A Critical Analysis of *Bringing Equity Back:
Research for a New Era in
American Educational Policy* Edited by Janice
Petrovich and Amy Stuart Wells

HILARY MEAD

The Importance of *Death and Life of Great
American Cities* (1961) by Jane Jacobs to the
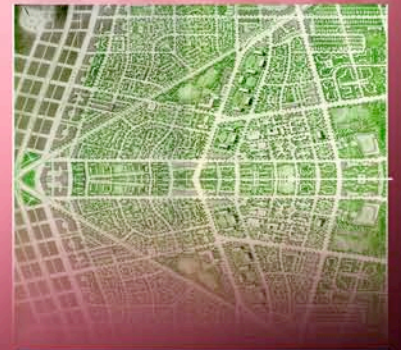Profession of Urban
Planning

MATTHIAS WENDT

Table of Contents

Letter from the Editors

Editorial Staff and Advisory Listing

Articles

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy- University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

To Our Readers,

We are pleased to present the first volume of *New Visions for Public Affairs,* an online journal produced by graduate students in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP) at the University of Delaware. Five SUAPP graduate students started this initiative in November 2007 with the goal of highlighting excellent student written work from within the School.

New Visions for Public Affairs aspires to publish an online journal in the public affairs community through publishing exceptional student writing and professional-level research. This journal will blend professional research, book reviews, and innovative public policy recommendations produced by the students of School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Delaware. Our principal goal is to stimulate discussion on pressing public policy issues within the campus community and beyond.

In this volume are two articles from SUAPP students, a Masters of Public Administration student and an article from a Masters of Arts in Urban Affairs and Public Policy student. These articles best exemplify the goals we have developed for the New Visions for Public Affairs Journal. Many thanks go to all of the authors that submitted their work for consideration in this inaugural edition. The submissions were graded with a double-blind review process on a competitive basis. Student work could be submitted either directly by the student or on recommendation of SUAPP faculty.

We appreciate the support that we have received for this project from the University of Delaware and School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy faculty. In particular, we would like to acknowledge and thank the Office of Graduate Studies for showing us their support though awarding us the Graduate Improvement and Innovation Grant. Additionally, we would like to thank our Faculty Advisory Board, the members of which have been of great assistance to us throughout this project.

We hope you enjoy this inaugural volume of *New Visions for Public Affairs.*

Sincerely,

The New Visions for Public Affairs Staff

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy- University of Delaware, Newark, DE
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New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy- University of Delaware, Newark, DE
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A Critical Analysis of Bringing Equity Back:
Research for a New Era in American
Educational Policy
Edited by Janice Petrovich and Amy Stuart Wells

Hilary Mead

Bringing Equity Back: Research for a New Era in American Educational Policy illustrates how the focus in education reform has changed from equity to excellence. Between the 1960s and the present, "the balance has shifted from concerns for group access to individual merit; from equity to quality; from entitlement to choice" (Petrovich, 2005, p.7). Each article isolates one reform strategy and examines it through one or more studies, many of them quantitative. The book is divided in half: four articles analyze to what extent "equity" reforms have persisted over the years, and consider how their current state does or does not contribute to excellence. Five others look at "excellence" strategies and interrogate their effects on educational equity. This book paints a gloomy picture of promising equity strategies traded for excellence reforms that not only fall short of their ambitious goals, but foster greater inequities among students. These authors aim to foment activism on problems of equity; they argue that change comes from top-down decisions and bottom-up advocacy.

After discussing how the authors conceptualize "equity" and "excellence," I will explore their arguments that (1) equity reforms need to be "brought back" to create the conditions for excellence, and (2) excellence reforms have largely undermined equity goals. Throughout, I also consider the book's agenda for action, discussing examples (from the book and beyond) for creating reforms that promote both equity and excellence.   Ultimately, I suggest that these examples all have limitations and that we need to re-conceptualize equity more than just "bring it back."

To begin, Bringing Equity Back uses the word "equity" in two distinct ways. First, equity describes a broad condition of justice and equal opportunity for all students in public education. Second, it characterizes a particular group of reform strategies, usually initiated in the 1960s and 1970s. At times, the book conflates the goal of equity with the kind of strategies or policies used to get there and this can be confusing. Here I begin with the broader concept and then dig into the specifics. Datnow and Hubbard (2005) provide a definition for gender equity that captures how these authors conceptualize equity for any group: "the removal of gender barriers, bias and stereotyping for females and males, and a conscious acknowledgement of gendered power relations in society" (p.195). Creating equity includes both removing barriers and explaining why those barriers existed. One article addresses gender differences, but the others focus on the educational attainment and experience of low-income, African-American or Latino children in public education. Several authors describe inequity as "longitudinal and additive" (Clarke, Madaeus & Shore, 2005, p.105) and this concept works on any level. For instance, as poor children age, "one disadvantage layers on to another, creating few opportunities for [them] to succeed" (Petrovich, 2005, p.12). As other articles illustrate, it is equally hard for a group or institutions such as schools to break the cycle of structural inequity. Seeing these complexities, "the authors of this book do not see equity as either static or ever completely achievable.

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

Rather, equity has to be pursued consistently in the attempt to create a more just society" (p.12).

Since equity is a shifting target and a constant struggle, it is important to consider education reforms within their historical, political, social and economic contexts. The book's dominant narrative – framed by the editors and echoed within each article – is of a movement from the 1960s to 2005 and from "equity" to "excellence" as a guiding vision. This shift in discourse mirrors other changes in American political, economic and community culture. As Petrovich (2005) describes the progression:

> "Policies pursuing equity in education traditionally have favored a more fair distribution of educational access, opportunities and resources . . . . Such redistributive policies have been less important to those arguing for greater "excellence" in education. Instead they advocate a free-market approach to education that allows parents to choose schools for their children and forces schools to improve so they can effectively compete for students. Faith in the private sphere rather than in government and the confidence of market mechanisms to improve efficiency and quality are replacing values of social solidarity, trust in public institutions [and citizenship]" (p.4).

This means reforms like affirmative action, desegregation, bilingual education and special education have been reduced or cast aside in favor of charter schools, vouchers, school "report cards," and standardized tests. This narrative closely matches what

Oakes and Lipton (1999) call "the market metaphor" for education, which became dominant in the United States in the 1980s (p.23) and is also reflected in the standards movement, especially No Child Left Behind. This perspective assumes that choice and competition propels schools to new levels of quality. Then it is up to the student and family to take advantage of the opportunities theoretically available to them. Again in the book's language, there is a conflation between the end goal of "excellence" (i.e., high-quality education) with the strategies used to accomplish it (i.e. choice, competition, individual agency).

Although they all agree on the historical trajectory from "equity" to "excellence," these authors frame the relationship between these concepts somewhat differently. Clarke et al. (2005) portray them as held in a fragile balance, as does Petrovich (2005): "achieving an excellent education for all children requires policies and practices that address both quality and equity" (p.12-13). Considering economic resources and political capital, Gittell (2005) takes a different stance: "although advocates for excellence and equity declare their support for both goals, when translated into public policy the two concepts are often competitive" (p.24). Puriefoy (2005) expresses a clear vote for which is more important: "equity is the necessary precondition for academic excellence, for systemic school improvement and for the nation's democratic way of life" (p.325). To the extent they emphasize equity over excellence; these authors aim to adjust the country's current obsession with excellence and to raise serious concerns about it. They provide evidence that (1)

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

eliminating or scaling back "equity" reforms compromises educational quality, and (2) "excellence" reforms fail on their own goals and also widen educational disparities and hurt equity. Next, I will illustrate and raise questions about each part of this argument.

When traditional equity reforms end, or our commitment to them falters, structural inequities dominate and threaten educational excellence for all students. The 1996 passage of Proposition 209, which repealed affirmative action in California, provides a striking "natural experiment." When race and ethnicity could not be factored into university admissions, diversity suffered. University of California acceptance rates for African-Americans and Hispanics fell from 64% to 47% and from 56% to 36% respectively over a five year period 1997-2002 (Federman & Pachon, 2005, p.139). Structural inequities created this yawning gap. As seen in the Bill Moyers film, *Children in America's Schools*, school facilities and programs vary wildly according to a community's advantage, with some students swimming in Olympic-sized pools and others being rained on in class. Opportunities for rigor are just as disparate, as Federman & Pachon's (2005) study of Advanced Placement (AP) in California demonstrates. They discovered a negative correlation between the number of AP courses offered and the percentage of African-American or Hispanic students in a school, and a weaker but still negative correlation between AP courses and the percentage of poor students (p.143-4). An African-American student is likely to have the least enriching curriculum and instruction up to high school.

Even if she persists through that and would be prepared for and accepted into Advanced Placement courses, none might be available at her school. In a race-blind admissions process, proving academic rigor in standard terms – i.e. through APs – becomes paramount. As Clarke et al. (2005) illustrate, inequities also affect group performance on the SATs, with the average African-American ranking at the 16th percentile among Whites (p.106). This is another barrier to educational and economic opportunity. In the qualitative part of this study, the researchers observed admissions directors using a "richer and more complicated" decision process, involving more definitions of excellence than just test scores (p.120). Still, there is limited cause for optimism since such a process is more feasible at private institutions, which also come with a hefty price tag and are out of reach for many.

