered little plans. Every site was different, with different planning problems. In all cases the old buildings were left, not destroyed, no matter what limitations that imposed. Sometimes the old buildings nearby were incorporated in the new schemes and rehabilitated too; in other cases the new buildings were simply inserted among the old in what had been vacant lots or parking lots. Some of the infill building has been high; most of it is low; but high or low these little plans have all been used to knit together again pieces of the city fabric that had become frayed or unraveled.

That is one form of city renewal, knitting up the little holes, but what about the very big holes? What about the sites that seem to demand big planning because they are big sites? In Toronto, some of the parts of the city that have needed renewal most are huge areas near the waterfront which were first blighted by the railroads,

then by expressways bordering the railroad, were taken over by industries and then abandoned by industries, leaving them as wastelands of junkyards, parking lots, and weedgrown vacant spaces interspersed here and there with an old industrial building, a warehouse, a transformer station.

Just such a great tract was chosen by the city for renewal in 1975, a tract so large that the construction would have to take place in phases, requiring, it was thought, about 15 years for completion. Only a few years earlier, the city's planners and politicians would have assumed that to do anything here they must first make a comprehensive, detailed plan for the whole thing. But the planners, administrators and politicians who had already previously worked on the infill schemes I have told about had been changed by that experience. Now they respected little plans, ingenuity, opportunism, variety; and from their infill experience they had learned new ways of thinking about planning itself. For this big tract, they did not work out a big, finished plan, but instead a scheme that would be hospitable to many little plans. For this they used five major devices.

First, instead of thinking of the big tract as a place in its own right, to be set apart from the city, they thought of it as just another piece of city fabric, to be knit into the existing city on its north, east and west. They could not knit it in on the south because there it was cut off by the railroad and expressway. So first they planned streets that would attach the tract into existing city streets without a break. They forgot everything they had learned in school about planning cul-de-sacs, and about buffering off residential areas with figurative Do Not Disturb signs, and laid out streets inside the tract that connect every part with every other part. These streets, real city streets, not fake suburban or country streets, together with a long narrow spine of park or commons running through the tract from end to end, are the skeleton of the plan.

Second, apart from providing this skeleton, they did not try to plan the whole tract from the start. They planned only the first phase to be built, and planned even that loosely. Apart from choosing a location for a combination school and apartment house – a mixed use building – they contented themselves with designating some streets for low buildings and some street locations for high buildings.

Third, they left to developers and their architects how the buildings were to look and what kinds of dwellings they were to contain. The developers include, to be sure, the city's own housing department, but they also include a great variety of independently run housing cooperatives and private developers as well. Some of the housing is for rent to residents, some is for sale. If the developers want to mix stores, restaurants or theaters in with the housing, they can. That is part of leaving room for little plans. There is no shopping center. Shops turn up where other minds than those of the planners think they will be successful.

Fourth, the planners gave thought to other aspects of flexibility. In buildings developed under the city's own supervision, what is today a house for a family can potentially be recycled into flats in the future, and vice-versa. What is now housing can potentially be recycled into shops in the future, just as happens in a living,

changing city which isn't going to take off for Saturn. Other developers have been encouraged to think in terms of adaptability too.

And fifth, the few old brick industrial buildings scattered about in the site, which had been thought of previously as part and parcel of its blight, were not demolished to create a clean slate. Every one of them is cherished, to be recycled and to help provide a few links with the past and its fashions in building. The fact that the tract contains so little from the past was not thought of as an asset, but as its chief deficiency. The first of the recycled industrial buildings is now occupied by housing and shops, and a handsome building it is. Significantly enough, even before the site was chosen for renewal, one of the old industrial buildings had already been recycled into a beautiful young people's theater, and of course it remains.

About a third of the tract is now completed and occupied, and its streets are delightful, full of variety with surprises around every corner. It is so popular and successful that building of the rest is proceeding faster than the planners had at first supposed was feasible.

Recently I asked the architect who had been employed in the city's housing office to lay out the street skeleton and park and choose the school site, what he thought would go on a particularly prominent spot, still untouched. "I have no idea," he said.

