***To the Thousandth Generation: The Green Civic Republican Tradition in the United States***

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**Chapter 8: Jane Jacobs – Self-Government, Organized Complexity, and the City**

Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) is arguably the most important urban theorist of the last 60 years.[[1]](#endnote-1) A journalist by trade, she was a premier public intellectual who wrote on the design, social dynamics, and economies of cities, as well as on ethics, political theory, and economics more generally. Her best-known work is *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961),[[2]](#endnote-2) which was simultaneously a devastating attack on the orthodox city planning and land-use policies of her time, particularly Urban Renewal; an argument for the vitality and health of densely populated, mixed-use urban neighborhoods; an analysis of the fundamental nature of cities; and an articulation of urban design principles that remain highly influential to this day. Today, all planners, at least on paper, share the reverence for mixed-use, higher-density, pedestrian-oriented urban neighborhoods that Jacobs articulated in *Death and Life*.[[3]](#endnote-3)

*Death and Life* is the main focus of this chapter, but Jacobs also wrote a number of articles and books, several of which I draw upon as well. Indeed, she had been writing for decades by the time she published *Death and Life*. Born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, Jacobs moved to New York City in 1935, where she lived until relocating to Toronto and becoming a Canadian citizen in 1968. Her writing career began in the 1930s. During the 1950s, she was an increasingly prominent critic for *Architectural Forum*. It was here that her ideas about cities and urban planning took shape. She evolved from being a supporter to a sharp critic of Urban Renewal.

Though Jacobs focused much of her writing on cities, her work fundamentally engaged our relationship with the natural world. First of all, urban settings are themselves a subject of environmental concern, both in their own right and because of their broader impact. Secondly, Jacobs theorized about the relationship between cities and the natural environment. Third, Jacobs drew explicit comparisons between cities and natural ecosystems. For her, the city was an example of *organized complexity* and as such had an affinity to living and ecological systems.

Although Jacobs wrote in a number of fields, all of her writing was in some measure political, in the sense that it touched on the principles and processes by which human communities organize themselves. Jacobs herself was also a political activist who played a key role in ending the destructive, government-sponsored policy of Urban Renewal. However, as we will see, Jacobs’s political ideology has bedeviled commentators, as she defied the standard left-right spectrum. I will argue that she best fits the civic republican tradition and, more specifically, green republicanism.

As we will see, Jacobs’s celebration of urban neighborhoods involves a long-term problem with the U.S. green republican tradition, a problem that is a key focus of this book. Green republicanism has been concerned with political stability, virtue, and ecological sustainability in the face of destructive, disruptive, and corrupting forces that degrade both the political community and the natural environment. In the writings of Jefferson and Madison, the tradition was much more explicitly focused on political stability, but environmental concerns clearly came in with Thoreau. As we have seen in previous chapters, in its quest for stability, green republicanism often posits a landscape – whether the small farm, the wilderness, or the urban park – where civic virtue and other republican values, like non-domination, can flourish shielded from the vicissitudes of history and politics. I call this sheltered landscape a *virtue haven*. The problem with *virtue havens* is that the concept overlooks larger dynamics that inevitably impact and reshape all places. In the end, this oversight, which has been a feature of the U.S. green republican tradition, becomes self-defeating, as the failure to consider these dynamics undercuts the ability to sustain a republican polity and makes the virtue haven vulnerable to failure.

We saw this problem especially with Thomas Jefferson, Henry David Thoreau, and Olmsted, and, to some degree, with Frederick Douglass. It was much less of a concern for Addams and Aldo Leopold. But is it an issue for Jacobs? Interestingly, much of the commentary about Jacobs turns on this very issue, though it is not framed in terms of republicanism or virtue havens. Critics of Jacobs, such as Sharon Zukin,[[4]](#endnote-4) argue that Jacobs built her whole concept of flourishing city life around a model highly specific to time and place: the vibrant, diverse, self-organizing post-World War II New York City neighborhood whose stability was threatened by government planners and Urban Renewal. Jacobs’s neighborhood ideal involved republican values like self-government, civic virtue, community, and stability. That model, according to her critics, blinded her to a number of social, political, and historical dynamics, including race, class, and the power of private capital. Such dynamics meant that even as Jacobs and others defeated Urban Renewal, her ideal urban neighborhood was already in decline and would be endangered by gentrification driven by private investment and corporate power. In fact, her critics argue, Jacobs’s whole approach, in relying on neighborhood self-organization and demonizing government as the main threat to vital urban neighborhoods, created a power and policy vacuum that opened the way to gentrification. In other words, Jacobs’s concept of a virtue haven proved self-defeating. Were her critics correct?

In tackling this question, the chapter proceeds as follows. First, I outline the target of Jacobs’s critical analysis and political activism: post-World War II Urban Renewal, fueled by what James Scott has termed the ideology of *authoritarian high modernism*.[[5]](#endnote-5) I look at Jacobs’s two main criticisms of Urban Renewal, one procedural, and the other substantive. From these criticisms I build a case for her as a civic republican thinker and how this identification helps to resolve uncertainties about her political ideology. Then I consider her as not only a republican thinker, but also an environmental thinker. Finally, I take up the question of whether Jacobs falls into the problem of envisioning a virtue haven. This question brings in prevailing criticisms of Jacobs, particularly her failure to anticipate or address the problem of gentrification. I argue that in the end, Jacobs’s suspicion of top-down government regulation made her less able to engage gentrification than she otherwise might otherwise have. Jacobs’s self-organizing neighborhood needed strong government regulation as a counterweight to gentrifying forces. Absent that, her urban vision became a self-defeating ideal of a virtue haven.

**Authoritarian High Modernism and Urban Renewal**

Before discussing Jacobs, it is important to outline the context in which she wrote *Death and Life*. Jacobs starts the book by self-consciously declaring it “an attack … on the principles and aims that have shaped modern, orthodox city planning and rebuilding” and “an attempt to introduce new principles of city planning and rebuilding.”[[6]](#endnote-6) What was this orthodoxy?

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Europe, North America, and, eventually, the entire world saw the ascendancy of what we identified earlier as authoritarian high modernism. As Scott discusses, high modernism itself is characterized by the notion of progress through simplification and scientific, technological rationalization of nature and society to provide for more orderly and efficient market exchange, resource development, public administration, law enforcement, and provision of essential services. As Scott tells us, high modernism was manifested in such diverse developments as scientific forestry, the rectilinear mapping of the US frontier, the uniform exercise of state power over once-feudal domains, the standardization of weights and measures and mediums of exchange, and, as we will see, the replacement of seemingly chaotic cities by intensively planned developments with land uses rigorously separated.[[7]](#endnote-7) High modernism took on explicitly authoritarian overtones in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with top-down attempts to radically, rapidly, and undemocratically reorder society along more rationalistic lines. Scott cites examples of authoritarian high modernism from around the world and across the political spectrum, including Georges-Eugène Haussmann’s nineteenth-century transformation of Paris, Soviet central planning, Nazi social engineering, and, as we discuss here, the twentieth century urban planning orthodoxy that Jacobs attacked.

This planning orthodoxy involved high modernist movements that sought to eliminate the apparent disorder and overcrowding of urban life and replace it with something more rational and functional. Chief among these movements were, first of all, the Garden City movement begun by British planner Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928). Howard sought to disperse large concentrated metropolises into smaller, highly planned, circular, smaller rural cities surrounded by greenbelts and combining residence, industry, agriculture, and countryside, but with all uses organized into separate districts. Howard in essence wished to transform existing urban life beyond recognition. Though Garden Cities were built around the world, much more directly influential on high modernist land-use planning was the French/Swiss architect Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, aka Le Corbusier (1887-1965) and his concept of the Radiant City. The hyper-modernist Radiant City was in many ways radically different from the Garden City, with its “ideal of a cozy town life.”[[8]](#endnote-8) However, both ideas involved top-down planning, spatial separation of human activities, and elimination of the densely populated city and the crowded urban street. Jacobs was also harshly critical of both, though her more immediate target was the Radiant City and the Urban Renewal it inspired.

The Radiant City reflected ideals of machinic efficiency, functionality, and speed. Significantly, Le Corbusier emphasized “the death of the street.”[[9]](#endnote-9) The idea was to eliminate the disorder of the mixed-use, crowded urban street and replace it with a highly controlled, rigidly planned landscape of widely spaced high-rise towers connected by high-speed roadways and surrounded by open space, i.e. lawns, parks, and plazas. Uses would be separated into distinct, single-purpose centers.[[10]](#endnote-10) Le Corbusier offered his services to both fascist and communist regimes, and his vision, reflected in the 1933 manifesto of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), proved highly influential on post-World War II urban reconstruction and planning, including Urban Renewal in the United States.[[11]](#endnote-11) A key aspect of modernist city planning, both the Radiant City and the plans enacted through Urban Renewal, was a focus on creating orderly geometric patterns when viewed from above, from an Olympian perspective.[[12]](#endnote-12) However, seeming order from above turned out to be perfectly consistent with a sterile, impoverished, even dead urban life at ground level.[[13]](#endnote-13)

Urban Renewal was a federally funded program that provided assistance to state and local governments to use eminent domain to condemn urban areas as “slums” and clear the land for redevelopment, in many cases turning it over to private developers at a bargain.[[14]](#endnote-14) Cities were sweepingly transformed: Urban Renewal razed neighborhoods and replaced them with landscapes of high-rise office buildings and high-end apartment towers, often dismal and segregated housing projects, concrete plazas, parking lots, and highways. Short blocks were replaced by long superblocks to facilitate automobile traffic and make room for towering buildings surrounded by open space. Commercial and residential land uses were separated. The new developments were also devoid of vibrant pedestrian life.

The rationales were the elimination of urban disorder, decay, and poverty; the creation of modern commercial and residential units and affordable housing; the building of high-speed roads and parking for greater automobility; and the attraction of new business investment and tax revenues. The city would be remade, as Peter Laurence puts it, to be “modern, mobile, and green.”[[15]](#endnote-15)

The federal government underwrote Urban Renewal. The federal Housing Acts of 1949 and, especially, 1954 provided federal funds for localities and other public agencies to undertake urban renewal projects, while the federal Interstate Highway Act of 1956 ensured the dominance of the automobile by providing for 41,000 miles of road to be built, with the federal government providing up 90 percent of the funding.[[16]](#endnote-16)

Richard Moe and Carter Wilkie note that “in most cases, the displacement of residents [occurred] without the provision of alternative housing.”[[17]](#endnote-17) When residents were re-housed, it was often in segregated public housing projects that warehoused the poor, were cut off from the commercial amenities of former neighborhoods, and fostered crime and alienation.[[18]](#endnote-18) The victims of Urban Renewal were disproportionately White ethnic and, especially, Black neighborhoods. These so-called slums were often in fact thriving communities. Uprooted residents lost their neighborhoods, including their social networks, their daily routines and street life, and, of course, homes and businesses.[[19]](#endnote-19)

Perhaps the best-known practitioner of Urban Renewal was Robert Moses (1888-1981). Moses simultaneously held a number of powerful state and municipal positions in New York from the 1920s to the 1970s and oversaw numerous redevelopment and highway-building efforts in the New York City metro region. Moses was initially popular for building bridges, establishing parks, swimming pools, and beaches – though he took pains to hinder African-American access to them – and for his role in organizing the 1939-1940 New York World’s Fair. However, starting in the 1930s, he became notorious for his increasingly callous disregard for neighborhoods impacted by his sweeping development schemes, especially during the Urban Renewal era.[[20]](#endnote-20) He once remarked, “You can draw any kind of picture you want on a clean slate, but when you’re operating in an overbuilt metropolis, you have to hack your way with a meat axe.”[[21]](#endnote-21) Marshall Berman describes him as corrupted by his own growing power through “the creation of a network of enormous, interlocking ‘public authorities,’ capable of raising virtually unlimited sums of money to build with, and accountable to no executive, legislative, or judicial power.”[[22]](#endnote-22)

Jacobs initially supported Urban Renewal. However, According to Robert Kanigel, when she visited Philadelphia in 1955, she had a kind of epiphany. She was struck by the disconnect between the attractive artistic renderings of a local Urban Renewal project – from an Olympian perspective – and the lack of any pedestrian life on the ground.[[23]](#endnote-23) In 1958, she thus described Urban Renewal projects on the horizon:

What will the projects look like? They will be spacious, parklike, and uncrowded. They will feature long green vistas. They will be stable and symmetrical and orderly. They will be clean, impressive, and monumental. They will have all the attributes of a well-kept, dignified cemetery.[[24]](#endnote-24)

Jacobs thus criticized planners who viewed the city as a grand artistic exercise. She said that they substituted art for life, creating a kind of dead urban “taxidermy.”[[25]](#endnote-25)

As a result of experiences like the one in Philadelphia and her own observations of street life in her Greenwich Village neighborhood, Jacobs turned against modernist planning orthodoxy. Though Jacobs arguably captured the most public attention, she was not alone. Other urban theorists at the time, such as William H. Whyte, Kevin Lynch, Herbert Gans, Robert Venturi, and Lewis Mumford, were also becoming critical as well.