Although these researchers are discouraged by public education in California, Rosen and Mehan (2003) show how the same situation engendered a creative response. To an extent, this is an example of what the editors in *Bringing Equity Back* recommend: a top-down and bottom-up decision resulting in greater equity. Concerned about diversity after Proposition 209, leaders at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) proposed launching an on-campus charter high school to give African-American and Hispanic students the preparation they would need to be eligible for admission. Rosen and Mehan tell the story of how the proposal was initially denied, a huge controversy broke out, and then the project was reframed, passed and made a reality. The situation was framed by top-down

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

decisions from the Chancellor and the Faculty Senate, as well as pressure from the Regents (Rosen & Mehan, 2003, p.675). There was also widespread bottom-up activism from students, professors, School Board members and a coalition from the African-American community (p. 669). This story is not presented as a victory but it illustrates one way to "sell" equity, re-writing it in language acceptable in the current climate. The charter school embraces "excellence" values like meritocracy and choice and redefines "under-representation [of groups of students] as under-preparation" (p.676). In this way, UCSD does not illustrate what *Bringing Equity Back* recommends. Yet it did concretely build a school that would increase opportunities for many students. Thus the authors conclude that this process had "contradictory effects… affirming a narrower understanding of inequality while promoting a more progressive definition of the university" (p.660). I return to this idea in my conclusion.

Analogous to California Proposition 209 are the many recent court decisions ending desegregation by declaring school districts – such as those in Charlotte-Mecklenberg, North Carolina and New Castle County, Delaware – "unitary." Here too the elimination of an "equity reform" reveals structural inequities and segregation in sharp before-and-after contrasts. In Delaware before the Neighborhood Schools Act, 1.8% of Black students attended majority-Black schools in 1995; by 2004, just four years after the Act, 16% did (Fuetsch & Chalmers, 2004, p.1). Mickelson (2005) points out that although Charlotte-Mecklenberg was

considered a model of desegregation, 25% of its schools were still racially imbalanced in 1999 (p.58). This shows that equity reforms are not magic; they have to be carefully implemented to achieve their intended results. Still, without any plan in place, the situation is much worse today. Among many reasons why school segregation matters, it harms achievement for all students, especially but not only, low-income and minority students. Schools with concentrated poverty or minority populations have fewer resources, weaker curricula, less experienced teachers, higher turnover, less parental advocacy etc., and all these factors compromise "excellence." In Charlotte-Mecklenberg, 82% of low-income students attending integrated schools were at grade level, but this was true for only 64% of low-income students in high-poverty schools. Even more striking, 81% of middle class students in poor schools were at grade level. In other words, the demographics of the school appear to matter even more than the individual demographics (Chambers, Boger, Earls & High 2005, p.3). As Mickelson and Welner & Oakes (2005) demonstrate, the structural problems of school segregation are replicated in the practice of tracking or "second-generation segregation" (Mickelson, 2005, p.61).

Often school desegregation is framed as a trade-off – "my kids versus those kids" – but the educational research suggests otherwise. In fact, I find it surprising that *Bringing Equity Back* does not do more with this research since it so thoroughly supports the book's agenda. A large body of literature finds that diverse schools promote achievement for low-income students

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

and students of color, at no educational cost to others (Mikelson, 2005, Chambers et al. 2005, Braddock & Eitle, 2004). The middle-class parents resisting detracking in San Jose, California, Rockford, Illinois, and East Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania must not have read this research. One theme in *Bringing Equity Back* is that parents react viscerally and emotionally, not rationally, to their children's educations. Race and class prejudice surely also played a part in the resistance to detracking. According to Welner and Oakes (2005), middle and upper class parents "scream[ed]" when they perceived weaker teaching in heterogeneous classes, but "they remained willing to foist that same (or worse) instruction on other children" (p.82-3). Welner and Oakes argue that detracking – an anachronistic "equity" reform – can result in more educational "excellence" but it is a politically unpopular change requiring momentum from the top down (via court mandates) and the bottom up (via "reform minded teachers, administrators, and community members" (p.80).

Cultivating "bottom-up" pressure for educational equity requires educating and mobilizing the public and providing professional development and critical inquiry for educators. Welner and Oakes (2005) emphasize self-questioning, public outreach, democratic dialogue and other "strategies used in social and political movements, such as local organizing" (p.98). In Delaware, the Brandywine School District used these strategies to powerful effect in resisting the Neighborhood Schools Act (NSA) and creating an alternative assignment plan to preserve school diversity. Although it was not as clearly "top-down" as the

mandates discussed above, this process did include important decisions from the School Board and "bottom-up" activism from the citizens of the district. As Board Chair Nancy Doorey and Superintendent Bruce Harter recall (2003), they decided to "take the questions straight to the public… [giving them] the opportunity and the responsibility to review the larger implications" of the NSA (p.23). Public outreach included presentations on the negative effects of high-poverty schools, a 16-page voters' guide and a public service announcement on TV (p.24). A formal coalition formed, over 200 people appeared at Brandywine's hearing before the State Board, and citizens passed a referendum to fund the alternative plan – by the highest margin in Delaware's history (p.24-25). This was a stunning achievement for equity. Doorey and Harter (2003) conclude:

> "What, then, will prevent our communities from dividing (or continuing to divide) into schools for the 'haves' and schools for the 'have nots'? Perhaps our district's experience points to the possibility of turning to ourselves, within our own communities, to grapple face-to-face with what we want for our children" (p. 25).

The authors in *Bringing Equity Back* would cheer for Brandywine; they advocate using targeted equity strategies like maintaining diversity in school assignments, and they argue that "equitable educational practices are unlikely to come about as an artifact of policies specifically promoting only excellence or choice" (Mickelson, 2005, p.85). The book's second section argues that policies like vouchers, charter schools and whole-school reforms have worsened

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

inequities and failed to achieve their own ambitious quality goals.

One reason for this failure is because so many excellence reforms involve parental choice and these are based on strong feelings rather than carefully considered educational rationales. As Shapiro and Johnson (2005) show, the power to choose is highly differential. They examine a form of choice, moving into "desirable" school zones, which is obviously more possible for those with wealth. Other forms can be inequitable too; many charter schools provide no transportation, so families have to drive their children to school or live nearby (Wells, Scott, Lopez & Holme 2005, p.237). Filling out applications and choice forms takes time and language ability that many families lack. When families can exert choice, they reinscribe race and class divisions. Shapiro and Johnson (2005) noted that families base their choices not on educational quality but on school reputation, for which "Whiteness" and wealth are markers (p.251, 253). In their study of vouchers in Chile, Carnoy and McEwan (2005) find that families choose the best education their money can buy: wealthy families pay tuition and middle class families use vouchers at private schools (p.278-9). These choices result in persistent cycles of inequity. What Wells et al. (2005) notice in California is also true in Delaware: "charter schools are more segregated by race and social class than the already segregated public schools" (p.237). Because choice is construed as so problematic, the book suggests that there is no "free market" for education.

The authors also demonstrate that ignoring the equity implications of an "excellence" reform is pernicious. They suggest that reforms need to be scrutinized for potential undermining consequences. For example, charter school laws – intended to promote local control and community voice – do not provide capital funding. As a result, schools often operate on (or close because of) inadequate budgets, or they seek private funding, compromising their community control and creating inequities between schools with greater and lesser resources to leverage (Wells et al., 2005, p.233). Although charter schools may hold the promise of culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy, financial troubles can threaten their excellence. Despite the explosion of charter schools and the high-profile successes of some charters in reducing achievement gaps, these researchers are not optimistic: "to the extent that charter schools offer yet another layer in a highly unequal education system, they have not solved the problems faced by the students on the 'bottom' in terms of access to better-quality education" (p.238).

Bringing Equity Back also tells two other stories of excellence reforms that failed – almost naively – to consider the equity landscape they had chosen to enter. Both New American Schools (NAS) and single-sex academies in California were framed as sparking innovation and adding choices to the educational menu; they were about excellence, not equity. Yet in both cases the decision was made to direct the reform at "at-risk" students and failing schools. According to Berends, Bodilly & Kirby (2005), many of the hurdles NAS faced in implementing its school designs can be

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

attributed to structural inequities in these schools: teacher morale or bias, teacher or leader turnover, exhaustion from "reform *du jour*" (p.182). Some schools received poor district support – either they were given no voice in choosing a design or not enough resources for professional development to take advantage of those designs (p.174 – 179). The authors imply that each of these complicating factors is more prevalent in poor schools. Overall, NAS failed in its ambitious goals of excellence: only 50% of schools made progress than the district/state average in math and only 47% made more progress in reading (p.183).