Nobody knows at this point. All we know is that when the right idea comes along, the city will probably recognize it. We don't have to decide until then, just for the sake of deciding. We don't have any monopoly on ideas for this neighborhood. Why should we?

Into my mind, when he said this, flashed a memory from my previous visit to Germany, back in 1966. I remembered a day I had spent with Professor Hillebrecht, the city architect of Hanover. First he had shown me around the center of the city, and I was filled with admiration for the skill, sensitivity and imagination with which the buildings had been inserted there to repair the destruction of the city's fabric from the war. Then he took me to the city's outskirts to see a large residential tract, a big plan, as boring as all big plans. Perhaps to cheer me up, the next thing he showed me, also in the city's outskirts, was a romantic looking, vacant and dilapidated, rambling masonry building, which if I remember correctly had once been occupied by a religious order, and which was surrounded by large wooded grounds. "We don't know," he answered. "The right idea hasn't come along. That doesn't worry me," he went on. "We don't need to decide everything. We have to leave something for the next generation. They'll have ideas too."

With that, my admiration for Professor Hillebrecht, which was already high, really soared. Here was a planner who was really thinking of the future – thinking of it with respect, hope and affection. How different, I thought, from Daniel Burnham. Burnham was an American architect living at the turn of the century. He said something very influential in America. "Make no little plans," he said.

They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans, aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.

Naturally, that sentiment remains to this day a favorite quotation of American planners. Burnham wanted to control the future.

Planning for all of us is a practical, everyday necessity. No responsible person can get along without trying to apply foresight. It is also enjoyable to most of us. Indeed, planning is so enjoyable that the chance to do it in a great big way is one of the seductions of great power: one reason people seek great power. But planning to gratify the impulse to plan, planning done for the sake of planning itself, is deadly stuff. If we are going to err in our planning – and we are, because what is perfect? – it is better to err on the side of being loose, minimal, a little too open to improvisation, rather than the reverse. A good rule of thumb would be to make no plan bigger than it must be, and to project it no farther into the future than we simply have to. Wherever we have the choice between making a big plan or providing instead for collections of little plans, let us choose the collections of little plans and the advantages they bring us with their diversity, fresh ideas, and flexibility.

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

# Index

## A

Abercrombie, Patrick 60  
Abrams, Charles 46  
Alberti, Marina 228  
Alinsky, Saul 38  
Altrock, Uwe 9, 199  
Albers, Gerd 148, 157  
Alexander, Christopher 219  
Amerling, Friedrich 99  
Anderson, Martin 179, 180  
Annan, Kofi 10  
Anson, Brian 206  
Arnheim, Rudolf 64  
Arvidsson, Margareta 145  
Auffahrt, Sid 144

## B

Bacon, Edmund 127, 173, 174, 178, 179  
Bahrtdt, Hans Paul 90, 148, 149, 154, 155  
Baird, George 42, 43, 52  
Banfield, Edward 179  
Bauer, Catherine 110  
Baumeister, Reinhard 85  
Bennett, Edward H. 241  
Benyus, Janine 227  
Berndt, Heide 149  
Bilgin, Ihsan 138  
Blake, Peter 77, 159, 160  
Blakely, Edward James 77  
Bloomberg, Michael 15  
Blumenfeld, Hans 144, 147  
Boeddinghaus, Gerhard 85, 90, 143, 148  
Brake, Klaus 9, 233  
Brandes Gratz, Roberta 6, 14, 21, 32  
Brandt, Willy 159  
Breslin, Jimmy 23  
Broadbent, Alan 25  
Bruns-Berentelg, Jürgen 163  
Burnham, Daniel 3, 9, 158, 241, 248, 249