Meanwhile, a grassroots backlash also emerged in opposition to highway-building and slum clearance and in support of historic preservation.[[26]](#endnote-26) Jacobs herself was active in these movements. In the 1950s and 1960s, Jacobs was one of the leaders of grassroots coalitions that defeated two of Moses’ development plans that threatened Greenwich Village: extension of Fifth Avenue through Washington Square Park, and the Lower Manhattan Expressway (LOMEX), a massive project to plow a highway and a set of Brutalist housing complexes along the path of Canal Street from the East River to the Hudson. In the end, grassroots activism and the writings of Jacobs and other critics, along with conservative attacks on government programs and the retreat of the welfare state, meant the end of Urban Renewal in the 1970s.

**Jacobs’s Two-fold Attack on Urban Renewal**

In both her writing and activism, Jacobs’s criticism of Urban Renewal is two-fold. First of all, her criticism is *procedural*. Here, it is important to briefly pause and address a common criticism of Jacobs, one especially advanced by Herbert Gans, namely that she engaged in the fallacy of physical determinism, in other words seeing the physical design of the city as determinative of social outcomes.[[27]](#endnote-27) This criticism is fueled by her emphasis in *Death and Life* on four design principles for a vibrant urban environment – see below – as well as by the fact that in the decades after publication of the book, urban neighborhoods that met her design specifications became highly gentrified and lost the social qualities she prized. However, Jacobs herself argues for the primacy of processes over things in both cities and natural ecosystems. In her Forward to the 1992 edition of *Death and Life*, she says, “Processes are always of the essence; things have significance as participants in processes, for better or worse.”[[28]](#endnote-28) And, as we now discuss, she emphasizes the role of political and economic processes in shaping urban life.

In terms of process or procedure, Jacobs is first of all concerned about domination by bureaucrats like Moses who exercised arbitrary, unaccountable power over neighborhoods slated for destruction. Urban Renewal projects ran roughshod over the will of local communities, were formulated and pursued in an authoritarian manner with little or no public participation, were the product of centralized planning bureaucracies with little knowledge of local conditions, and involved radical, abrupt transformations that disrupted and destroyed urban life. Provision for public hearings and other forms of citizen engagement was meaningless, Jacobs said, as plans had largely been finalized by decision-makers, and the authorities created sham citizens’ groups to support their plans.[[29]](#endnote-29) Urban Renewal disrupted neighborhoods’ natural self-governing structures – see below – and put top-down fiat in their place, using the coercive and often inequitable power of eminent domain.[[30]](#endnote-30) City planners and federal and state authorities, dismissing citizens and protesters as ill-informed and parochial,[[31]](#endnote-31) then imposed uniform, simplistic approaches that took no account of local conditions.

Jacobs points out another procedural flaw. Urban Renewal was an example of what she called *cataclysmic money*, as opposed to *gradual money*. Cataclysmic money “pours into an area in concentrated form, producing drastic changes.”[[32]](#endnote-32) Cataclysmic money can be public or private: it typified Urban Renewal and government subsidies for land clearance and suburban sprawl outside of cities, as well as large influxes of investment from developers and other private entities. Cataclysmic money is fundamentally destructive: it rapidly transforms and disrupts an area and undermines key features of a flourishing urban neighborhood. This sweeping character was not a problem for high modernists. A key aspect of Urban Renewal, very much in keeping with Le Corbusier’s influence and Moses’s meat axe metaphor, is that it aimed to entirely erase the past and then create a kind of sterilized eternal present characterized not by the built environment as a set of machines for specialized functions.[[33]](#endnote-33)

By contrast, Jacobs was fundamentally an incrementalist.[[34]](#endnote-34) Though she says that a city is perpetually in flux[[35]](#endnote-35) and never finished, she explicitly favors gradual money and “piecemeal, evolutionary” change that a city can absorb.[[36]](#endnote-36) Smaller, targeted increments of public or private funding or investment, i.e. gradual money, enable neighborhoods to improve slowly and incrementally, in ways that allow existing residents to remain and benefit in a process she called “unslumming.” Unslumming is not the result of massive public policy initiatives, but typically happens incrementally from the ground up, though heavy reliance on local resources to improve neighborhood conditions, for example by renovating properties: “We need to discern, respect and build upon the forces for regeneration that exist in slums themselves, and that demonstrably work in real cities.”[[37]](#endnote-37)

Gradual money creates continuity in urban life. Buildings can be rehabilitated instead of torn down. New development happens not through wholesale razing of buildings or additional suburban sprawl but largely through infill of existing spaces and strategic location of important buildings, like concert halls, in order to stimulate a variety of other businesses.[[38]](#endnote-38) A neighborhood does not change all at once, but acquires a mixture of buildings of different ages, conditions, and uses, as well as a combination of old and new residents, who all benefit from unslumming. Gradual money ties in with the notion that a well-functioning urban neighborhood requires time to emerge. Gradual money fundamentally involves stability.[[39]](#endnote-39)

Significantly, unslumming, as Laurence says, is also about “self-determination” and “participation” rather than top-down planning.[[40]](#endnote-40) Jacobs says that we must “think of repairing and rebuilding the city in such a way that its people will continue to have freedom and opportunity to make thousands of intricate, big and little adjustments.”[[41]](#endnote-41)

For Jacobs, temporal and spatial scales are related. Jacobs favors what Richard Sennett calls “slow-time” and small scale. Sennett says, “Small is where slow happens.”[[42]](#endnote-42) Jacobs thus opposes not only rapid change, but also plans on a large scale, whether top-down national plans or reorganizations of whole neighborhoods. She famously rejected the well-known advice given by architect Daniel Burnham in a 1910 speech: “Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s’ blood … Make big plans.”[[43]](#endnote-43)

Big plans, Jacobs argues, are antidemocratic.[[44]](#endnote-44) They are monotonous and boring: they impose vast, uniform solutions. They reflect established orthodoxies rather than new ideas. Even worse, big plans are inflexible in the face of changing conditions, and when they fail, they fail in correspondingly big ways. Jacobs does not outright reject planning, but favors smaller-scale trial-and-error and experimentation, tailored to particular, local conditions. Success can inform similar efforts elsewhere and failure can be contained.[[45]](#endnote-45)

Jacobs’s second criticism of Urban Renewal was a *substantive* critique of the kind of city it created.[[46]](#endnote-46) The substantive critique of Urban Renewal dovetails with the procedural critique. Urban Renewal, Jacobs argues, created a built environment devoid of healthy social and economic activity. She says, “This is not the rebuilding of cities. This is the sacking of cities.”[[47]](#endnote-47) Urban Renewal was in her view anti-city. It erased diverse, densely populated vibrant city neighborhoods, replacing them with sterile, automobile-dependent developments devoid of diversity and street life. The substantive critique joins the procedural critique in that in erasing neighborhood life, Urban Renewal also destroyed a key dimension of democratic self-governance in cities. In order to understand these points, we must go further into Jacobs’s theory of urban life.

**Diversity and Complexity**

A key theme, in both *Death and Life* and Jacobs’s later writings on the economics of cities, is *diversity*. Jacobs says that a “ubiquitous principle” in *Death and Life* “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.”[[48]](#endnote-48) Cities are a premier engine of economic growth and technological progress, and social and economic vitality depend on cities having a dense, diverse population and diverse businesses and other activities, all in close proximity and interaction. She rejects the presumed efficiency advantages of cities specializing in one highly profitable industry, for example Detroit with automobile manufacturing.[[49]](#endnote-49) Such cities lack flexibility and creativity and cannot respond to changing conditions. Cities with a diverse, dense concentration of smaller industries, failing and succeeding through constant experimentation and trial and error, seem less efficient and more chaotic but are actually more vital, innovative, and growing.[[50]](#endnote-50)

In *Death and Life*, Jacobs draws on observations of her own block in Greenwich Village and also observations of other neighborhoods and cities to come up with four essential design principles for a diverse, healthy city. These principles, which became enormously influential in city planning, are as follows:

1. The district, and indeed as many of its internal parts as possible, must serve more than one primary function; preferably 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 sufficiently 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.[[51]](#endnote-51)

In other words: diverse, multiple-use districts; short blocks and frequent corners; buildings varying in age, condition, and economic yield; high population density. She stresses, “*All* four in combination are necessary to generate city diversity; the absence of any one of the four frustrates a district's potential.”[[52]](#endnote-52)

These conditions yield a number of benefits. They encourage a diversity of interactions and activities and promote economic vitality. Multiple uses means a variety of functions that sustain activity over a 24-hour period and also encourage constant pedestrian traffic. Short blocks mean that individuals are more likely to take side streets; hence these streets are not relegated solely to residence or some other limited function. Having buildings of different ages and conditions means a diversity of businesses, as less profitable enterprises – including younger, more innovative businesses – are able to use older, perhaps more rundown, buildings with lower rents. Newer, more expensive buildings tend to favor established chains. High density means that people engage in a variety of face-to-face interactions and that businesses have a sufficient customer base and can more easily build relationships with one another.