The story of single-sex academies in California is somewhat more complicated for it shows a policy focused on one surface conception of equity instead of deeply probing another form of equity. Datnow and Hubbard (2005) "found many administrators sought the $500,000 [grant to open academies] because of the resources and opportunities that it would provide for students who were not successful in their school system," usually low-income students of color, rather than out of concern about gender disparities (p.203). They focused on acquiring resources to help low-achieving students (e.g. full-time counselors) rather than developing a "strong theory of single-gender education" (p.211). Far from increasing equity, the schools promoted gender stereotypes through their curriculum (*Pride and Prejudice* for girls, *All Quiet on the Western Front* for boys) and discipline. In the words of teachers, boys needed "military-style" classrooms while girls misbehaving were just being "catty" (p.207, 211). This article raises a question: did single-sex

academies fail because they focused on ability instead of gender issues? This is too simplistic and indeed, these administrators are not portrayed as thinking deeply about any facet of equity. Instead they seem to be chasing the money or looking for a quick fix. However, in this book actions are never individual, they are always structural. So, for instance, an administrator's decision to close the academy when the grant ends says as much about inadequate school budgets or the political sense that the "gender 'problem' in schools is essentially solved" (p.215) as it does about individual beliefs. Since inequities are structurally embedded, as Berends et al. (2005) put it, "easy fixes to the equity issues in our schools are not possible. Rather, equity can be achieved only through systematic, sustained reform of the educational infrastructure" (p.188).

The book ends with the one truly optimistic article, and I want to explore to the extent it offers a model for "bringing equity back" or updating it to fit within the current climate. Rebell (2005) analyzes cases where states have been sued for failing to provide adequate education to some students. Such lawsuits are not new; Rebell, Gittell (2005), Karp (2003) and Grubb, Goe & Huerta (2004) all discuss them. Yet Rebell sees three trends that make adequacy litigation a powerful tool and a path forward for equity. He illustrates them with the case of *Coalition for Fiscal Equity (CFE) vs. State of New York*. However, each of these trends can be questioned.

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

First, Rebell's argument rests on an optimistic foundation that some would challenge. He sees our country as guided by a "democratic imperative" which he defines

> "as a period eruption of moral fervor that presses to eliminate the gap between the real and the ideal by implementing extensive political reforms that put into practice America's historical egalitarian ideals" (p.292).

Considering that the power dynamic has turned in adequacy litigation, with 18 of the past 29 cases won by plaintiffs, Rebell sees this as one of those periods of moral reform (p.297). Other authors are explicitly skeptical of this narrative of progress.

Second, Rebell sees at least some benefits in the current focus on accountability because it shines a light on funding and other inequities. He embeds equity within excellence:

> "inherent in the standards movement is also a powerful equity element, namely its philosophical premise that all students can learn at high cognitive levels and that society has an obligation to provide them the opportunity to do so" (p.302).

Other authors, notably Lipman (2002), view accountability very differently; they pierce through the rhetoric of No Child Left Behind and argue "current policies exacerbate existing inequalities and create new dynamics of inequity" (p. 380). Rebell would respond that political pressure for equity requires test scores that everyone can understand.

Finally, Rebell again describes a "top-down" and "bottom-up" movement for change. Of all the strategies that CFE used to engage the public, the key was requesting to "'level-up' the resources in New York City and other under-funded districts by expanding the pool of educational resources, rather than seeking a 'Robin Hood' remedy" of redistributing funds (Rebell, 2005, p.312). Thus. rich citizens from Great Neck have nothing to lose by joining this coalition. Although pragmatic, this strategy raises questions. How often can policy decisions be framed in this win-win manner? (Rebell leaves it ambiguous where these extra resources will come from.). Does this coalition truly represent citizens rallying around the cause of equity and grasping its educational benefits for all children, including theirs? Unlike the citizens of Brandywine, these people did not vote or pay, so their commitment is harder to gauge. The solution proposed by CFE does not directly address all the structural inequities discussed in *Bringing Equity Back*, such as resegregation. Thus it does not necessarily "bring equity back" in the way other authors envision. The Court of Appeals' ruling was a victory for equity, but Karp (2003) sounds a note of caution about the same case, anticipating an "extended political (and perhaps additional legal) struggle, in the midst of perpetual budget crises, to turn the court's decision into real educational equity" (p.283). As this book demonstrates clearly, implementation issues can undermine the best intentions.

CFE's story shows remarkable strategizing on one level, but it cannot be used as "the answer" for re-

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

introducing equity into our current educational climate. Nor, I would argue, can the story of Brandywine School District or the lawsuits in San Jose, Rockford and East Pittsburgh, since they employ strategies (desegregation and detracking) that may be unacceptable in our current climate. *Bringing Equity Back* expresses nostalgia for "equity reforms" as they existed in the 1960s and 1970s, even as the book clearly illustrates that those times have passed. Moreover, other researchers interpret the efficacy of those original reforms differently than this book does. For example, Grubb et al. (2004) state that "earlier efforts to undo inequity… have evidently not been enough to overcome these inequities and so, a more complex approach is necessary in the unending search for equity." One example of a complex solution comes from UCSD's charter school controversy and process, discussed above as a contradiction, but it is also a compromise.

On the one hand, UCSD did succeed in increasing equity by launching a new school and re-conceiving the university's responsibility to equity. To make this possible, UCSD had to "re-write" equity concerns in the language of excellence. I imagine overall the authors of *Bringing Equity Back* would be troubled by this kind of rewriting. Taking a more utilitarian perspective though, I would argue that the UCSD story is the closest thing to a model for the future, for how to re-assert equity in a time that is enthusiastically, irretrievably committed to excellence.

Author Biography

Hilary Mead earned a Masters of Public Administration from School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Delaware in 2008, concentrating in Educational Leadership. She wrote her Analytical Paper (thesis equivalent) on Delaware school leaders' use and perceptions of time. She won the United Alumni of Urban Affairs Student Award and the Pauline E. Loessner Memorial Scholarship and was elected to Pi Alpha Alpha. A former teacher and non-profit manager, Ms. Mead now works at the Delaware Academy for School Leadership where she coordinates several professional development and education policy projects. She lives with her husband and two young daughters in Middletown, Delaware.

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

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New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

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New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

The Importance of Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961) by Jane Jacobs to the Profession of Urban Planning

Matthias Wendt

The *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, which will be hereafter referred to as Death and Life, was the first and most influential book by Jane Jacobs, a writer and city activist from New York City. The book was first published in 1961 and it frontally attacked the principles and objectives of modernist, orthodox city planning and rebuilding in the post-war U.S.

Death and Life is a reaction to the devastating results of post-war American urban renewal. Jacobs' 1961 landmark critique directly attacks what she calls "orthodox" city planning and rebuilding. She documents the failures of modernist planning ideas and argues that the various foundations of intellectual planning history all suffer from a misconception of how cities actually work. Jacobs' notion that the best ideas on liveable cities originate from close observation of city life rather than deductive theories or master plans was a radical new approach in the U.S. during the 1960s and changed the way planners and city dwellers perceive cities today.

Even though Jacobs wrote Death and Life nearly 50 years ago, her ideas and conceptions of how to make cities liveable are as relevant today as they ever were, particularly in American cities where large-scale urban redevelopment projects often lack diversity and vitality just like the slum clearance and urban renewal projects Jacobs witnessed five decades ago (Gratz, 2003).

This paper introduces the key ideas of Death and Life against the backdrop of the profound changes that took place in the post-war period and then analyses the impact of the book on the profession of urban planning. In addition, Jane Jacobs' influence on the New Urbanism movement is explored, and her concepts are finally applied to the Atlantic Yards Project, a large-scale urban redevelopment project in Brooklyn, New York.

I. Urban Planning and U.S. Cities in the Post-War Period

Jane Jacobs evolved the ideas set forth in Death and Life as a young mother living in New York's Greenwich Village during the postwar period, when the big American cities were in a state of crisis.

Like in many countries of the Western hemisphere, America experienced a time of unequalled prosperity in the mid-1950s. With the increasing number of automobiles and the thousands of miles of new, federally subsidized motorways that were being constructed after the passage of the Interstate Highway Act in 1956, people were moving in large numbers out of the cities and into the suburbs. For the cities, these developments were a disaster. As the middle-class continued to flee to the suburbs, the remaining population was disproportionately impoverished and ethnic minorities concentrated in central cities. The "white flight" of middle-class Americans was accompanied by another demographic factor: "the great migration" of hundreds of thousands of African-Americans who moved up North. A huge post-war influx of Puerto Ricans fleeing the poverty of their

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

motherland further swelled the minority population of some cities such as New York City.

The benefits for GIs returning from World War II included a mortgage subsidy program allowing them to acquire homes at very liberal terms. In addition, the Federal Housing Administration provided mortgage insurance that minimized risks for home builders, banks, savings and loan associations and insurance companies. These federal programs restricting mortgages to new, single-family detached houses enticed both developers to construct single-family homes on the fringes of the metropolitan areas and young families to buy them. As a result, federal policy accelerated the downward spiral of American cities during the 1950s (Fox, 1986). In the central cities, landlords had no stimulus to renovate their residential properties, nor did private developers have motivation to build new rental housing. While the land values in the suburbs were booming, downtowns were decaying more and more as former city dwellers began to shop in the new enclosed malls that were developed in the brand-new suburbs. Public transportation systems continued to deteriorate as more people were driving automobiles and federal funds had been cut since the Depression.