## C

Campanella, Thomas J. 18, 19, 137, 162  
Capra, Fritjof 29  
Carson, Rachel 18  
Certeau, Michel de 61  
Chaplin, Charlie 200  
Christiaanse, Kees 130  
Clay, Lucius D. 142  
Clos, Joan 10  
Cohen, Leonard 100  
Collins, John F. 173  
Conrads, Ulrich 144, 145  
Coombes, Anthony 45, 46  
Crombie, David 39, 43, 47  
Cullen, Gordon 45, 68, 69, 164

## D

Dasseking, Wulf 228  
Davidoff, Paul 179  
Day Hicks, Louise 178  
Dennis, Michael 41  
Desrochers, Pierre 230  
Disch, Rolf 228  
Düttmann, Werner 158–60  
Dulski, Birgit 8, 185  
Dunckelmann, Henning 156  
Duntze, Klaus 160, 202  
Durkheim, Emile 89

## E

Eisenhower, Dwight D. 138  
Eisenman, Peter 120  
Elizabeth, Lynne 21, 133, 230  
Erlach, Fischer von 98

## F

Feder, Gottfried 85  
Feuerstein, Christiane 7, 95, 98, 101  
Fischer, Friedhelm 9, 199, 202, 207, 218

Fishman, Robert 31  
 Flint, Anthony 200, 206  
 Florida, Richard 74, 77, 78, 128, 219  
 Fourastié, Jean 145  
 Franco, Francisco 118  
 Friedan, Betty 18  
 Friedrichs, Juergen 156  
 Frisch, Max 155  
 Fritsch, Theodor 85  
 Fulford, Robert 32, 36, 39, 42  
 Funke, Hermann 147, 154, 155

**G**

Gans, Herbert 75, 76, 125, 128, 150, 151  
 Gaviria, Mario 110  
 Gehl, Jan 128, 129, 219, 229  
 Gehry, Frank O. 120  
 Gilpatrick, Chadbourne 68, 175  
 Glaeser, Edward 128  
 Göderitz, Johannes 159  
 Göttlicher, Franz 97, 98  
 Goldbard, Arlene 227  
 Goldsmith, Stephen 9, 21, 25, 133, 225  
 Gómez-Ordoñez, José Luis 110  
 Gratz, Leopold 101  
 Greenberg, Ken 32, 48  
 Gropius, Walter 144  
 Gruen, Victor 146, 153, 154  
 Gutschow, Konstanty 143

**H**

Hack, Dieter 241  
 Haemer, Hardt-Walther 160  
 Hall, Peter 47, 161  
 Hartmann, Nicolai 61  
 Haskell, Douglas 175  
 Hawken, Paul 226–7  
 Hayden, Tom 38, 39  
 Hebebrand, Werner 153, 173  
 Hentig, Hartmut von 158  
 Hicks, Louise Day 178  
 Hillebrecht, Rudolf 143–7, 152, 154–6,  
 165, 175, 199, 241, 248  
 Hitler, Adolf 171  
 Hoog, Maurits de 188  
 Hoffman-Axthelm, Dieter 204, 210  
 Holly White, William 18

Hospers, Gert-Jan 7, 125  
 Howard, Ebenezer 6, 66, 85, 86, 110, 144,  
 145, 149, 199, 208  
 Huxtable, Ada Louise 160  
 Hynes, John 173

**J**

Jacobs, Robert 41, 42  
 Jaffary, Karl 35, 39  
 James, Henry 199, 200  
 Jencks, Charles 201  
 Jerde, Jon 217, 218  
 Jessen, Walter 144  
 Johnson, Lyndon B. 180

**K**

Kahn, Louis 174, 230  
 Kassabaum, Hellmuth Obata 219  
 Keating, John 218  
 Kennedy, John F. 138  
 Kepes, Gyorgy 57, 68  
 Kleihues, Josef Paul 204  
 Klemek, Christopher 8, 21, 32, 36, 42, 171,  
 206  
 Koolhaas, Rem 61, 130, 219  
 Korkmaz, Tansel 138  
 Kuhn, Thomas 5, 200