But these four conditions not only promote economic vitality. They help generate a functional, self-organizing, self-governing social order. Drawing on the work of Warren Weaver, Jacobs discusses “what *kind* of problem cities pose,”[[53]](#endnote-53) though the word “problem” is not meant as pejorative. There are problems of *simplicity*, wherein a system is governed by two variables directly related to one another.[[54]](#endnote-54) There are problems of *disorganized complexity*, wherein a system is governed by a multitude of variables that can be understood statistically and in terms of average properties.[[55]](#endnote-55) And, finally, there are problems of *organized complexity*, wherein a system generates complex organic wholes with interrelated, interdependent elements that cannot be understood in abstraction from one another.[[56]](#endnote-56)

Jacobs argues that planners saw the city in terms of simplicity or disorganized complexity and therefore attempted to apply top-down, formulaic approaches that involved manipulating a few variables, such as traffic flows, numbers of jobs, housing turnover, square feet of housing, tax revenue, or relative acreage of buildings versus open space.[[57]](#endnote-57) Planners also tried to reduce the problem of disorganized complexity into problems of simplicity, by trying to understand the city in terms of just two variables, for example as by “analyz[ing] statistically, by income groups and family sizes, a given quantity of people uprooted by acts of planning, to combine these with probability statistics on normal housing turnover, and to estimate accurately the gap. Thus arose the supposed feasibility of large-scale relocation of citizens.”[[58]](#endnote-58) Such exercises also atomized the public: “In the form of statistics, citizens were no longer components of any unit except the family, and could be dealt with intellectually like grains of sand, or electrons or billiard balls.”[[59]](#endnote-59)

Planners who used these simplistic or statistical approaches also viewed the existing city as chaotic and entropic. Modernist city planners tried to impose order from above to eliminate disorder at ground level. They failed to understand the true nature of cities, namely that they embody “a complex and highly developed form of order.”[[60]](#endnote-60) Cities are characterized by organized complexity. Urban life generates its own complicated structures over time, structures that were disrupted or erased by Urban Renewal and could not be created by policy or regenerated overnight. Jacobs remarked, “The remarkable intricacy and liveliness of downtown can never be created by the abstract logic of a few men.”[[61]](#endnote-61) Jacobs believes that “conscious design cannot replace spontaneous order.”[[62]](#endnote-62) Cities cannot be considered in the abstract or in highly generalized terms, but must be understood from the ground up and in terms of the particular. Jacobs thus thought that “ordinary people, untrained in expertise, who are attached to a neighborhood, accustomed to using it, and so are not accustomed to thinking of it in generalized or abstract fashion” had a much better understanding of the particular conditions governing cities than did planners.[[63]](#endnote-63) The average citizen “does not have to be a planner or an architect, or arrogate their functions, to ask the right questions.”[[64]](#endnote-64)

**Self-Generating Social Order and Self-Government**

A healthy city generates social order at various levels, forming “an intricate living network of relationships.”[[65]](#endnote-65) Jacobs was fundamentally concerned with *place* and *place making* at a small-scale level.[[66]](#endnote-66) Jacobs addressed larger-scale urban economic and social dynamics in her later books, but in *Death and Life*, she focused on the urban street and neighborhood. The street was key: “Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs.”[[67]](#endnote-67) And these public places self-organized their collective life. In one of her most famous passages, describing a city’s ‘sidewalk ballet,’ she said:

Under the seeming disorder of the old city, wherever the old city is working successfully, is a marvelous order for maintaining the safety of the streets and the freedom of the city. It is a complex order. Its essence is intricacy of sidewalk use, bringing with it a constant succession of eyes. This order is all composed of movement and change, and although it is life, not art, we may fancifully call it the art form of the city and liken it to the dance – not to a simple-minded precision dance with everyone kicking up at the same time, twirling in unison and bowing off en masse, but to an intricate ballet in which the individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce each other and compose an orderly whole. The ballet of the good city sidewalk never repeats itself from place to place, and in any once place is always replete with new improvisations.[[68]](#endnote-68)

A diverse city block is a complex social order, like a spontaneously choreographed ballet, that emerges over time through interactions of people pursuing daily routines, children playing on sidewalks, residents watching from windows and stoops, and constant flows of strangers patronizing businesses or just passing through. This order generates relationships of *trust*:

In speaking about city sidewalk safety, I mentioned how necessary it is that there should be, in the brains behind the eyes on the street, an almost unconscious assumption of general street support when the chips are down. There is a short word for this assumption of support: trust.[[69]](#endnote-69)

For example, a storekeeper might keep spare keys to nearby apartments or houses as a courtesy to residents who might be out of town and have guests coming to stay, something she calls a “a common custom in New York.”[[70]](#endnote-70)

Trust helps constitute a neighborhood as a place, but requires time to gestate. It cannot be created all at once or through deliberate policy, but arises from a long history of small, daily interactions that create social capital. “The trust of a city street is formed over time from many, many little public sidewalk contacts,” Jacobs says. Most of these casual interactions are “ostensibly utterly trivial but the sum is not trivial at all. The sum of such casual, public contact at a local level – most of it fortuitous, most of it associated with errands, all of it metered by the person concerned and not thrust upon him by anyone – is a feeling for the public identity of people, a web of public respect and trust, and a resource in time of personal or neighborhood need. The absence of this trust is a disaster to a city street. Its cultivation cannot be institutionalized.”[[71]](#endnote-71) She says, “If self-government in the place is to work, underlying any float of population must be a continuity of people who have forged neighborhood networks. These networks are a city’s irreplaceable social capital.”[[72]](#endnote-72)

Trust thus depends on some stability of the local population. A transient population is often disengaged and cannot build the necessary social capital.[[73]](#endnote-73) Somewhat paradoxically, the fluidity and diversity of life within cities helps to maintain this stability. Because cities or sub-city districts can provide a myriad of nearby opportunities for employment, socializing, recreation, and consumption, residents can change jobs, friends, tastes, needs, and so forth without having to move out of their neighborhoods.[[74]](#endnote-74)

This stability and continuity and the importance of street life, along with the implications for self-government, tie in with what Richard Dagger calls *civic memory*. Dagger emphasizes the importance of shared place for a sense of community: “Citizenship grows out of attachment to a place and its people – out of a sense of community – that only forms over time.”[[75]](#endnote-75) Shared civic memory helps constitute communal identities. Civic memory “preserves, as it creates, the identity and integrity of a city.” It fosters attachments between citizens and their city. “By fostering these attachments, civic memory enables the people of a city to see it as *their* city – a perception that is essential if they are to regard participation in the government of the city as *self*-government.”[[76]](#endnote-76) Civic memory helps enable what Jacobs calls “the first fundamental of successful city life: People must take a modicum of public responsibility for each other even if they have no ties to each other.”[[77]](#endnote-77)

An urban neighborhood provides itself certain public services, including a degree of security. In “successful city neighborhoods,” the street is “equipped to handle strangers, and [is able] to make a safety asset, in itself, out of the presence of strangers.”[[78]](#endnote-78) In terms of policing functions, a successful neighborhood is in many ways self-governing: “the public peace – the sidewalk and street peace – of cities is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as police are. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves.”[[79]](#endnote-79) Jacobs captures this capacity for safety in her famous metaphor of “eyes on the street”:

… there must be eyes upon the street, eyes belonging to those we might call the natural proprietors of the street. The buildings on a street equipped to handle strangers and to insure the safety of both residents and strangers, must be oriented to the street. They cannot turn their backs or blank sides on it and leave it blind.

She adds, “the sidewalk must have users on it fairly continuously, both to add to the number of effective eyes on the street and to induce the people in buildings along the street to watch the sidewalks in sufficient numbers.”[[80]](#endnote-80) The presence of shops and public places, especially if these places draw activity around the clock, plays a key role.[[81]](#endnote-81) The “natural proprietors of the street” are presumably residents, business owners and employees, and those who regularly visit or pass through. Their surveillance is generally unconscious.[[82]](#endnote-82)

The trust that develops within neighborhoods enables a local political life. “The casual public sidewalk life of cities ties directly into other types of public life.” This public life cannot be generated just by announcing meetings or providing meeting rooms: “Formal public organizations in cities require an informal public life underlying them, mediating between them and the privacy of the people of the city.”[[83]](#endnote-83) Jacobs’s talks about a neighborhood’s “public characters,” i.e. leaders, activists, and sharers of news who are in frequent contact with others.[[84]](#endnote-84) She emphasizes that “sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city's wealth of public life may grow.”[[85]](#endnote-85)

The connection to self-government is fundamental. Jacobs says, “Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”[[86]](#endnote-86) The city neighborhood does much of the work of managing itself. She notes, “Where democracy means more than having the vote, many citizens engage part-time in public affairs.”[[87]](#endnote-87) Both Sennett and Laurence see Jacobs following in the traditions of self-government like the Aristotelian polis and the American town meeting. She was, Laurence says, concerned with “the fundamental issue of balancing local self-determination with federal governance.”[[88]](#endnote-88) She believed, Sennett argues, in “the primacy of direct democracy,” which “could be built up in a cellular fashion, with each cell being a neighborhood in which people had, as it were, shouting-distance knowledge of one another.”[[89]](#endnote-89) Jacobs herself says, “We must think of city neighborhoods as mundane organs of self-government.” She adds, significantly, “I am using self-government in its broadest sense, meaning both the informal and formal self-management of society.”[[90]](#endnote-90) In one passage, she summarizes “the self-government functions of city streets”: “to weave webs of public surveillance and thus to protect strangers as well as themselves; to grow networks of small-scale, everyday public life and thus of trust and social control; and to help assimilate children into reasonably responsible and tolerant city life.[[91]](#endnote-91)

For Jacobs, self-government promoted the common good:

The usual objection to local self-government within cities is that their people are shortsighted, selfish and either oblivious to the good of the whole or opposed to it. While in some cases this may be true, I am far more impressed by how often the good of the city district or neighborhood corresponds with the good of the whole. The whole, in fact, turns out not to be an abstraction untouched by the fate of the parts.[[92]](#endnote-92)

Despite the communitarian elements, it is important to note that Jacobs emphasizes the limits of social bond. People “do depend greatly on their neighborhoods for the kind of everyday lives they lead,”[[93]](#endnote-93) but the urban neighborhood is not an isolated, inward-looking enclave. It is fully embedded in the larger city and has shifting bounds that blend into surrounding places and vary with different people’s perspectives: “We must first of all drop any ideal of neighborhoods as self-contained or introverted units.”[[94]](#endnote-94)

Benjamin Fraser says, “At the root of the complex unity of the sidewalk ballet there is, simply put, a community in movement.”[[95]](#endnote-95) But, Fraser argues, Jacobs recognizes that even at the sidewalk level, the urban “community is not one but multiple; it is not univocal but is instead the product and the producer of difference and disorder.”[[96]](#endnote-96) It is a community of neighbors and strangers, not of friends or family.