Between 1950 and 1960, all the older American cities lost inhabitants. The decrease in population hollowed out the urban cores and led to what planners call the "hole in the donut." Boston, for example, lost 13 percent of its population while its suburbs grew by 17 percent. New York and Chicago lost less than 2 percent, but their suburbs grew rapidly by over 70 percent. Simultaneously, the industrial base of the cities shrunk. Between 1947 and 1967, the sixteen largest central cities lost on average 34,000 manufacturing jobs, while their suburbs gained an average of 87,000 jobs. Following the people and jobs, merchants abandoned Main Streets for strip locations along highways or large shopping centers. Suburbia also became increasingly enticing for firms relocating their office uses, since the suburban office parks reduced the commuting time of their employees. In addition, the most rapidly growing industries, such as electronics, pharmaceuticals and aeronautics, were established in the suburban hinterland, leaving declining sectors, namely iron and steel manufacturing, textiles and automobiles, to the old central cities (Ruchelman, 2004).

Government did not completely neglect the cities. In keeping with the post-war propensity to think and act big, Congress passed the Federal Housing Act, which allotted great sums to build public housing for the urban poor. The Housing Act ushered in an era of master plans. All across the U.S., the "federal bulldozer" was pulling down entire blocks in areas which planners defined as "blighted" and were then rebuilt with huge high-rises. At the same time, municipalities were drawing up large-scale master plans to revitalize decaying downtowns with new civic centers. City officials and planners across the country enthusiastically celebrated public housing as the cure for all of the cities' social ills.

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

New York City's first housing projects, erected in the 1930s, were low-rises. During that time, high-rises were built for luxury tenants, not for the urban poor. In 1941, New York's first high-rise public housing project was built in East Harlem on the site of a just-cleared slum. After this project was completed, officials realized that housing people in towers was the most cost-efficient way to accommodate them. From this project on, all public housing projects were designed as high-rises, modelled on the "tower in the park" design of architect Le Corbusier. Visiting New York in 1935, Le Corbusier was fascinated by the skyscrapers and the "vertical city" of Manhattan. However, he criticized that the skyscrapers were not big enough. He proposed that the city's messy, short blocks be eliminated to be replaced by huge mega-blocks spaced farther away in order to provide better and healthier living conditions (Alexiou, 2006).

Housing people in high-rises was considered a vast leap forward, both economically and aesthetically. Instead of dark tenement houses, people were being housed in new apartments that had light and ventilation. The new projects were built in clusters, among patches of grass, where children were supposed to play just like their suburban counterparts. Politicians and planning practitioners believed that in comparison to the slums they were replacing, the new projects were heaven and that the inhabitants of the new high-rises should be grateful. These public housing projects seemed entirely rational in the 1920s. Even in the 1950s, they still seemed rational because housing people in high-rise buildings was the only way to tackle the problem of increasing concentration of people in the cities. Preeminent urban planner Robert Blake explained the rationale behind this approach: "[B]ecause these concentrations of people should not be deprived of sun and greenery, it seemed reasonable to house them in tall buildings spaced far apart and interspersed with parks and other outdoor amenities" (Alexiou, 2006, p.38).

While working as an associate editor for the Architectural Forum in New York, Jane Jacobs wrote on several urban renewal projects and observed the fiasco of post-war urban renewal and all its consequences. She found that the new projects that were appreciated by planners and architects bore no relation to what people actually needed. Based on her own observations and conclusions and without any formal training as an urban planner or architect, she questioned the basic premises by which modern city planning had functioned since the end of World War II and before (Kunstler, 2001).

Death and Life also challenged the prevailing idea of decentralization that most physical planning ideologues shared during the 1960s. Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City (1932) was the most extreme decentralization concept. Wright contended that the megalopolis was much too crowded and Americans wanted to live at radically lower densities. Ian McHarg in Design with Nature (1969) also argued that decentralization was fine but was improperly located in the ecosystem. Lewis Mumford's City in History attacked the metropolis as a cultural disaster and advocated new towns in the countryside. Jacobs defied

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

all these authors with the argument that Americans never should have left their big, diverse cities in the first place (Hill, 1988).

II. Objectives and Core Theses of Death and Life

> "This book is an attack on current city planning and rebuilding. It is also, and mostly, an attempt to introduce new principles of city planning and rebuilding […]."

With this sentence so famously outlining its purpose, Death and Life begins. Jacobs charges on the methods, objectives and results of modernist planning, which she characterizes as conventional and orthodox in approach and practice. She further tries to introduce new principles into urban planning.

With numerous examples, Jacobs explains why precisely the "wrong" areas in city after city, according to orthodox planning theory, are decaying and why, in many cities, the wrong areas are resisting the decay. She blames modernist planning for the monotonous projects that exacerbated the problems of their inhabitants. These projects are characterized by dullness and uniformity and sealed against any vitality and buoyancy of city life. She criticizes standardized commercial centers, promenades that pedestrians never use and expressways that dissect great cities (Jacobs, 1961). Jacobs further condemns the practice of urban renewal, which destroys liveable neighborhoods and their social fabric by dispersing their residents across the whole metropolitan area and by destroying small

businesses and ruining their proprietors without providing adequate compensation.

Jacobs (1961) finds similarities between the pseudoscience of bloodletting at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which could only heal by accident or insofar as it broke its own rules, and the practice of city planning, which has created numerous complicated dogmas based "on a foundation of nonsense" (p.13). She accuses the pseudoscience of city planning of destroying a good deal of once liveable U.S. cities and failing to probe the real city life.

She reproaches city planners with having used massive financial incentives to achieve large-scale projects characterized by a high "degree of monotony, sterility and vulgarity" (Jacobs, 1961, p.7). According to Jacobs, cities are enormous laboratories of trial and error, failure and success in city building and city design. Instead of learning from cities as well as forming and testing their theories in this laboratory, planning practitioners and teachers in the discipline have ignored the study of success and failure in the real city life and have been incurious about the reasons of unexpected success in some neighborhoods.

In order to understand how cities work, Jacobs uses inductive reasoning and closely observes city life. She regards inductive thinking as an activity that can be engaged in by ordinary, interested citizens. Ordinary people relying on their observations even have an advantage over urban planners, since they have been educated to act according to deductive theories instead of using their good judgement and experiences (Jacobs,

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

1961). By working strictly empirically, Jacobs (2006) demonstrates "how cities work in real life [...] and what principles in planning and what practices in rebuilding can promote social and economic vitality in cities, and what practices and principles will deaden these attributes" (p.4).

> The way to get at what goes on in the seemingly mysterious and perverse behavior of cities is, I think, to look closely, and with little previous expectation as possible, at the most ordinary scenes and events, and attempt to see what they mean and whether any threads of principle emerge among them (Jacobs, 1961, p.13).

Jacobs is not primarily concerned with the physiognomy of cities or how to create a pleasing appearance of order. She is, rather, deeply interested in showing how cities actually work. By comparing a considerable number of American cities, such as Boston, Philadelphia and, of course, New York, she tries "to begin understanding the intricate social and economic order under the seeming disorder of cities" (Jacobs, 1961, p.15).

Jacobs focuses on the inner cities of big cities, since she is of the opinion that these areas have most consistently been neglected in planning theory and that the problems occurring in these areas will remain highly relevant in the time to come. But the inscription at the beginning of the book ("to New York City") proves that she is especially writing about New York. Residing in Greenwich Village, most of the examples she uses to illustrate her ideas are New York-based.

The key thesis of Death and Life, the principle of the close-grained mix of uses, buildings and people, she sets forth as follows:

> This ubiquitous principle is the need of cities for a most intricate and close-grained diversity of uses that give each other constant mutual support, both economically and socially. The components of this diversity can differ enormously, but they must supplement each other in certain concrete ways (Jacobs, 1961, p.14).

Jacobs considers unsuccessful city neighborhoods as areas that lack this kind of mutual support and sees city planning's main task as catalyzing and nourishing these close-grained working relationships.

III. The Foundations of Orthodox City Planning from Howard to Le Corbusier

Jacobs traces the roots of orthodox city planning, contending that all modernist conceptions lacked a clear understanding of how cities really work. The first concept of wide influence was Ebenezer Howard's Garden City (1902), which introduced, according to Jacobs, powerful city-destroying ideas into planning. Howard observed the living conditions of the urban poor in late nineteenth-century London and proposed to halt the growth of the metropolis and repopulate the countryside by building a new kind of town, the Garden City. Jacobs especially dislikes Howard's paternalistic and authoritarian notion of planning that neglected the rich city life. Howard intended to overcome the rapid urban growth by sorting and sifting out certain uses and

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

rearranging each of them in relative self-containment. Jacobs also criticized Howard's disinterest in the multi-faceted metropolitan cultural life, and his lack of insight in how great cities police themselves and how they serve as places of innovation and creative hubs of the economy (Jacobs, 1961).

Howard's ideas were enthusiastically adopted in America during the 1920s and refined by members of the Regional Planning Association of America, including Lewis Mumford, Clarence Stein, and Henry Wright. Their main goal was to decentralize the big cities, thin them out and disperse their businesses and residents into smaller, self-contained cities and rural towns. The "Decentrists" popularized anti-urban ideas such as turning houses away from the street and toward sheltered greens, since the street would be a bad environment for humans. They further propagated the super block instead of the street as the basic unit of city design as well as the segregation of residences, commerce and green spaces. The Decentrists' notion that the presence of many people in a neighborhood is evil and that good city planning must aim for the illusion of suburban privacy collided with Jacobs' idea of variously used streets and densely populated neighborhoods. Jacobs particularly spoke against the omniscient role of the planner controlling every significant detail in the planning process (Jacobs, 1961).