**L**

Lambooy, Jan 129  
 Landry, Charles 67  
 Lang, Glenna 229  
 Le Corbusier 65, 66, 85, 86, 96, 110, 112,  
 145, 218  
 Lefèbvre, Henri 110, 112–14  
 Leppala, Samuli 230  
 Lerner, Jaime 226  
 Lewinberg, Frank 41–3, 46  
 Lindsay, John 179  
 Littlewood, Alan 41–3, 47  
 Löw, Martina 61  
 Low, Setha M. 77  
 Logue, Edward 127  
 Lucio, Ramón López 110  
 Luther, Martin 137  
 Luecke, Paul 142  
 Lyes, Madeleine 6, 71

Lynch, Kevin 6, 46, 57, 58, 60, 62–9, 219, 230

## M

Macy, Johanna 225, 226  
 Malthus, Robert 88  
 Marx, Karl 88  
 McHarg, Ian 230  
 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice 61  
 Miller, David 32  
 Miranda, Antonio 110  
 Mitford, Jessica 18  
 Mitscherlich, Alexander 145, 146, 154  
 Mooney, Harold A. 227  
 Moses, Robert 5, 6, 17, 67, 127, 128, 137, 142, 164, 173, 177, 200  
 Moya, Luis 110  
 Moynihan, Daniel P. 179, 180  
 Müller-Ibold, Klaus 144, 156, 158  
 Muir, John 228  
 Mumford, Lewis 6, 13, 66, 68, 110, 174, 175, 230

## N

Nader, Ralph 18  
 Nairn, Ian 175  
 Nell-Breuning, Oswald 142  
 Newton, Isaac 84  
 Niggemeyer, Elizabeth 150, 152  
 Nixon, Richard 178, 180

## P

Peck, Jamie 78  
 Pei, Ieoh Ming 230  
 Perkins, Holmes 127  
 Picasso, Pablo 112  
 Piano, Renzo 215  
 Prokesch, Alfred 147, 148

## R

Rochon, Lisa 32  
 Repo, Marjaleena 38, 39  
 Reuter, Edzard 214  
 Riis, Jacob A. 163  
 Rizzo, Frank 178  
 Rogers, Richard 218, 219  
 Roskamm, Nicolai 6, 83, 84

Rossi, Aldo 207, 208  
 Rowe, Colin 219  
 Rowe, Mary 6, 21, 23, 25, 26

## S

Sainz Guerra, José Luis 7, 107, 115, 121  
 Salin, Edgar 155  
 Sampson, Barry 42  
 Schinkel, Friedrich 159  
 Schubert, Dirk 3, 8, 137, 202  
 Schuster, Franz 98  
 Scott Brown, Denise 174, 179  
 Seifert, Jörg 6, 57, 58, 65  
 Sert, José Luis 112  
 Sewell, John 16, 38, 39, 41, 42  
 Short, John Rennie 77  
 Shub, Vadim 36  
 Smithson, Alison 174  
 Smithson, Peter 174  
 Snyder, Mary Gail 77  
 Solà-Morales, Manuel de 110  
 Soskolne, Ron 45, 46  
 Spaxman, Raymond 45, 46  
 Spector, Arless 178  
 Speer, Albert 143, 171  
 Stein, Clarence 110  
 Stein, Lorenz von 84  
 Stimmann, Hans 210, 211  
 Straaten, Gerben van 8, 185

## T

Tamms, Friedrich 147  
 Terán, Fernando de 110  
 Thatcher, Margaret 177, 180

## U

Unwin, Raymond 208

## V

Venturi, Robert 174  
 Vitousek, Peter 227  
 Voith, Helmut 101

## W

Wagner, Otto 98, 99, 102  
 Wagner, Robert 173, 179  
 White, Richard 6, 15, 21, 31

Whyte Jr., William H. 175, 228  
Williams, Austen 203  
Wilson, James Q. 151, 179  
Wirth, Louis 89  
Wright, Henry 110

**Z**

Zapf, Katrin 149, 150  
Zeidler, Eberhard 41–3, 47, 48  
Zilk, Helmut 101  
Zukin, Sharon 6, 71–9, 132, 206  
Zucotti, John 128