Jacobs thus distinguishes public and private life and says that closeness between neighbors in a way that approaches ties among friends or family – a characteristic she associates with the suburbs – is socially unhealthy. “In small settlements everyone knows your affairs,” but a flourishing urban neighborhood balances a well-functioning public life with personal privacy. A shop owner keeps keys to local residences for use by houseguests, but does not pry into whom those houseguests are.[[97]](#endnote-97) She notes, “Privacy is precious in cities. It is indispensable. Perhaps it is precious and indispensable everywhere, but most places you cannot get it.”[[98]](#endnote-98) Jacobs forcefully rejects the “nauseating” ideal of “togetherness,” which she associates with the suburbs, as erasing the public/private distinction and encouraging exclusivity and hostility to difference, including racism.[[99]](#endnote-99)

According to Jacobs, “cities are, by definition, full of strangers.” Consequently, she says, “The bedrock attribute of a successful city district is that a person must feel personally safe and secure on the street among all these strangers.”[[100]](#endnote-100) She emphasizes what Paul Kidder calls “the strength of weak ties,” i.e. “interactions that are substantial enough to generate a sense of care and solidarity but not strong enough to entail the demands of friendship.”[[101]](#endnote-101) Somewhat optimistically, Jacobs argues that the sense of security built by trust and a balance of public and private in a city neighborhood full of strangers helps ward off discrimination and segregation. When people feel safe and secure, and when collective life does not collapse into insular togetherness, they are more apt to accept difference.[[102]](#endnote-102)

Yet while Jacobs is not a full-throated communitarian, she clearly sees a densely populated, diverse neighborhood as promoting a kind of civic virtue of shared responsibility, tolerance, and self-government. Kidder, who relates Jacobs to virtue ethics, says, “For Jacobs, the city is a place where characters are formed.”[[103]](#endnote-103) Indeed, Jacobs intimates a relationship between urban residents’ public engagement and human flourishing, even when people are speaking in vain at public hearings:

… the proceedings are heartening, because of the abounding vitality, earnestness and sense with which so many of the citizens rise to the occasion. Very plain people, including the poor, including the discriminated against, including the uneducated, reveal themselves momentarily as people with grains of greatness in them, and I do not speak sardonically. They tell with wisdom and often eloquence about things they know first-hand from life. They speak with passion about concerns that are local but far from narrow.[[104]](#endnote-104)

Jacobs’ advocacy of self-government and civic virtue was not just academic or theoretical. She saw protest and civil disobedience – she was arrested twice during protests – as part of self-government and character formation: “If war is an extension of diplomacy, civil disobedience is an extension of self-government.” She adds, “civil disobedience affirms that outside the corridors of power are men and women who make judgments, possess courage, form intentions, captain their souls, and act on their own.”[[105]](#endnote-105)

Jacobs’ support for self-government went even further. She engaged in grassroots urban planning. This was displayed in the West Village Houses plan, which Jacobs and other local activists developed in response to the Urban Renewal plans for Greenwich Village.[[106]](#endnote-106) The project, which also reflected Jacobs’ focus on gradual money and small scale, involved infill of affordable housing in parcels throughout the neighborhood, with the buildings to be “developed by a nonprofit corporation with public funds.”[[107]](#endnote-107) Though the New York City government watered down distinctive elements of the project, it was eventually executed in 1975 with the construction of forty-two walkup apartment buildings, and it has been considered successful.

In line with her emphasis on neighborhood self-government, Jacobs was also consistently an advocate of decentralization. She says, “Central planning, whether by leftists or conservatives, draws too little on local knowledge and creativity, stifles innovations, and is inefficient and costly because it is circuitous. It bypasses intimate and varied knowledge directly fed back into the system.”[[108]](#endnote-108) Centralized city governments were unable to comprehend the complexity of a huge modern metropolis[[109]](#endnote-109) and resorted to overly simplistic approaches that were fundamentally destructive.[[110]](#endnote-110)

However, Jacobs sees decentralization in complex terms. She lodges a key role for self-government in the district, an intermediate level of social, infrastructural, and economic coherence and integration between the street neighborhood and the city as a whole.[[111]](#endnote-111) In the largest cities, districts can include 100,000 people or more, with the permissible range between 50,000 and 200,000.[[112]](#endnote-112) City government as a whole is too big to sufficiently comprehend the local level, but, contrary to Sennett’s characterization of Jacobs as favoring direct democracy, she believed that lodging formal self-governing power in street neighborhoods is pointless, as they would be powerless. Given its size, the district would involve representative democracy rather than direct democracy.[[113]](#endnote-113) “The chief function of a successful district,” she says, “is to mediate between the indispensable, but inherently politically powerless, street neighborhoods, and the inherently powerful city as a whole.”[[114]](#endnote-114) Neighbors, districts, and the city as a whole would have different responsibilities,[[115]](#endnote-115) but the overall system should based on “the principle, probably inseparable from vigorous self-government, that any division of government should be kept as close to the people as function permits.”[[116]](#endnote-116)

**City as Ecosystem**

Jacobs privileges cities over other types of human settlement. Jacobs was no Jeffersonian. She feels that the agrarian way of life as a major facet of society was largely a thing of the past.[[117]](#endnote-117) She often criticizes small town and suburban life and saw cities as fundamentally liberating.[[118]](#endnote-118) And she specifically takes issue with Jefferson’s anti-urbanism, calling it a “fantasy that cities and their people are unproductive parasites, idly battening on wealth bestowed upon rural and wild places.” She adds, “Some people still believe this, including some ecologists whose breezy diagnosis of all troubles are ‘too many people.’ It follows from simple bivariant misanthropy – bad city guys, good rural and wilderness guys – that rural places must be morally finer and more nurturing spiritually than urban environments.”[[119]](#endnote-119)

One might therefore think that Jacobs is anti-nature. Ruth Alexander says, “Jacobs is generally portrayed as a woman so immersed in modern city life as to have no meaningful interest in nature.”[[120]](#endnote-120) This is not at all the case. She is concerned about the paving over of the countryside and loss of agricultural land due to suburbanization. One of her key concerns in *Death and Life* is the impact of the automobile, which had overrun cities, generated pollution, and inspired misguided, destructive planning.[[121]](#endnote-121) She wrote about recycling and air pollution.[[122]](#endnote-122) However, her approaches to environmental problems diverged from the movement’s mainstream values at various points. She believed that environmental problems were a symptom of society’s economic and technological stagnation rather than a result of economic development.[[123]](#endnote-123) She rejected population control, arguing that overpopulation was only a problem in stagnant societies putting undue pressure on a limited set of resources and not developing new substitutes and new technologies to accommodate growing numbers of people.[[124]](#endnote-124) She also feared that population controls in the U.S. could end up being racist, targeting Black people. [[125]](#endnote-125)

One aspect of stagnation common to wrongheaded urban planning, economic decline, and environmental degradation, Jacobs emphasizes, is the application of sweeping, monocultural policies where smaller, diverse, particularized approaches might be more sensible. Thus, she cites Rachel Carson’s criticisms of the indiscriminate use of pesticides and mass-production farming techniques.[[126]](#endnote-126) She generally opposes command and control regulation and instead favors broad mandates with implementation methods left to individual businesses and localities.[[127]](#endnote-127) In keeping with her emphasis on self-government and decentralization, she sees environmental degradation as exacerbated by democratic failure, when “the people who are in closest touch with practical problems are rendered powerless to solve them.”[[128]](#endnote-128)

But Jacobs’ environmental thought runs even deeper. Most significantly, she posits fundamental affinities between the society and the natural world. David Kinkela, relating Jacobs and Carson, says of *Death and Life*, “Jacobs’s book was not simply an urban text, but was part of a larger ideological movement that embraced ecology as an alternative model for human development.”[[129]](#endnote-129) Alexander argues that Jacobs and Carson, as well as Betty Friedan, all of them contemporaries, sought “to reveal deep flaws in the nation’s understanding of, and approach to, human and non-human nature. Urban renewal projects that ruined lively neighborhoods, pesticides’ harm to biota and waterways, and men’s oppression of women represented disparate human misalignments with nature and distinct warpings of relationships, each involving an ill-conceived agenda for control.”[[130]](#endnote-130)

Jacobs, who once described herself as a “city naturalist,” often looks to the life sciences for a model.[[131]](#endnote-131) In *The Nature of Economies*, she emphasizes that the economy was embedded in larger natural systems, operates like an ecosystem, and is subject to natural limits.[[132]](#endnote-132) However, she did not suggest limits to economic growth, but feels that through innovation, growth can be sustained and, by implication, made ecologically benign.[[133]](#endnote-133)

Most interestingly, Jacobs describes the city itself as a kind of ecosystem.[[134]](#endnote-134) In her Forward to the 1992 edition of *Death and Life*, she says, “at some point along the trail I realized I was engaged in studying the ecology of cities,” what she calls a “city ecosystem.” She elaborates on the similarities between natural and city ecosystems, including the importance of diversity and of seemingly “small and obscure components”; the proliferation of new forms and hybrids, whether of organisms or niches or enterprises; the “complex interdependencies of components”; the vulnerability of both systems to destructive forces; and, as noted earlier, the primacy of processes over things.[[135]](#endnote-135) Importantly, the city is not a deliberate, planned artificial construct, but is fundamentally natural: “Human beings are, of course, a part of nature, as much so as grizzly bears or bees or whales or sorghum cane. The cities of human beings are as natural, being a product of one form of nature, as are the colonies of prairie dogs or the beds of oysters.”[[136]](#endnote-136)

Though cities are part of nature, Jacobs also argues that a distinction between the city and the countryside is necessary for the survival of both. Jacobs’s opposition to the Garden City and the Radiant City in part stems from skepticism about the wisdom of dispersing the built environment by incorporating large open spaces. Correspondingly, she sees development outside of the city, i.e. suburban sprawl, as destroying the countryside. She sees suburbanization as involving both a sentimentalization of nature and a rejection of the city as unnatural. This leads us to pave over and pollute the countryside to create “some insipid, standardized, suburbanized shadow of nature – apparently in sheer disbelief that we and our cities, just by virtue of being, are a legitimate part of nature too, and involved with it in much deeper and more inescapable ways than grass trimming, sunbathing, and contemplative uplift.”[[137]](#endnote-137) Both the built and natural environments need to be understood on their own terms and appreciated for their own qualities, rather than mixing them and hollowing out both. Our failure to do so encourages modernity’s drive to transform and destroy both city and countryside. She concludes, “Big cities and countrysides can get along well together. Big cities need real countryside close by. And countryside—from man's point of view—needs big cities, with all their diverse opportunities and productivity, so human beings can be in a position to appreciate the rest of the natural world instead of to curse it.”[[138]](#endnote-138) Alexander says, “Jacobs’s goal was to restore cities and the humans who occupied them to their rightful place in nature’s embrace.”[[139]](#endnote-139)

Like Carson, whose *Silent Spring* came out a year after *Death and Life*, Jacobs thus highlighted modernity’s arrogant and self-destructive effort to dominate and simplify complex natural, organic systems.[[140]](#endnote-140) Jacobs says, “our slum clearers, housing officials, highway planners and semi-public developers have been treating the city as if it were only a bunch of physical raw materials—land, space, roads, utilities. They are destroying New York’s variety and disorganizing its economic and social relationships just as swiftly and efficiently as rebuilding money can destroy them.”[[141]](#endnote-141)

It is worth emphasizing here that the struggles of both Jacobs and Carson against high modernism took on gendered, feminist overtones.[[142]](#endnote-142) Male critics attacked both of them in explicitly gendered terms.[[143]](#endnote-143) In Jacobs’ case, for example, Moses tried to dismiss her and other activists as “a bunch of mothers.”[[144]](#endnote-144) Kinkela says, “in postwar America, the ‘era of specialists,’ shaped by professional associations and corporate dollars, divided expertise along a rigid gender line. Men were experts; women were not.”[[145]](#endnote-145)

And, like Addams, Jacobs drew on the quotidian experiences of city residents and turned them into a basis for democratic activism and self-government. And, as with Addams’ notion of civic housekeeping, these were likely to be women’s experiences. In an era when women were much less likely than today to be in the labor force, women played a significant role in providing eyes on the street, pushing strollers around the neighborhood, and supervising children playing on the sidewalks.[[146]](#endnote-146) Jacobs thus saw herself as opposing a male-dominated planning establishment whose grandiose ideas were out of touch with people’s lived experiences on the ground.

**Jacobs as Green Republican**

The foregoing observations, I will now argue, situate Jacobs in the green republican tradition. This perhaps solves an ongoing point of contention around interpretations of Jacobs: where did she fit on the ideological spectrum?