Jacobs judges Le Corbusier's Radiant City as the most dramatic idea to apply anti-city planning to existing cities, not only planning a completely new physical environment but also a social utopia. Le Corbusier's Radiant City was composed of huge skyscrapers in a park-like setting. Jacobs detects great similarities between Howard and Le Corbusier. By adapting Howard's ideas of the Garden City to a modernist metropolis of highrises, Le Corbusier was able to accommodate much higher densities of people. His vertical Garden City was planned to house 1,200 inhabitants per acre. The skyscrapers of the core area would cover only 5 percent of the ground, leaving 95 percent for open space and parks. Jacobs conceives orthodox planning as a combination of the Garden City and the Radiant City, since highway planners, legislators, land use planners and parks and playground planners constantly use these two powerful visions as fixed points of reference (Jacobs, 1961).

Another ancestor to orthodox planning, according to Jacobs, is the City Beautiful movement. Originating from the great Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, the movement was dominated by Daniel Burnham, who became the leading City Beautiful planner. It drew up large schemes of boulevards and civic or cultural centers in a retrogressive imitation of Renaissance style. All these monumental centers sorted out certain cultural and public functions and separated them from the rest of the city. Jacobs observes that the surrounding areas deteriorated and attracted questionable uses and decay.

Jacobs (1961) argues that these modernist conceptions have harmoniously merged "into a sort of Radiant Garden City Beautiful" as the foundation of orthodox

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

city planning (p.25). She makes the point that Howard, Burnham, Le Corbusier, and the Decentrists shared a common uneasiness with existing cities, each of them seeking to replace the complexity of real city life with a planned ideal city. Observing current urban renewal, Jacobs concludes that the failure of these schemes was proof of the error of prevailing planning orthodoxies.

Jacobs also makes a passionate argument that professional planners are ruining cities and should get out of the way to let citizens -- that is, planning amateurs -- make the rules. "Planners," Jacobs (1961) wrote, "frequently seem to be less equipped intellectually for respecting and understanding particulars than ordinary people, untrained in expertise, who are attached to a neighborhood, accustomed to using it, and so are not accustomed to thinking in generalized or abstract fashion" (p.441). She points out that the more training someone receives in designing or developing a city, the more likely he or she is to be guided by theories and academic knowledge instead of observations and experience. In other words, Jacobs proclaims that planning is too important to be left completely to planners and that citizens should engage in the planning of their cities (Ehrenhalt, 2001).

IV. City Streets, Districts and the Mix of Uses

In the first part of Death and Life, titled "The Peculiar Nature of Cities", Jacobs sets forth the principle of close-grained diversity of uses, buildings and people by analyzing the uses of different urban elements, such as

sidewalks, neighborhood parks, and city neighborhoods.

For example, sidewalks serve many purposes besides carrying pedestrians. Busy sidewalks ensure street safety, foster contact by bringing people together, and further assimilate children into society.

At the time Jacobs was writing Death and Life, crime, and the fear of it, pervaded New York and other major U.S. cities. In order to escape the dangers of the city and to provide a safe environment for their children, many young families moved to the suburbs. Thus, crime was a big issue in many cities, as it is today.

Jacobs regards sidewalks' primary task as ensuring street safety, since the safety of a city as a whole depends on the ability of its streets and sidewalks to provide safety. A city district that fails to ensure street safety makes people fear the streets. And as they fear them, they use them less, so that streets become even more unsafe. Jacobs argues that the public peace of cities, and particularly its sidewalks, is not primarily kept by the police, but by an intricate network of voluntary controls and standards among people themselves. This is seen prominently on busy city streets where passers-by, street-level merchants and residents keeping an eye on the street provide few opportunities for street crime (Jacobs, 1961).

Problems of street safety arise in some city areas, such as public housing projects and streets with high population turnover that lack voluntary controls by residents and merchants. An important condition for

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

safe city streets is a clear demarcation between public and private space. These spaces should not merge into one another as they typically do in suburban settings. A second quality of safe city streets is that "there must be eyes upon the street, eyes belonging to those we might call the natural proprietors of the street" (Jacobs, 1961, p.35). So that residents can watch the street life, buildings must be oriented to the street. Third, sidewalks must have users fairly continuously. Different users use the streets at different schedules and thus add to the number of "street eyes" while inducing people in the buildings along the street to watch the sidewalks in sufficient numbers. Stores, bars, cafés and restaurants are necessary to attract people at night. The mixture of workplaces and residences generally assures that there are always people around keeping the streets safe with their presence. The "eyes on the street" is one of the several phrases that Jacobs coined and entered into the terminology of urban planning.

She demonstrates the vitality and benefits of busy sidewalks on the basis of the street life at her doorstep in Greenwich Village. Jacobs depicts how a marvelous order for maintaining the safety of the streets is working under the seeming disorder of the city. Her description of the "sidewalk ballet" that takes place everyday on Hudson Street is probably the most famous passage of Death and Life.

The stretch of Hudson Street where I live is each day the scene of an intricate sidewalk ballet. I make my own first entrance into it a little after eight when I put out the garbage can, surely a prosaic occupation, but I enjoy my part, my little clang, as the droves of junior high-school students walk by the center of the stage dropping candy wrappers. […] When I get home after work, the ballet is reaching crescendo. This is the time of roller skates and stilts and tricycles […] this is the time when teenagers, all dressed up, are pausing to ask if their slips show or their collars look right […] this is when anybody you know around Hudson Street will go by (Jacobs, 1961, p.51).

The second major use of sidewalks is to foster contacts. The busy street life on sidewalks, the occasional contacts of people in bars and shops and the general fact that people like to linger on the street was dismissed by orthodox planners. This led to the error of judgment that "if these people had decent homes and a more private or bosky outdoor place, they wouldn't be on the street" (Jacobs, 1961, p. 55). Orthodox planners misjudged the importance of spontaneous and random contacts on the sidewalks of cities. Jacobs perceives these contacts as trivial in a given case but in total as non-trivial, since they create a feeling of public identity, a web of public respect and trust, as well as a resource in time of personal or neighborhood need or emergency. Vital city districts allow spontaneous contacts and public encounters on sidewalks and thus enable a metropolitan life without obligation. By contrast, impersonal city streets result in anonymous people so that nobody feels responsible for occurrences on the streets. This is the case in many public housing projects, where it is common for residents to isolate themselves, as these areas lack the natural and casual public life (Jacobs, 1961). Contacts on sidewalks may

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

seem irrelevant and casual at the first glance, but in sum, Jacobs judges them as the basis for a flourishing public life in cities.

The third use of sidewalks is to assimilate children. Jacobs detects superstition among the proponents of orthodox planning that city streets are generally bad environments for children and parks and playgrounds automatically are clean and happy places. In reality, however, parks and playgrounds of the housing projects of the 1950s and 1960s are often boring and unsafe for children. Comparing several major American cities, Jacobs's finds that adolescent street gangs predominately fight in parks and playgrounds and that the members of these gangs turned out to be from super-block projects. Everyday play was no longer in the streets, after the streets themselves had largely been removed. Jacobs is of the opinion that lively sidewalks under the surveillance of adults have positive aspects for children's play since they are much safer and much more interesting places for children than uncontrolled playgrounds in parks. Lively sidewalks also offer children, apart from safety and protection, other amenities. As children in cities need a variety of places to play and learn, sidewalks serve as a form of unspecialized playground helping children to form their notions of the world.

At the bottom line, Jacobs judges the idea of eradicating city streets to downgrade and minimize their economic and social part in city life as the most harmful and destructive idea in orthodox city planning.

Reflecting the uses of public neighborhood parks, Jacobs opposes the common notion that parks or park-like open spaces generally are blessings for the deprived populations of cities. Instead, she detects an inverse relationship: it's the people using the parks who make them successes or, if withholding use, doom parks to failure and lack of life. Parks can be attractive features of city districts and economic assets, but they can be only as attractive as the neighborhoods in which they are located. Jacobs indicates that neighborhood parks are far from able to transform any essential quality in their surroundings and to automatically uplift their neighborhoods. Referring to her core thesis of the diversity of uses, Jacobs states that parks themselves are drastically affected by the diversity and users of the surrounding neighborhood. Parks are always mirroring their environment and are not, as Jacobs underscores with examples from Philadelphia, stabilizing their surrounding districts (Jacobs, 1961).

Unpopular parks are not only troubling because of their missed opportunities, but also because of their negative effects. These parks have the same problems as streets lacking public street life. Successful parks, such as Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, possess a diverse neighborhood hinterland. The mixture of uses of buildings produces a mixture of people using the park at different times so that such a park is busy during the whole day. Neighborhood parks that are located in a monotonous surrounding, such as office districts, are only used for a specific part of the day, creating a vacuum of usage at other times of the day. The vacuum often attracts certain people who are usually not

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

welcome in public parks. According to Jacobs, the main problem of neighborhood park planning relates to the problem of the surrounding neighborhoods that are only capable of supporting parks if they themselves are livable and diversified.

With regard to planning city neighborhoods, Jacobs judges the notion of a neighborhood as imitation of town or suburban life as extremely harmful to city planning. A successful neighborhood is a place that is able to solve its problems independently so it is not destroyed by them. She also opposes the "doctrine of salvation by bricks" (Jacobs, 1961, p.113), according to which improved housing conditions automatically lead to improved social conditions within the neighborhoods. Empirical studies comparing delinquency records in new housing projects show that there is no direct relationship between good housing and good behavior (Jacobs, 2006, p.113).