Jacobs had affinities with both left and right. She was an activist who promoted grassroots democracy, and opposed slum clearance, racism and sexism, the destruction of nature, and the Vietnam War. Yet she also had enormous suspicion of government and top-down regulation, often touted the self-organizing marketplace and the freedom of small businesses, and celebrated the traditional urban neighborhood.[[147]](#endnote-147) She opposed the expansion of federal power under the New Deal.[[148]](#endnote-148) She saw a very limited role for government in promoting and sustaining the sorts of diverse, high-density neighborhoods she celebrated, a point to which I return below. Zipp and Storring say, that while Jacobs defies traditional categories, she had “a basic faith that the market is not inherently exploitative. Inequality and economic crises are problems to be solved. They are bugs, not features, of capitalism.”[[149]](#endnote-149)

But, in Jacobs’s view, solving those “bugs” also necessitated some familiar liberal policies. A community should provide “affordable housing for all the community’s members, publicly funded transportation…; water and sewage systems; fire protection; public health and safety inspections and enforcement; schools; public libraries; large-scale public recreation facilities; parks; ambulances and other emergency services.” Moreover, a community should provide “noncommercial (nonprofit) services initiated and maintained by volunteer citizens’ groups.”[[150]](#endnote-150) She also favored assistance to the poor and not tying health care to one’s financial means. Zipp and Storring argue that she was not a market fundamentalist, but that “she saw a more active role for government … to protect young enterprises from established players,” to pursue “policies that would enable self-organized networks of small producers to solve problems in new ways and overturn the economic status quo.”[[151]](#endnote-151)

In *Systems of Survival* (1992), Jacobs describes society as being governed by two moral systems, or “syndromes,”[[152]](#endnote-152) a Commercial syndrome that governs peaceful, uncoerced, voluntary exchange and agreement, including both private enterprise and science, and a Guardian syndrome that animates government and other political actors, including citizen activists and journalists. Jacobs clearly sees both syndromes as necessary. The Commercial syndrome enables society to progress, whereas the Guardian syndrome promotes security and justice, safeguards tradition, engages in redistribution, helps promote political unity through cultural and symbolic largesse, and protects the environment and public health. Guardians also check dishonesty or law breaking by the private sector.

The two syndromes should “support and complement each other,”[[153]](#endnote-153) but they should not mix.[[154]](#endnote-154) When they mix, “monstrous hybrids” emerge.[[155]](#endnote-155) Such monstrous hybrids include government agencies or functions being driven by market incentives. This can lead to brutal cost cutting, which especially impacts the most vulnerable.[[156]](#endnote-156) Or it can subordinate public services to the profit motive, resulting in “really monstrous things like prisons run by profit-making organizations”[[157]](#endnote-157) or police departments responding to arrest quotas and becoming crooked and abusive.[[158]](#endnote-158) The monstrous hybridization of the two syndromes can generate creeping and, ultimately, pervasive corruption.[[159]](#endnote-159)

Jacobs, who tangled with Guardians imposing Urban Renewal, on the whole seems more enamored of the Commercial syndrome.[[160]](#endnote-160) At the end of *Systems of Survival*, however, she emphasizes the need for both syndromes, “a guardian-commercial symbiosis that combats force, fraud, and unconscionable greed in commercial life – and simultaneously impels guardians to respect private plans, private property, and personal rights.”[[161]](#endnote-161)

Interestingly, none of Jacobs’s commentators have considered that she best fits with civic republicanism, a perspective that defies standard left/right categories. Based on the foregoing discussion, Jacobs hews closely to the republican tradition. In keeping with the republican value of non-domination, she critiques the arbitrary, unaccountable power of government officials, especially urban planners, and the undemocratic processes by which they destroy neighborhoods. Her conception of neighborhood self-organization and her championing of decentralization and local involvement in planning fit republicanism’s emphasis on self-government and civic engagement and republican concerns about concentrated political and economic power. She also cites the civic responsibility of urban residents and the role of neighborhood life in cultivating civic virtue.

Jacobs’s moderately communitarian vision of the urban neighborhood fits the republican concept of a common good. Iseult Honohan says that a common good is one that “can be realized only in interaction with others.”[[162]](#endnote-162) It is a set of practices, activities, and/or meanings that depends on collective participation for its pursuit, creation, and enjoyment, and in fact partly draws its value precisely from being a collective undertaking, “participated in *with* others.”[[163]](#endnote-163)

Though much of Jacobs’s writing focuses on what makes cities economically successful, she does not necessarily put economic values first. In keeping with republicanism, Jacobs often puts civic values above economic objectives. Jacobs says, “There are lots of things that are not subject to being judged by financial success.”[[164]](#endnote-164) In her final book, *Dark Age Ahead* (2004), she criticizes how job growth is often used to justify socially and environmentally destructive policies: “Any institution, including a government agency, that is bent upon ecological destruction or an outrage on the built environment argues its case or bullies its opponents by righteously citing the jobs that supposedly will materialize or, even more effectively, the jobs that may be forfeited or jeopardized if the ugly deed is not done. To this day, no alternative disaster, including possible global warming, is deemed as dire a threat as job loss.”[[165]](#endnote-165) She also attacks the prioritization of economic efficiency. She warns that the “cult of efficiency” can be “taken without understanding from commercial life and applied idiotically to government,” where “it hurts the common good.”[[166]](#endnote-166)

The application of efficiency standards to government is an example of a monstrous hybridization of Commercial and Guardian values. And such hybrids lead to corruption. Concern about corruption and the ultimate decline of a self-governing polity is an important thread in the republican tradition. It also infuses Jacobs’s critiques of dishonest planners who present sham versions of democratic participation while rigging the process to get their way. Societal corruption and decline is also a major focus of the aptly titled *Dark Age Ahead*. Nathaniel Rich thus says that Jacobs’s “great theme was the fragility of democracy – how difficult it is to maintain, how easily it can crumble.”[[167]](#endnote-167)

Related to Jacobs’s concerns about corruption, decline, and the fragility of democracy is her emphasis on stability, another element of the republican tradition. Jacobs always argues for the dynamism of city neighborhoods and the city itself. Kinkela says that Jacobs “understood that time mattered and that change was, indeed, something to be valued, rather than controlled.”[[168]](#endnote-168) Residents and industries change. In fact, such change makes it possible for cities to be engines of economic progress rather than frozen museum pieces. Hence her criticism of what she terms urban taxidermy.

At the same time, Jacobs saw how change could destroy the very qualities she prized in urban neighborhoods, including self-government. In *Death and Life*, she worried about the diversity of neighborhoods becoming self-destructive, as neighborhoods become more attractive and focus on promoting their most lucrative economic activities – especially housing for the affluent – at the expense of others. Ironically, “self-destruction of diversity is caused by success, not failure.”[[169]](#endnote-169)

Her concerns about change certainly come through her in discussions of cataclysmic versus gradual money and her concept of unslumming. Even as she wants cities to develop, she always seeks continuity. Her vision of the city is one of neither stasis nor disruption, but, as Ebba Högström puts it, “dynamic stability.”[[170]](#endnote-170)

Though Jacobs was wary of governmental power and celebrated the virtues of self-organizing, unfettered markets, this view was not necessarily in line with free market conservatism or libertarianism, but more in keeping with republican veneration of small, independent property owners resisting political and economic power structures. Describing Jacobs’s philosophy, Zipp and Storring say, “Small, young enterprises and their employees, particularly those engaged in unglamorous work producing necessary goods and services that solve everyday problems behind the scenes … need protection from corrosive concentrations of bureaucratic power, whether corporate or governmental, private or public.” They thusly present her vision of the good society: “The just city and nation is a place where anyone’s creative impulses to ‘dicker’ and improvise and reinvent themselves would be unleashed, where everyone would have the opportunity to make their own ‘vital little plans.’”[[171]](#endnote-171)

One area where Jacobs favors small, independent businesses is in her approach to affordable housing. She opposes public housing, which she sees little reason for and which she blames for the segregation and warehousing of the poor in housing projects. Instead, she favors subsidizing private owners, their buildings interspersed within the neighborhood, to make housing affordable.[[172]](#endnote-172) This approach would not require large-scale land clearance and eminent domain but would rely on infill and normal building replacement. It would involve “gradual money and gradual change.”[[173]](#endnote-173) Significantly, it would also support small, independent property owners: “because the method would entail no necessity for large-scale clearance and rebuilding, the program could include great numbers of builders and owners, thousands of them.”[[174]](#endnote-174)

Jacobs also advocates ownership as a strategy to combat gentrification. However, it is important to note that she does not just mean traditional private property ownership. Related to her embrace of small-scale, democratic self-governance and civic engagement, she also envisions ownership in collective forms, such as “ownership by nonprofit organizations,” as well as “ownership by cooperatives, community development corporations, land trusts, nonprofit organizations – whatever ingenuities can be directed to the aim of retaining neighborhood diversity of population.”[[175]](#endnote-175) Examples of what Jacobs has in mind include the aforementioned West Village Houses, a type of project whose widespread adoption, argues Roberta Brandes Gratz, might have helped stave off gentrification in New York City.[[176]](#endnote-176) Another example is Boston’s Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), an inner-city community land trust. DSNI is a democratically run, neighborhood-based organization that, partly through the power of eminent domain, has collectively acquired land in the local community. It has used property acquisition to clean up polluted and trash-strewn empty lots, set up an urban farm and town common, and provide long-term, affordable leases of new homes to local residents. DSNI is bringing economic development and environmental quality back to the Dudley neighborhood, while retaining and benefiting existing residents.[[177]](#endnote-177)

In terms of her green orientation, Jacobs connects republican virtue with the protection of a particular kind of landscape or environment, in this case, the urban neighborhood. She thus continues U.S. republicanism’s rejection of Jeffersonian anti-urbanism and its reconciliation with the city, a project begun by Olmsted and continued by Addams, as discussed in earlier chapters. However, both Olmsted and Addams sought to cure what they perceived as the ills of urban life in order to promote civic virtue. Olmsted created vast parks to provide a pastoral refuge from the city and cultivate good morals and democratic values. Addams sought to ameliorate the social and environmental dysfunction of working-class urban neighborhoods and foster democratic empowerment and a sense of community. Addams, like Jacobs, also brought a feminist perspective to bear on their approaches to urban life and republican values. However, unlike Olmsted and Addams, Jacobs is not so much concerned with redeeming or improving city residents and urban life, though she takes aim at conditions of poverty and segregation. Instead, she emphasizes the social health and vitality of existing urban communities and their capacities for civic virtue and self-government. Zipp and Storring argue that Jacobs, who “distrusted most visions of utopia,”[[178]](#endnote-178) believed that a “better world is here already, in the streets themselves.”[[179]](#endnote-179) She sought to affirm urban life against the anti-city views of the planning establishment. Consequently, she represents a much fuller harmonization of urban values and republican virtue than did either Olmsted or Addams. This is perhaps symbolized in how, with regard to large urban parks like Central Park, she favors more thoroughly connecting them to the surrounding city by moving their facilities to the park perimeter.[[180]](#endnote-180) Olmsted, by contrast, tried to arrange his parks so that visitors would almost forget they were still in the city. In conclusion, one can say that Jacobs established the urban neighborhood as a worthy landscape in its own right for the cultivation of republican values. Moreover, she brought republican values to bear on a sophisticated architectural analysis of the built environment.

**Critiques of Jacobs**

But does Jacobs turn the dense, diverse urban neighborhood into a problematic virtue haven? As discussed throughout this book, virtue havens are an ongoing issue in U.S. green republicanism and its attempt advance stability in the face of potential political corruption and environmental degradation. For Jacobs, this question turns on whether she fully accounts for how political, social, and economic forces impact the kind of city she sought to sustain or whether her conception of the city is self-defeating. In answering this question, we need to consider some prevailing criticisms of Jacobs.

A major criticism of Jacobs is that her urban ideal reflects a particular time and place – the post-World War II White ethnic, working-class urban community – and is not universalizable. Zukin says that it was “a product of its time, the end of the second generation of the great wave of Southern and Eastern European immigration, and of its location in New York’s postwar political economy, with rent control enabling many of the tenants to stay in their apartments and a lack of new investment keeping the small-scale houses that Jacobs likes from being replaced.”[[181]](#endnote-181) She argues, “Jacobs romanticized social conditions that were already becoming obsolete when she wrote about them in 1960.”[[182]](#endnote-182) The old city that Jacobs knew was already beginning to slide into decline due to the popularity of the suburbs, racial tensions, redlining and government-subsidized White flight, the loss of manufacturing, the rise of the automobile, and ill-advised attempts like Urban Renewal to address these problems.[[183]](#endnote-183) Jacobs, Herbert Gans argues, also did not acknowledge the appeal of the suburbs for middle-class families.[[184]](#endnote-184)

Moreover, Jacobs arguably did not take sufficient account of key social changes happening in the 1960s. Jacobs’s eyes on the street presupposed a world of extended families and of women staying home rather than being in the workplace.[[185]](#endnote-185) Moreover, Marshall Berman bluntly says that Jacobs’s picture of the urban neighborhood was a vision of “the city before the blacks got there.” It is a remarkably unstratified world, without racial tensions or structural discrimination or extreme poverty.[[186]](#endnote-186) Similarly, Gans argues that Jacobs especially overlooked the importance of race and class in shaping urban life and creating slums and segregated housing projects.[[187]](#endnote-187)

Jacobs does explicitly decry racial discrimination and geographic segregation.[[188]](#endnote-188) In *Death and Life*, she talks about systemic efforts by Whites to deny Black people the opportunity to invest their capital, especially in cities.[[189]](#endnote-189) However, in the same book, she also claims that local residents, Black or White, have the means to improve their own neighborhoods, a dubious claim given pervasive discrimination against Black people, including with regard to bank loans: “The inherent resources necessary for unslumming – advancement and self-diversification in a population – demonstrably exist among colored people, including the colored people who are in slums or who have passed through slums, as strikingly as these resources exist among white people.”[[190]](#endnote-190)

As noted earlier, Jacobs rejected the togetherness ideal and its exclusionary qualities. However, Berman and others argue that her celebration of the local neighborhood could play into traditionalist conservative values of insularity, cultural repression, and exclusion.[[191]](#endnote-191) Indeed, the notion of eyes on the street and of the street’s “natural proprietors” could imply distrust of strangers and outsiders and intolerance of difference.[[192]](#endnote-192)

Jacobs’s neighborhood ideal may have also romanticized existing conditions. Gans argues that Jacobs overlooked the economic insecurity, social problems, and crime in her own neighborhood.[[193]](#endnote-193) Regarding Jacobs’ concept of ‘unslumming,’ Gans says that “the modest rehabilitation of her Hudson Street rowhouse may have led Jane to the idea that low and moderate income city dwellers could also rebuild their homes … Possibly she did not know that even white working class people then rarely got bank loans to fix up their houses or to make their rented tenement apartments more habitable.” He adds, “I suspect she never knew that the apartments in the high rise public housing projects she so disliked were far superior to the 5 and six story tenements from which many residents of New York’s projects moved.”[[194]](#endnote-194) However, the charge of romanticization may be unfair. Kanigel argues that Jacobs and other local activists recognized that the neighborhood was in many ways rundown, and they therefore proposed their own approach to bringing in more housing.[[195]](#endnote-195)

Related to these criticisms is Jacobs’s handling of the issue of gentrification and whether, intentionally or not, she actually promoted gentrification. Jacobs’s design principles and her vision of a gritty but fairly harmonious urban neighborhood fed into what Zukin describes as a commodified conception of urban authenticity that proved consequential as a number of older, high-density cities like New York began to recover from decline starting in the 1980s. Due in part to Jacobs’s writing and activism, neighborhoods like New York’s Tribeca, Soho, and Greenwich Village were spared the wrecking ball of Urban Renewal. They became attractive because of the very qualities that Jacobs had touted and that drew Jacobs herself to the Village. As a result, such neighborhoods attracted waves of increasing gentrification: urban “pioneers,” artists, hipsters, and finally the affluent and real estate speculators. As Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring describe it:

So the Village endures, but as a bright and blurry clone of a past self. With astronomic rents came chain stores, fashion boutiques, luxury condo conversions in glass and steel. They have crowded out hardware stores, bodegas, diners, bookstores, small manufacturing shops, and unpredictable and the odd. Real estate speculation, long a New York obsession, has finally chased out most everything but rarefied shopping and eating and looking. The diverse mixture of people with plans both humble and grand that Jacobs celebrated can find little purchase in this meager city soil.[[196]](#endnote-196)

In the end, even if the buildings are preserved, such neighborhoods have lost their diversity and character and become enclaves of the affluent. Gentrification and redevelopment throw up high rises on wide avenues and the waterfront and drive up prices in historic districts and small-scale neighborhoods.[[197]](#endnote-197) Jacobs’s house in Greenwich Village still stands, but the neighborhood has become expensive. “Whenever I’m here,” she told *The New Yorker*’s Adam Gopnik in 2004, “I go back to look at our house, 555 Hudson Street, and I know that I could never afford it now.”[[198]](#endnote-198)

Meanwhile, investors, Zukin says, “buy rent-controlled apartment houses in socially marginal areas of the city, such as the Bronx, the city’s poorest borough, where they empty the apartments and raise the rents or demolish the buildings and replace them with taller, sleeker towers when the city government gets around to rezoning the areas.”[[199]](#endnote-199) Zukin notes, “Between 1990 and 2007 New York City lost 30 percent of nearly 120,000 state-subsidized apartments, and in just four years, from 2003 to 2007, private funds bought 90,000 affordable apartments.”[[200]](#endnote-200)

Zukin describes contemporary gentrification in New York City in ways that alarmingly recall Urban Renewal:

New Yorkers were complaining about their disenchantment with the city. Too many favorite landmarks had disappeared, replaced by faceless towers. One neighborhood after another had lost its small scale and local identity. People who had been in place for what seemed like forever – tenement dwellers, mom-and-pop store owners, whole populations of artists and workers and people of color – were suddenly gone. In their place we found gentrifiers, cocktail bars, Starbucks, and H&M. [[201]](#endnote-201)

City planners today pay lip service to Jacobs, but they are mainly concerned with protecting buildings, not communities: “They encourage mixed uses, but not a mixed population.”[[202]](#endnote-202) Even while invoking Jacobs, they “never speak of maintaining low rents on commercial properties, so they cannot combat the most common means of uprooting the small shop owners who inspired Jacobs’s ideas about social order and the vitality of the street. More and more of the owners, in any case, are chains; there are few traditional shopkeepers left.”[[203]](#endnote-203)

In some ways, the planning process changed drastically as a result of the activism of Jacobs and others. In New York City, says Zukin, “voters transformed the approval process for big development projects to require more public input. Both public sector and private sector plans now had to pass through a series of public hearings, beginning with land-use hearings at local community boards that were established in the 1970s as a result of the grassroots activism that challenged Moses’s power, and moving up by stages to the City Planning Commission, City Council, and Mayor’s Office.”[[204]](#endnote-204) However, these changes are less consequential than they seem. Zukin says that democratic planning remains a sham:

The city government has overturned communities’ plans for low-key, mixed development that place a priority on maintaining existing tenants and uses, and responds with “affordable” units only if a community rises up in protest … Despite the mandated public hearings, both local and citywide, on changes in land use, city government agencies most often endorse the prior decisions of the City Planning Commission, which tends to approve big new development projects supported by the mayor.[[205]](#endnote-205)

Almost exactly a year before her death, Jacobs herself, in an April 2005 letter to the New York City Council and Mayor Michael Bloomberg, threw her support behind a plan for the Williamsburg neighborhood and waterfront put forth by local artists and working-class residents. The plan would have promoted manufacturing jobs and affordable housing in the area, but “the council members proceeded to rezone the waterfront from manufacturing to residential use, permitting tall—and presumably luxury—apartment towers to replace empty factories and rundown warehouses.”[[206]](#endnote-206)

Zukin is in many ways sympathetic to Jacobs and casts her as a champion of the “urban village” against Moses’ efforts “to build the corporate city.”[[207]](#endnote-207) She adds, “the struggle between the corporate city and the urban village continues in our time.”[[208]](#endnote-208) However, she strongly criticizes Jacobs for not addressing the forces that led to gentrification, even to the point of not sufficiently recognizing her own role as an early gentrifier.[[209]](#endnote-209)

Jacobs was certainly aware of gentrification as a potential problem. As part of her concerns about the self-destruction of diversity, she worried that unslumming could lead to gentrification. She recognized that the affluent were attracted to the very neighborhoods she celebrated: “they pay enormous rents to move into areas with an exuberant and varied sidewalk life. They actually crowd out the middle class and the poor in lively areas like Yorkville or Greenwich Village in New York, or Telegraph Hill just off the North Beach streets of San Francisco.”[[210]](#endnote-210)

Jacobs, though, was not opposed to gentrification per se. In a lecture given in 2000, Jacobs said, “As long as gentrification proceeds gently, with moderation, it tends to continue to be beneficial, and diversifying.”[[211]](#endnote-211) In the best case, gentrification would proceed as “unslumming,” without displacing existing residents. Yet, in the same lecture, she also recognized that gentrification can also proceed destructively, though cataclysmic money in the form of massive influxes of private investment:

Suddenly, so many, many new people want in on a place now generally perceived as interesting and fashionable that gentrification turns socially and economically vicious. It explodes into a feeding frenzy of real-estate speculation and evictions.[[212]](#endnote-212)

But Zukin argues that Jacobs focused too much on planners – the object of her criticism should have also been developers promoting Urban Renewal and then gentrification. Regarding Urban Renewal plans, Zukin says that while architects like Le Corbusier “popularized designs for superblocks and disdained narrow, crowded streets,” it was “developers and state agencies [who] built these designs, and, with her intelligence and progressive political activism, Jacobs should not have ignored the power of the capital they wielded.”[[213]](#endnote-213) Similarly, Gans, in reviewing *Death and Life*, said Jacobs “forgets that private enterprise – acting through the well-heeled builder and realtor lobby in Washington – is responsible for some of the more obnoxious features of the urban renewal laws.”[[214]](#endnote-214)

And even Jacobs’ incremental, gradual money plays into destructive gentrification. Zukin says that Jacobs “didn’t realize then, or acknowledge later, that gradual investments by highly educated, higher income people like herself might, over time, grease the wheels of developers’ high-stakes, large-scale projects, even without concerted planning by the state.”[[215]](#endnote-215) Zipp and Storring ask, “Where, … in her world of streets and sidewalks and plucky small firms, is the rise of capitalism and its twin products, great wealth and great inequality?”[[216]](#endnote-216)

It is not simply that Jacobs failed to adequately account for the role of large-scale private capital. She also discredited the professional and regulatory forces that might have reined it in and protected the kinds of neighborhoods she loved. Thomas Campanella and Max Page accuse her of undermining the self-confidence, identity, courage, and efficacy of the planning profession and undermining our commitment to public works.[[217]](#endnote-217) Moreover, her anti-regulatory approach discouraged a government response to gentrification.