The core question concerning city neighborhoods, according to Jacobs, is what city neighborhoods do and how they do it that may be socially and economically useful for the city as a whole. Therefore, it is essential that neighborhoods apply a successful form of localized self-government. Jacobs observes that successful street-neighborhoods have no distinct beginnings and ends separating them in individual units since different people have different spheres of action. Isolated street neighborhoods are typically associated with long blocks and are not desirable, since they tend to be physically self-isolating. Street neighborhoods are capable of self-government if they are physical, social and economic

continuities and have sufficient frequency of commerce and general liveliness to cultivate public street life (Jacobs, 1961).

Jacobs postulates that planning for effective neighborhoods should aim at fostering interesting and lively streets and connect these streets to a continuous network throughout a city district. Neighborhood planning should further plan parks, squares and public buildings as part of the street fabric so that a multi-faceted mix of uses and users emerges, and it should also emphasize the functional identity of areas (Jacobs, 1961).

V. The Conditions for City Diversity

In the second part of Death and Life, Jacobs evolves general conditions for city diversity on the basis of her observations of different major American cities. These conditions, according to Jacobs, have to be considered in planning for diverse and vital city life; however, they can never be exclusively achieved by plans of city planners and designers. Great cities do not automatically generate diversity just by existing. By observing places in which diversity flourishes, such as Boston's North End, New York's Upper East Side and San Francisco's Telegraph Hill, Jacobs (2006) develops four conditions that she regards as indispensable to generating exuberant diversity in a city's streets and districts.

> 1. The district, and indeed as many of its internal parts as possible, must serve more than one primary function; preferably

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

more than two. These must insure the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different purposes, but who are able to use many facilities in common.

2.   Most blocks must be short; that is, streets and opportunities to turn corners must be frequent.

3. The district must mingle buildings that vary in age and condition, including a good proportion of old ones so that they vary in the economic yield they must produce. This mingling must be fairly close-grained.

4.   There must be a sufficient dense concentration of people, for whatever purposes they may be there. This includes dense concentration in the case of people who are there because of residence. (Jacobs, 2006, p.151)

Jacobs regards the necessity of these four conditions as the most important point made in Death and Life. These four conditions are no guarantee that all city districts will produce an equivalent diversity. But given the development of these four conditions, a city district should be able to realize its best potential (Jacobs, 1961).

Primary uses are those uses which bring people to a specific place. These are necessary to ensure safety in streets and neighborhood parks and are also relevant from an economic point of view. Just as neighborhood parks need people who are in the immediate vicinity for different purposes, most shops are dependent on people passing by during the day. If consumers are missing, businesses will disappear or never appear in the first place. Neighborhood businesses are not only dependent on the residents but also on the people working in the

neighborhood who contribute with their demand to the diversity of merchants and services. Jacobs underscores the significance of time spread using the example of the Wall Street district, which is suffering from extreme time unbalance among its users. During working hours, a considerable number of people visit the district mostly on office or government business. On evenings and weekends, however, office districts are dull and deserted (Jacobs, 1961). Jacobs regards all efforts to vitalize Lower Manhattan by attracting a residential population as inadequate and instead favors attracting tourists and visitors from the city using the district during their leisure time on evenings, Saturdays and Sundays when the district needs them most for time balance. Primary uses, such as offices, manufacturing plants, residences as well as leisure facilities should be combined in a way that people are around throughout the day.

Jacobs describes the insufficient primary mixture of uses as the principal shortcoming of postwar U.S. downtowns. In the past, most big-city downtowns fulfilled all four of the necessary conditions for generating diversity. By the time Jacobs wrote Death and Life, downtowns had become predominantly devoted to work so that they only fulfilled three of the functions. This development has been taken into account in planning, which no longer speaks of "downtowns" but of "Central Business Districts" (Jacobs, 1961, p.165).

Since the central areas of cities have direct effects on other city districts, the primary mixture of uses

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

downtown is of peculiar importance as "a city, without a strong and inclusive heart, tends to become a collection of interests isolated from one another" (Jacobs, 1961, p.165). But unfortunately, Jacobs notes, orthodox city planners employ their destructive purposes of city planning to attractive and thriving streets and districts and thus accelerate the downward spiral of U.S. central cities.

The second condition for city diversity, the need for short blocks, Jacobs describes by using the example of Manhattan. Long blocks, such as the 800-foot blocks on West Eighty-eighth Street in Manhattan, tend to segregate regular users of one street from the users of the next street, isolate street neighborhoods socially and economically and impede the exchange of people between the different streets. The situation of long blocks would change profoundly if an extra street cut across them, offering residents various alternative routes from which to choose (Jacobs,1961). Jacobs opposes the notion of Garden City and Radiant City proponents that plentiful streets are wasteful. On the contrary, she argues that frequent streets and short blocks are valuable as they permit a fabric of intricate cross-use among the users of a city neighborhood. Like the mixtures of primary uses, frequent streets and short blocks are effective in helping to generate city diversity and vitality (Jacobs, 1961).

The third condition of city diversity is the mixture of buildings of different ages. Cities, as Jacobs notes, not only need old buildings in a high state of rehabilitation but also some run-down old buildings, since these buildings accommodate many ordinary enterprises which are necessary to the public life of streets but incapable of paying the high overhead of new construction. Even enterprises that can afford new construction need old construction in their vicinity, since otherwise they are part of a uniform environment that is neither lively nor interesting. Flourishing diversity in cities requires a mixture of high- and low-yield enterprises. On the other hand, a district that solely consists of aged buildings reveals that its enterprises and people are unable to support and attract new construction.

Large areas of construction built at one time are, according to Jacobs, inefficient for sheltering a wide array of cultural, population and business diversity as exemplified in many places, such as Stuyvesant Town in New York. Homogenous neighborhoods change little physically over the years and show a great inability to enliven and reinvent themselves. This finding supports the postulation of the diversity of old and new buildings within a city district as a condition for liveliness and vitality of street life (Jacobs, 1961).

City diversity can only emerge if a city district has a sufficiently dense concentration of people. Opposing orthodox planning and housing theory, Jacobs argues for high dwelling densities as an important factor for a district's vitality and illustrates this assertion by referring to attractive high-density residential districts in several U.S. cities, such as Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, Brooklyn Heights in New York and the North End in Boston. The overcrowded slums of the

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

planning literature are, according to Jacobs, rather thriving areas with a high density of dwellings, whereas the slums of real-life America are areas with a low-density of dwellings (Jacobs, 1961).

High dwelling density alone is not sufficient to attain city vitality if diversity is suppressed by other insufficiencies, as is the case in regimented housing projects. However, dense concentrations of people are one of the necessary conditions for flourishing city diversity, since the other factors will not have any influence if there are not enough people in an area (Jacobs, 1961). Dwelling densities are too high if they begin to repress diversity. At some point, the standardization of buildings sets in so that variety among buildings and diversity in age and types of buildings diminishes. Jacobs (2006) concludes that people gathered in concentrations are not an evil of cities but "the source of immense vitality, because they do represent, in small geographic compass, a great and exuberant richness of differences and possibilities" (p.220).

Jacobs' concept that physical diversity in cities encourages neighbors to interact and discourages crime was not fully embraced by planners and sociologists. The notion that the lack of physical diversity has undesirable effects on social behavior and can be resolved by building in a more physically diverse manner was rejected as too simplistic. Herbert Gans pointed out that the majority of the American middle class did not want the vitality of Boston's North End but rather the quiet privacy obtainable in low-density neighborhoods and high-rise apartment houses (Fowler, 1987).

VI. The Forces of Decline and Regeneration

Jacobs notes that American cities need all kinds of mutually supportive diversity to further develop their society and civilization. The main responsibility of city planning should be to develop cities that are fertile places for private initiatives, unofficial plans, ideas and opportunities to flourish as well as the prosperity of public enterprises, all of which determine if cities are livable. Jacobs outlines several powerful forces that compromise the growth of diversity and vitality in cities. These negative factors are the tendency of very successful districts to become victims of their own success and destroy their own diversity, the penchant of massive single elements to harm their surrounding area, the danger of high population turnover rates to hinder the growth of stable and diverse neighborhoods and the propensity of both public and private money to support development and change too much or let it starve (Jacobs, 1961).

Jacobs makes clear that several elements within cities form borders, and she analyses their physical and functional effects on their immediate city surroundings. Inner-city borders, such as railroad tracks and waterfronts, as well as large areas serving a single use, such as big-city university campuses, civic centers and large hospital grounds, result in vacuums in the immediate adjoining areas. Single-use territories tend to

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

simplify the use that people give to the surrounding neighborhood, as monotonous areas produce users with fewer different purposes and destinations. Borders of all kinds divide up cities in pieces. Trouble arises when districts are bisected or fragmented by borders so that the neighborhoods are weak fragments and unable to exist functionally. However, many of the institutions and facilities that chop up cities with borders are important to cities. Every big city needs universities, railroads and expressways. Jacobs calls for planners to recognize that these facilities also have destructive effects that should be countered. Referring to Kevin Lynch's Image of the City, Jacobs argues that borders should become a seam rather than a barrier, a line of exchange connecting different areas. Many borders can become more like seams if they placed their uses intended for the public, such as cafés and leisure facilities, at strategic points on their perimeters (Jacobs, 1961).