Her solutions to gentrification and to the related problem of self-destruction of diversity were quite limited in terms of government action. First, she recommends zoning for diversity, namely ensuring a diversity of building ages and sizes through “constraints on too rapid a replacement of too many buildings” and through adjustments in property taxes so as not to punish real estate owners for not converting their holdings to the most profitable use.[[218]](#endnote-218) Second, she recommends “staunchness of public buildings.” In other words, “Public and quasi-public bodies should establish their buildings and facilities at points where these will add effectively to diversity in the first place (rather than duplicate their neighbors). Then, in their role as uses, these should stand staunch, no matter how valuable the property becomes … and no matter how large the offers from those who would supplant them to duplicate surrounding successful uses.” This strategy can also involve public agencies purchasing key buildings.[[219]](#endnote-219)

Finally, she calls for “competitive diversion.” She says, “If outstandingly successful city localities are to withstand the forces of self-destruction … the sheer supply of diversified, lively, economically viable city localities must be increased.”[[220]](#endnote-220) In the aforementioned 2000 lecture, she says, “When gentrification turns vicious and excessive, it tells us, first, that demand for moderately gentrified neighborhoods has outrun supply.” One solution is that in other, relatively desirable neighborhoods, “moderate gentrification – I emphasize moderate – could be deliberately encouraged to help take the heat off other places being excessively gentrified. Another way of adding to supply could be by encouraging judicious infilling of housing in neighborhoods with human scale but not excessive compactness or density.”[[221]](#endnote-221) This was the approach used with West Village Houses.

The existence of more diverse, desirable neighborhoods would take gentrification pressure off of particular neighborhoods. “And with this,” she says, “we are back to the basic need to supply more city streets and districts with the four conditions economically necessary to city diversity.” Will there be enough of such streets and districts? “To be sure,” she says, “there will always be some districts, at any particular moment in time, which are most exuberantly diversified, most popular and most tempting for destruction by momentarily most profitable duplications. If other localities are not far behind in opportunities and interest, however, and still others are coming along, these can offer competitive diversion from the most popular.”[[222]](#endnote-222)

However, because Jacobs saw desirable neighborhoods as needing to arise over time, through a mixture of uses and building ages and through the creation of social capital, rather than through aggressive government regulation or planning, her comments about supply may have been a bit optimistic.[[223]](#endnote-223) For example, old buildings by definition cannot be created overnight.[[224]](#endnote-224) Absent regulatory measures to protect affordability, a limited supply of desirable neighborhoods will, as Zukin says, “create a precious commodity that few longtime residents and store owners could afford.[[225]](#endnote-225)

Jacobs’s anti-regulatory stance, says Christopher Klemek, contributed to “a broader paralysis in urban planning and governance, now largely accepted as the new status quo for more than three decades: no more public megaprojects that engender mass displacement, but also no defense against incremental gentrification pressures nor even the large-scale private actors.”[[226]](#endnote-226) Interestingly, despite Jacobs’s advocacy of activism and self-government and her unwillingness to overly privilege economic values, she herself articulates a kind of fatalism that defaults to the market: “Any forms of zoning, any forms of public building policy, any forms of tax assessment policy, no matter how enlightened, give eventually under sufficiently powerful economic pressure. They usually have, and probably they usually will.”[[227]](#endnote-227)

Sennett emphasizes that Jacobs did not follow the socialist dictum espoused by Mumford, one of her fiercest critics, that “to fight capitalist top-down power you need a sweeping, countervailing force.”[[228]](#endnote-228) Jacobs did not recognize that a muscular regulatory government could be an essential counterweight to domineering corporate power. Zukin says, “without the power of state laws neighborhoods have no way to fight market forces that destroy community institutions.”[[229]](#endnote-229) Maintaining vibrant neighborhoods requires more vigorous regulatory approaches: “Zoning, limits on rent increases, government-backed mortgage guarantees for store owners, special privileges for start-up businesses and young apprentices that will maintain crafts and trades, street vending, and even gardening: these are the basic building blocks that can produce the neighborhood self-sufficiency Jane Jacobs prized.”[[230]](#endnote-230) Zukin also argues that cities need to provide more of a voice for local communities’ development plans and not routinely override them, a point with which Jacobs would certainly agree.

Moreover, even though certain aspects of neighborhood life require years or decades to emerge, Jacobs is too absolute in rejecting planning as a way to create desirable neighborhoods. Emily Talen says, “Accommodating difference and diversity may mean that there is a need to put forth a material expression – a plan – that rests on some sense of order ... In other words, there may be legitimate ways of nurturing diversity that involved preconceived designs and coerced urban forms.”[[231]](#endnote-231)

Talen is part of New Urbanism, an influential planning movement dating back to the 1990s that looks in part to Jacobs for inspiration. New Urbanism is a reaction to both to the legacy of Urban Renewal and, especially, to suburban sprawl. Sprawling, single-use, automobile dependent suburbs, often lacking in sidewalks, are the antithesis of Jacobs’s model of urbanity. New Urbanists like Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Peter Calthorpe advocate compact, mixed-use, and mixed-income development; commercial activities restored to town or neighborhood centers; pedestrian-friendly streets, parks, public squares, and other public spaces; civic architecture prominently placed in town and neighborhood centers; and planning around coherent neighborhood and town centers.[[232]](#endnote-232)

New Urbanism in practice often attempts to create neighborly attributes all at once through an obsessive reliance on design, which some see as an unfortunate legacy of Jacobs’s emphasis on physical form. New Urbanists draw upon 1920s urban and neighborhood design as a model for contemporary development. Whatever the intrinsic appeal of the model itself, New Urbanists often approach it as a rigid architectural and planning code. The New Urbanist development of Seaside, Florida has very strict design criteria, down to small minutiae: “Rules mandate roof pitches, types of fencing, [and] porch dimensions.”[[233]](#endnote-233) New Urbanism shows an excessive faith that given the right physical design, a functioning community can emerge.[[234]](#endnote-234) James Howard Kunstler says that the aim of Seaside “is to demonstrate how good relationships between public and private space may be achieved by changing a few rules of building.” Seaside “make[s] the important point that if you change the rules of building, you can reproduce these good relationships anywhere.”[[235]](#endnote-235) This is Gans’ fallacy of physical determinism taken to an extreme.[[236]](#endnote-236)

Moreover, New Urbanism often falls short of its own ideals in practice. It is frequently employed in the form of new suburban, automobile-dependent developments, often little more than aesthetically pleasing sprawl.[[237]](#endnote-237) And while New Urbanism champions mixed-income planning, actual New Urbanist developments tend to be very expensive. These are issues of application, for New Urbanist principles can more fruitfully be used to restore existing urban neighborhoods or guide the sorts of infill projects that Jacobs favored.

But it is important to note that Jacobs herself was critical of New Urbanism.[[238]](#endnote-238) She criticized the focus on suburban developments and believed that New Urbanism advocated a lower density than she favored. More fundamentally, Jacobs criticized New Urbanism because she saw cities as fundamentally dynamic and as shaped over the long term and from the ground up, through diversity and trial and error. Instead, New Urbanism pursues top-down planning and “seek[s] to freeze form in a unique moment in time.”[[239]](#endnote-239) New Urbanism replicates the very problems Jacobs saw with Modernist planning, which sought to come up with an optimal design and urban way of life and freeze it into an eternal present, creating a kind of urban taxidermy.

However, New Urbanism may be onto something, as Talen suggests in her advocacy of more deliberate government planning. Because the supply of desirable urban neighborhoods is limited, there may be reason to create, especially through infill on vacant or underutilized land within cities or existing suburbs, neighborhoods at least approximating Jacobs’ design principles.

As urban centers like Manhattan face build-out and lose opportunities for infill, one must look broadly at a region to create or protect affordable or desirable neighborhoods. Such communities could be built around transit hubs, as is done with transit-oriented development. This would of course require a much more robust planning function on the part of government than Jacobs was willing to allow. Here, some form of metropolitan or regional government is required.

The need for metropolitan or regional jurisdiction goes beyond the provision of well-functioning neighborhoods. In addition, the problems of sprawl and resource and racial inequities between jurisdictions are almost impossible to address without coordination of municipalities. One must also consider the threat of climate change. The modernization of energy grids and the replacement of carbon-intensive road systems with mass transit require at least a regional-level approach. Climate adaptation, including the reconfiguration of cities and managed retreat and resettlement, all entail large-scale, regional and national coordination, especially if we are to ensure that people, especially those with fewer means, do not become permanently uprooted and can have livable neighborhoods and communities. Related issues like climate gentrification also entail regional approaches.[[240]](#endnote-240)

In short, regional or metropolitan government is arguably essential to creating the sort of urban life Jacobs advocates and also for addressing other problems facing cities and surrounding areas.[[241]](#endnote-241) However, Jacobs herself was ambivalent about regional or metropolitan government. In “Metropolitan Government,” a 1957 an essay prior to the publication of *Death and Life*, she considers it a promising approach to governing land use and other regional matters, like pollution, transit systems, waterfront planning, and agricultural conservation. In accord with her focus on trial and error, she advocates experimentation in metropolitan government.[[242]](#endnote-242) Jacobs herself suggests a regional federation of local governments with a “super-area government which would have extensive planning powers and administrative organs for carrying the plans into action.”[[243]](#endnote-243) However, in *Death and Life*, she draws back. She acknowledges municipal fragmentation and the need for regional or metropolitan coordination,[[244]](#endnote-244) but in the end argues that metropolitan government would just magnify the problem of municipal government’s inability to comprehend street-level conditions.[[245]](#endnote-245) As a kind of halfway approach, she said that regionalism was still an experimental idea and that potential problems could be worked out by first perfecting the government of big cities like New York, which are regions unto themselves.”[[246]](#endnote-246)

**Conclusion**

Jacobs delivered an important corrective to authoritarian high modernist city planning and reaffirmed the value of urban neighborhoods, street life, and local self-government. She pushed back against the anti-urban bias in both the republican tradition and orthodox city planning. She established the city as a site for republican values and also as a legitimate part of nature. As noted earlier, she established the urban neighborhood as an important landscape in its own right for advancing republican values. Moreover, she used republican values to generate a sophisticated architectural analysis and critique of the built environment. As we will see in Chapter Ten, her ideas help inform the Environmental Justice movement and its democratic, civically engaged approach to the built environment.

However, Jacobs’s anti-regulatory stance undermines her vision of urban life as it deprives her of sufficient means to address the political, economic, and environmental challenges threatening cities. These challenges include gentrification and the power of capital, but also climate change and inequities of race and class. Addressing these challenges requires aggressive regulation and significant coordination and planning at all scales, including regional or metropolitan. Without a more robust public sector protecting the sort of neighborhood life Jacobs celebrated, her vision of the city threatens to become an unrealistic, self-defeating attempt to create a virtue haven.