Jacobs opposes the attempts of the urban renewal laws to solve the problem of spreading slums by eradicating slums and their populations and replacing them with upscale projects intended to improve the city's tax base. This method usually completely fails, since at best, it merely relocates slums to another area or, at worst, destroys lively neighborhoods where improving communities exist. Jacobs detects the high population turnover and lack of identification of the residents with their neighborhood as the key problems of slums. Overcoming slums thus hinges on the retention of a considerable number of residents and business people pursuing their plans within the slum. Jacobs notes that

an early symptom of unslumming is a drop in population and a constant number of dwellings at the same time. This is a sign of increasing attractiveness of a neighborhood, as inhabitants have become economically able to increase their living space. This process of incumbent upgrading needs to be fostered by planning instead of being destroyed by knocking down whole neighborhoods (Jacobs, 1961).

VII.   The Influence of Death and Life on Urban Planning

Death and Life was deeply influenced, apart from the profound changes U.S. cities were undergoing during the post-war period, by Jacobs' personal circumstances. Her life as a young mother in Greenwich Village and observations of the street life in her own neighborhood directly influenced, as the cited passages show, her empirical theories. Jacobs wanted to convince her readers with real-life insights instead of academic knowledge (Laurence, 2007).

When Death and Life was first published in 1961, the reception was divided. It got a very good public reception; a New York Times reviewer called it "the most refreshing, provocative, stimulating, and exciting study of this greatest of our problems of living which I have seen" (Rodwin, 1961). In the planning field, however, it was initially treated negatively by the professionals, while architects were divided (Bromley, 2000). Death and Life also had a significant impact on related disciplines, such as urban sociology; for

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

decades, Death and Life was cited in every urban sociology text (Choldin, 1978). Her method of participant observation and her advocacy to look closely at ordinary scenes and events are highly relevant from a sociological point of view.

Critics mainly referred to her non-university background and denoted her as a "Greenwich Village housewife." But her "amateur" writing about professional and academic matters for which she had no formal qualifications seems to have been an advantage as she took a fresh look on orthodox city planning and identified the absurdity in orthodox expert thinking. Her inductive methods and distrust of expert thinking constitute the strengths of Death and Life, which has also been described as "a manifesto for critical lay intelligence" (Taylor, 2006, p.1983).

But Death and Life also exhibits some weaknesses. Planners and economists found antiquated arguments in her work concerning idealized old neighborhoods and romantic myths of eighteenth-century economies. In addition, she made some oversimplifications about the evils of modernist planning, had a penchant to romanticize small neighborhood businesses and completely neglected issues of race in urban renewal (Campbell, 2003), although many studies explored that redevelopment negatively affected racial justice. African-Americans in particular suffered from clearance projects, so much so that urban renewal is also often referred to as "negro removal" (Thomas, 1997, p.6).

With respect to urban renewal and its consequences, Death and Life was the first book of consequence that attacked urban renewal schemes. Jacobs' depiction of urban renewal as the proof of the error of the prevailing planning orthodoxies and her commitment to inner-city neighborhoods and their diversity added energy to the countermovement to urban renewal and supported activist city dwellers. In The Urban Villagers (1962), Herbert Gans, another critic of urban renewal, examined in Boston's West End, a close-knit Italian community, in participant observation shortly before the area was cleared to make way for high-rise luxury apartment houses. Gans, like Jacobs, criticized orthodox planners as they misjudged an area like the West End as a slum by applying their middle-class perspectives when it was, in fact, satisfying to its inhabitants.

Apart from Death and Life, Martin Anderson's The Federal Bulldozer (1964) is regarded as the most important critique of urban renewal. This book represented the first major analysis of the urban renewal program and judges the federal urban renewal program as very costly, destructive of personal liberty and incapable of achieving its goals.

In Defensible Space, Oscar Newman explores the relationship of the design of residential areas to the organization of public and semi-public spaces so that these spaces can be defended against potential crime. Like Jacobs, Newman argues that high rise blocks, freely positioned in the landscape, are disconnect from the street and, thus, foster street crime and vandalism.

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

Instead, houses should be turned toward the street, as street-facing windows and doorways extend the zone of residents' territorial commitments to the sidewalk and the street. In describing the configuration of houses and sidewalks, Newman directly refers to Jane Jacobs' concept of casual surveillance by residents, passers-by and local shop owners (Newman, 1972). This concept, also known as "street eyes" became Jacobs' best known concept and tells planners that liveable streets with small-scale commerce and a high density of residents are the best means to ensure street safety, since the informal surveillance by the street's denizens and merchants creates the sense of well-being and safety. The inverse of street eyes, Jacobs called them "blind" places, characterized many urban renewal projects.

The concept of crime prevention through environmental design originated, like a lot of ideas that planners take for granted today, with Jane Jacobs. Although Jacobs did not use that term, Jacobs' idea of street eyes, together with her idea that streets need a clear demarcation between public and private space and her postulation that sidewalks need continuous use, set out the basic concepts that others later refined (Meck, 2005). As this concept translated so neatly into planning practice and architectural site design criteria, a field of specialized practice grew out of Jacobs' ideas. At the end of the 1960s, Oscar Newman led a project, with U.S. Department of Justice support, to salvage a troubled public housing project in New York. His team reconfigured the project to facilitate street eyes and make outdoor spaces "defensible." Newman reported

on these and parallel cases in the monograph cited above (Montgomery, 1998).

At the time Death and Life was published in 1961, Jacobs was a singular voice challenging the dominant theories of the entire planning establishment and found her philosophy of city planning rejected by urban planners as well as architects and scholars. But in the long run, she created a paradigm shift in the profession of urban planning. As new generations of planners entered the profession, Jacobs' concepts became the new orthodoxy of the late twentieth century. Planners, developers and architects increasingly respected the urban context and recognized the merits of preserving older structures and the existing street pattern. In 1974, John Zucotti, chairman of the New York City Planning Commission and successor of Robert Moses, the almighty planning commissioner of New York for decades, declared that "to a large extent we are neo-Jacobeans" (Klemek, 2007, p.50). Nearly five decades after Jacobs articulated her ideas, Zucotti's statement is still largely true of planners in the United States.

Her ideas mainly influenced urban renewal practice, which she despised in her book. During the last years of the federal urban renewal program, the funds allocated for rehabilitation projects increased, and in the late 1970s, the new emphasis on preservation and repair became even more evident. In the 1970s and 1980s, the historic preservation movement attracted many supporters and the recycling of existing buildings became the prevailing fashion. Old warehouses and factories deemed as eyesores in the 1950s were

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

transformed into shops, restaurants and attractive apartment lofts, as young urban professionals were looking for authentic and unique ways to live within the central cities. As developers identified an increasing demand for historic structures, they showed considerable imagination in finding new uses for empty post offices, railroad stations and city halls (Teaford, 2001).

Development strategies for city centers also reflect the paradigm shift in planning. While entire neighborhoods were bulldozed in the 1950s, late twentieth-century revival schemes were more often small-scale and selective, creating strategic sites, such as Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston. Mixed-use centers replaced the single-purpose apartment or office projects of the 1950s and 1960s. Urban infill is now used as a method to mend the tears in the urban fabric. Incorporating Jane Jacobs' ideas in their work, planners increasingly respected the past and no longer sought to create a whole new city and discard the old one (Frieden, 2000).

More importantly, the book has never been out of print and has come into prominence again in Richard Florida's influential work on the creative class in cities. A recent polemical essay ("Outgrowing Jane Jacobs") by New York Times' major architecture critic Nicolai Ouroussoff demonstrates that her ideas are still vigorously debated. Even though Ouroussoff argues that Jacobs failed to provide answers to some of the problems of twentieth-century cities, such as suburban sprawl and the nation's dependence on automobiles, he has to admit that today, the understanding of urban

planning in the U.S. is substantially shaped by ideas Jacobs set forth in Death and Life.

VIII. Jane Jacobs and the New Urbanism Movement

The concepts and ideas Jacobs evolved in Death and Life also influenced one of the most important movements in current U.S. planning, the New Urbanism movement. New Urbanism claims to find its roots in Jane Jacobs' works as she argues to maintain the vibrant, fine-grained, mixed use neighborhoods of the American cities. New Urbanists seek to restore this aspect of cities in their developments (Grant, 2006).

New Urbanism refers to a design-oriented approach to planned urban development, which was developed primarily by architects and journalists and became very popular not only in academic circles, but amongst planning practitioners. It aims at using spatial relations to create a close-knit social community that fosters diversity and allows residents to interact in a variety of ways. By calling for an urban design that includes a variety of building types, mixed uses, intermingling of housing for different income groups and a strong privileging of the public realm, New Urbanists apply many ideas Jane Jacobs set forth in Death and Life. The basic unit of New Urbanist planning is the neighborhood, which is limited in size, has a well-defined edge between settlement area and open space and a focused center, which is a walkable distance from the residences (Fainstein, 2003).

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

New Urbanists, who regard Death and Life as the most important initial theoretical contribution to their movement, not only rely on Jacobs' concepts of city density, walkable communities and "street eyes", but also on her belief in the mix of uses, buildings and people. Jacobs warned against single-purpose zoning, which rigidly categorizes and separates uses and described mixed-use development as the foremost goal in rebuilding a neighborhood. Jane Jacobs also advised planners to let people work where they live. "Working places and commerce," she wrote, "must be mingled with residences" (Jacobs, 1961, p. 253). With her concept of "zoning for diversity," she opposes the separation of uses by traditional zoning regulations and anticipates, in today's terminology, a sustainable form of development, much appreciated by a range of groups, including the New Urbanists. Nearly five decades later, the futility of exclusionary zoning is not only heavily anticipated by the New Urbanism movement, but it also unites many activists in the planning field. Mixed-use zoning is regarded as common sense in planning, and Jacobs was the one who popularized the concept first.

Although very successful with planning practitioners, New Urbanism has been widely criticized for merely calling for a different form of suburbia rather than overcoming the issue of metropolitan social segregation. And indeed, one of the most important contributions of New Urbanism to planning is the effort to overcome the environmentally destructive, wasteful form of American suburban development. As New Urbanists must rely on private developers to build and

finance their visions, their developments often contain greater physical diversity but do not differ markedly in their social composition from the existing suburbs. By concentrating on design features and assuming that changing people's environment will somehow take care of social inequalities of life; New Urbanism tends to commit the same errors as modernism. This concept, also known as "the doctrine of salvation by bricks," was criticized by Jacobs as one of the inherent misconceptions of modernist urban planning, but it re-emerges in the New Urbanism movement, which boasts itself to be the most progressive concept in current urban planning (Fainstein, 2003).

The main problem in the application of Jacobs' ideas to New Urbanism revolves around the question of whether diversity can be planned as theories in planning and urban design postulate. While Jacobs observed dense, walkable downtowns, mixed-use development and varied building styles as organic elements of successful cities, New Urbanists contort her beliefs as they try to impose these concepts in a formulaic fashion on cities. Thereby, Jacobs' observations of what makes cities work are transmuted into an authoritarian recipe for policy intervention. By applying Jacobs' hands-on observations to their projects, New Urbanist planners misinterpret the central lesson of Death and Life – that cities are vibrant living systems, not a product of grand, utopian schemes by overeager planners (Gilroy, 2006).

Her message to city planners is to do less and to operate on a smaller scale that also allows the preservation of existing structures. She tells planners to involve citizens

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

in planning and to favor pedestrians over cars and trucks. Her presumably most important advice is not to build residential areas apart from shops, factories and entertainment facilities. Instead, planners should enhance creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship within cities, since the best cities and neighborhoods, as Jacobs described, are as historically grown and diverse as city life itself (Choldin, 1978).

IX. Jane Jacobs on the Ground: The Atlantic Yards Project

The ideas set forth in Death and Life are finally applied to one of New York's currently largest urban redevelopment project, the Atlantic Yards Project in Brooklyn.

The Atlantic Yards Project comprises a 22-acre area, which is located at the intersection of Brooklyn's major thoroughfares, Flatbush and Atlantic Avenue and is surrounded by several lively neighborhoods. However, it currently contains none of the land use patterns of the adjacent neighborhoods. The greatest portion of the project site is used by the open below-grade Vanderbilt Rail Yard. Many of the once active industrial and commercial uses on the site became auto-repair shops, gas stations, parking lots and vacant lots. The loss of uses on the site, together with the rail yard, created a physical gap in the urban fabric of the area and a barrier separating the neighborhoods surrounding the project site. The project site is adjacent to the southern end of the commercial center of Brooklyn. The large-scale

urban redevelopment project will include 8 million square feet of apartments, offices, stores and a basketball arena for the New York Nets. Frank Gehry designed the sprawling project, which will include 6,430 apartments, 2,000 of which will be condominiums. Some of the residential units, both rental and for sale are designated as affordable housing units under state guidelines. The $4 billion project has been developed by Forest City Ratner Companies, who's CEO, Bruce Ratner, bought the New Jersey Nets of the NBA with the intention of moving it from New Jersey to anchor the planned arena.

Applying Jacobs' ideas to the Atlantic Yards Project, the first thing to notice is that Jacobs does not generally oppose new construction of architecture, as long as it is well integrated into the existing urban fabric. She praises the offices towers of Park Avenue, such as Lever House and Seagram Building as "masterpieces of modern design" (Jacobs, 1961, p.227). But as New York Times' critic Ouroussoff notes, acolytes of Jane Jacobs will have problems with the enormous size of the project, which will dominate the adjacent neighborhoods of three- and four-story brownstones (Ouroussoff, 2005).

It can be argued that the proposed mixture of residential, office and ground-floor retail uses in the Atlantic Yards Project is influenced by her ideas on mixture of uses and street-level retail. The proposed intermingling of different uses supports the presence of different people at different times of the day and thus serves to utilize Jacobs' concept of "street eyes" for

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

increased street safety. The proposed number of affordable housing units adds to the project's overall heterogeneity and may create the kind of diversity Jacobs intended (Jacobs, 1961). On the other hand, Jacobs herself points out that "large swathes of construction built at one time are inherently inefficient for sheltering wide ranges of cultural, population and business diversity" (Jacobs, 1961, p.191). Hence, she would have certainly opposed Atlantic Yards being built by one developer and one architect, being reserved for upscale uses and retail and not providing space for low-rent uses.

The key feature of Atlantic Yards is that it is constructed atop the Vanderbilt Rail Yard that currently bisects the neighborhoods of Fort Greene and Prospect Heights. It remains questionable if Atlantic Yards will be able to close the current border vacuum created by the rail yard. The permeability of the project will be the determining factor – whether the new development will be able to knit together these two neighborhoods. Furthermore, it will be critical to see whether the proposed gardens on the inside of the project feel like a smooth extension of the public realm or whether they will be isolated from the street grid. As the project provides ground-floor retail uses and cafés and restaurants on its perimeters, it follows Jacobs' recommendation to turn borders into seams that become "a line of exchange along which two areas are sewn together" (Jacobs, 1961, p.267).

Applying Jacobs' conditions for diversity in cities (see section V) to the Atlantic Yards, the project would meet the conditions of several primary functions and dense concentration of people. However, Jacobs saw the danger posed by densities higher than Boston's North End's 275 dwellings per acre and drastic standardization of building types (Jacobs, 1961). The Atlantic Yards Project, with 292 dwellings per acre, would be significantly denser, made possible through higher buildings and high rates of standardization. However, the remaining two Jacobsian qualities, frequent streets and varied buildings, would be absent from the Atlantic Yards plan. It would create two superblocks – one for the basketball arena and another for the second phase, bounded by Carlton and Vanderbilt avenues and Pacific and Dean Streets.

The biggest drawback of the Atlantic Yards Project is the involvement of eminent domain that Jacobs criticized, as it can have drastic and often ruinous consequences for commercial tenants and residents of the condemned property (Jacobs, 1961). In 2007, residents and business owners who had previously refused to sell their properties to the development corporation filed a suit because of the looming condemnation of their businesses and homes. The plaintiffs argued that the primary benefit of the project would be private and would enrich the developer, Forest City Ratner Companies. They further contended that the project was initiated by the developer rather than the city or state officials (Confessore, 2007).

In determining that the plaintiffs' claims lacked merit, the United States District Court in Brooklyn found that the plaintiffs had not presented facts supporting the

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

claim that the taking was unconstitutional and that there were no indices that the condemnations would not benefit the public. In so holding, the court referred to the much-disputed Kelo v. City of New London United States Supreme Court decision. In the Kelo case, Jacobs filed an amicus brief in support of the petitioners, arguing that economic development takings impose enormous economic and social costs on property owners and neighborhoods, sometimes destroying entire neighborhoods. In her argumentation, Jacobs also referred to her findings in Death and Life (Somin & Getman   2004).

X. Conclusion

This paper documents that Jane Jacobs, in her first book, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, has stridently articulated a set of ideas that have travelled well beyond that source. She created a paradigm shift in planning as she brought the respect of existing city diversity to planners' knowledge and deeply changed the way many city dwellers see cities today. Even today, her ideas are highly relevant as they serve to inform and inspire important planning movements, such as New Urbanism, and are cited when discussing contemporary developments in cities.

Death and Life provides powerful advice, particularly for planning practitioners. Jacobs encourages planners to work on the basis of their own observations to understand the complexity of cities instead of imposing unquestioned planning theories. Jacobs' notions that planning practitioners should promote diversity in cities

and be self-critical in achieving planning goals are highly relevant today. Death and Life is especially cherished by planning students and active planners. Jacobs provides hands-on examples and relates to common sense and everyday city life by using vivid language instead of writing in a code indecipherable by the average planning practitioner.

Author Biography

Matthias C.D. Wendt received his M.A. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy from the University of Delaware in 2008. He specialized in urban planning and worked as a graduate research assistant for the Institute of Public Administraion. He is currently completing his degree in Geography at the University of Bayreuth, Germany and aims at a career in the public sector or research.

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

New Visions for Public Affairs – Volume 1, Spring 2009
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy – University of Delaware, Newark, DE
www.suapp.udel.edu/nvpa/home

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