1. Witold Rybczynski, *Makeshift Metropolis: Ideas About Cities* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), p.88. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Dirk Schubert, “50 Years: ‘The Death and Life of Great American Cities,’” in Dirk Schubert, ed., *Contemporary Perspectives on Jane Jacobs: Reassessing the Impacts of an Urban Visionary* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp.3-10 (8). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Sharon Zukin, *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.3. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. See also David Kinkela, “The Ecological Landscapes of Jane Jacobs and Rachel Carson,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 4, December 2009, pp. 905-928. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.23; Witold Rybczynski, *Makeshift Metropolis*, pp.44-45. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, p.109. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Rybczynski, *Makeshift Metropolis*, p.49. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Richard Sennett, *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), pp.74-78; Rybczynski, *Makeshift Metropolis*, pp.45-50. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Peter L. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp.182, 199; Scott, *Seeing Like a State*. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. See also Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), pp.6-8. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.225. For discussions of urban renewal, see Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*; Herbert Gans, *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans* (New York: Free Press, 1962); John Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); John Logan and Harvey Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp.167-170; Richard Moe and Carter Wilkie, *Changing Places: Rebuilding Community in the Age of Sprawl* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), pp.56-69; Bettina Drew, *Crossing the Expendable Landscape* (St. Paul: Graywolf Press, 1998), pp.8-31; Walter Rybeck, “Curing Slums: The Jane Jacobs Way and the Henry George Way,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (May 2015), pp.481-494. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, p.48. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, pp.129-130, 159-162, 191-192; Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, p.249. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Moe and Wilkie, *Changing Places*, p.57. Often, when downtowns weren’t demolished, older structures, including buildings of considerable beauty, were covered over in aluminum siding or stucco to look more like the new suburban strip malls. Moe and Wilkie, *Changing Places*, p.159. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Robert Fishman, “The Death and Life of American Regional Planning,” in Bruce Katz, ed., *Reflections on Regionalism* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2000), pp.107-123 (111). [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Berman, *All That is Solid*, pp.290-296; Robert Kanigel, *Eyes on the Street: The Life of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), p.162. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Berman, *All That is Solid*, pp.296-304 [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Quoted in Moe and Wilkie, *Changing Places*, p.63. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Berman, *All That is Solid*, p.305. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Kanigel, *Eyes on the Street*, pp.130-131. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Jane Jacobs, “Downtown is for People” (1958), in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.107-130 (107). [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.373. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*; Christopher Klemek, “Jane Jacobs and the Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal,” in Dirk Schubert, ed., *Contemporary Perspectives on Jane Jacobs: Reassessing the Impacts of an Urban Visionary* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp.171-181. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. See Herbert J. Gans, “Review of *The Death & Life of Great American Cities*, by Jane Jacobs,” *Commentary Magazine*, February 1962, <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/herbert-gans/the-death-life-of-great-american-cities-by-jane-jacobs/> (accessed February 15, 2021). See also Richard Harris, “The Magpie and the Bee: Jane Jacobs’s Magnificent Obsession,” and Jill L. Grant, “Time, Scale, and Control: How New Urbanism (Mis)uses Jane Jacobs,” in Max Page and Timothy Mennel, eds., *Reconsidering Jane Jacobs* (Chicago: American Planning Association, 2011), pp.65-81 and 91-103 [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Jane Jacobs, “Forward to The Death and Life of Great American Cities” (1992), in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.276-284 (283). See also Jane Jacobs, *The Nature of Economies* (New York: Random House, 2000), p.32. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, pp.281-289; James Stockard, “Jane Jacobs and Citizen Participation,” in Sonia Hirt and Diane Zahm, *The Urban Wisdom of Jane Jacobs* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.49-59 (55-56). [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.311; Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, pp.38, 160. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.358. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.293. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Sennett, *Building and Dwelling*, pp.72-73; Berman, *All That is Solid*, pp.294-295; Rybczynski, *Makeshift Metropolis*, p.80; Moe and Wilkie, *Changing Places*, p.43. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Sennett, *Building and Dwelling*, p.15. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Jacobs, Jane Jacobs, “Forward,” p.283. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.369. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.271. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. See Jane Jacobs, “Our ‘Surplus’ Land” (1957), in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.76-80; Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.167. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, p.31; Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.272. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, p.31. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Jane Jacobs, “A Living Network of Relationships” (1958), in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.131-144 (144). [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Sennett, *Building and Dwelling*, p.80. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. See http://mysteriouschicago.com/finding-daniel-burnhams-no-little-plans-quote/. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.17. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Jane Jacobs, “Can Big Plans Solve the Problem of Urban Renewal?” (1981), in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.224-239. Also, Jane Jacobs, “Hamburg Lecture, 1981,” in Dirk Schubert, ed., *Contemporary Perspectives on Jane Jacobs: Reassessing the Impacts of an Urban Visionary* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp.241-249. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Paul Kidder sees two sides of Jacobs: as a procedural theorist of bottom-up planning and as a substantive theorist of good city form. Paul Kidder, “The Right and the Good in Jane Jacobs’s Urbanism,” in Sonia Hirt and Diane Zahm, *The Urban Wisdom of Jane Jacobs* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.9-23 (11). [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.4. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.14. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Jacobs, *Nature of Economies*, p.79. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. See Jane Jacobs, *The Economy of Cities* (New York: Random House, 1969). [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.150-151. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.151; emphasis in original. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.428. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.428. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.431. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.432. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.435-438. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.437. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.437. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.222. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Jacobs, Downtown Is for People,” p.129. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. “Editor’s Introduction: Public Intellectuals - Jane Jacobs and Henry George,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (May 2015), pp.457-480 (462). [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.441. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. Jacobs, “Downtown Is for People,” p.129. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. Jacobs, “Living Network,” p.131; also quoted in Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, p.253. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. Ebba Högström, “Cities of Relationships, Not Things,” in Jesper Meijling and Tigran Haas, eds., *Essays on Jane Jacobs* (Stockholm: Bokförlaget Stolpe, 2020), pp.51-70 (68). [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.29. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.50. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.56. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.59-60. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.56. [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.138. [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.39, 78-79, 139. [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.139. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. # Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues: Rights, Citizenship, and Republican Liberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.162. See also John Barry, *The Politics of Actually Existing Unsustainability: Human Flourishing in a Climate-Changed, Carbon Constrained World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.228-229. On the relationship between place and identity, see also Peter F. Cannavò, *The* *Working Landscape: Founding, Preservation, and the Politics of Place* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007).

    [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. Dagger, *Civic Virtues*, p.165; emphasis in original. [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.82. [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.35. [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.31-32. [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.35. [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.36. [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.36. An infamous counter-example to eyes on the street is the 1964 murder of New York City resident Catherine Genovese. Genovese was stabbed to death just outside her apartment bloc. There were over thirty witnesses. On the empirical evidence for the efficacy of eyes on the street, as well as the role today of smartphones and apps, see Vania Ceccato, “Apps on the Street,” in in Jesper Meijling and Tigran Haas, eds., *Essays on Jane Jacobs* (Stockholm: Bokförlaget Stolpe, 2020), pp.159-171. [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.57. [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
84. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.68. [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
85. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.72. [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
86. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.238. [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
87. Jacobs, Jane Jacobs, *Systems of Survival: A Dialogue on the Moral Foundations of Commerce and Politics* (New York: Random House, 1992), p.205. [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
88. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, p.61. [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
89. Sennett, *Building and Dwelling*, p.82. [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
90. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.114. [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
91. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.119. [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
92. Jane Jacobs, “The Real Problem of Cities” (1970), in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.198-223 (220). [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
93. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.117. [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
94. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.114. [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
95. Benjamin Fraser, “The ‘Sidewalk Ballet’ in the Work of Henri Lefebvre and Manuel Delgado Ruiz,” in Sonia Hirt and Diane Zahm, *The Urban Wisdom of Jane Jacobs* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.24-36 (25). [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
96. Fraser, “Sidewalk Ballet,” p.31. [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
97. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.56-62; quote appears on p.58. [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
98. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.58. [↑](#endnote-ref-98)
99. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.62-63. See also Sennett, *Building and Dwelling*, p.81. [↑](#endnote-ref-99)
100. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.30. [↑](#endnote-ref-100)
101. Kidder, “The Right and the Good,” p.13. Jacobs’s conception of the neighborhood is echoed in Iris Young’s conception of city life as “the being together of strangers.” Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.237. [↑](#endnote-ref-101)
102. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.72 [↑](#endnote-ref-102)
103. Kidder, “The Right and the Good,” p.15. [↑](#endnote-ref-103)
104. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.407. [↑](#endnote-ref-104)
105. Jane Jacobs, “On Civil Disobedience” (1967), in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.172-174 (172, 173-174). [↑](#endnote-ref-105)
106. Jacobs, *Economy of Cities*, p.244; Kanigel, *Eyes on the Street*, pp.242-247; Roberta Brandes Gratz, “Central Elements of Jane Jacobs’s Philosophy,” in Dirk Schubert, ed., *Contemporary Perspectives on Jane Jacobs: Reassessing the Impacts of an Urban Visionary* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp.13-19 (17). [↑](#endnote-ref-106)
107. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, p.298. [↑](#endnote-ref-107)
108. Jane Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead* (New York: Random House, 2004), p.117. [↑](#endnote-ref-108)
109. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.406-407. [↑](#endnote-ref-109)
110. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.408. [↑](#endnote-ref-110)
111. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.121-136. [↑](#endnote-ref-111)
112. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.117, 425. [↑](#endnote-ref-112)
113. Kidder, “The Right and the Good,” p.13. [↑](#endnote-ref-113)
114. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.121. [↑](#endnote-ref-114)
115. See Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.421. [↑](#endnote-ref-115)
116. Jane Jacobs, “Metropolitan Government” (1957), in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.87-106 (94). [↑](#endnote-ref-116)
117. Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead*, p.162. [↑](#endnote-ref-117)
118. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.444. [↑](#endnote-ref-118)
119. Jane Jacobs, “The End of the Plantation Age” (2004), in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.432-459 (450). [↑](#endnote-ref-119)
120. Ruth M. Alexander, “In Defense of Nature: Jane Jacobs, Rachel Carson, and Betty Friedan,” *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Fall 2019), pp. 78-101 (80). [↑](#endnote-ref-120)
121. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.343; Jacobs, “Real Problem of Cities.” [↑](#endnote-ref-121)
122. Jacobs, *Economy of Cities*, pp.107-121. [↑](#endnote-ref-122)
123. Jacobs, *Economy of Cities*, pp.105, 118; Jacobs, “Real Problem of Cities.” [↑](#endnote-ref-123)
124. Jacobs, *Economy of Cities*, pp.117-121. [↑](#endnote-ref-124)
125. Jacobs, “Real Problem of Cities,” pp.222-223. [↑](#endnote-ref-125)
126. Jacobs, *Economy of Cities*, pp.240-241. [↑](#endnote-ref-126)
127. Jacobs, *Systems of Survival*, p.175; Jacobs, “Real Problem of Cities.” [↑](#endnote-ref-127)
128. Jacobs, “Real Problem of Cities,” p.204. [↑](#endnote-ref-128)
129. Kinkela, “Ecological Landscapes,” p.905. [↑](#endnote-ref-129)
130. Alexander, “In Defense of Nature,” p.80. [↑](#endnote-ref-130)
131. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, pp.54, 57-58. [↑](#endnote-ref-131)
132. Jane Jacobs, *The Nature of Economies* (New York: Random House, 2000), pp.10-11. [↑](#endnote-ref-132)
133. Jacobs, *Nature of Economies*, p.94; *Systems of Survival*, pp.43-44. [↑](#endnote-ref-133)
134. Jacobs, “Forward.” See also Stephen A. Goldsmith, “Urban Ecology as the New Planning Paradigm: Another Legacy of Jane Jacobs,” in Dirk Schubert, ed., *Contemporary Perspectives on Jane Jacobs: Reassessing the Impacts of an Urban Visionary* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp.227-232. [↑](#endnote-ref-134)
135. Jane Jacobs, “Forward,” pp.282-283. [↑](#endnote-ref-135)
136. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.444-445. [↑](#endnote-ref-136)
137. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.445. [↑](#endnote-ref-137)
138. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.447. [↑](#endnote-ref-138)
139. Alexander, “In Defense of Nature,” p.87. [↑](#endnote-ref-139)
140. See Kinkela, “Ecological Landscapes.” [↑](#endnote-ref-140)
141. Jacobs, “Living Network,” p.133. [↑](#endnote-ref-141)
142. Kanigel, *Eyes on the Street*, pp.391-394. [↑](#endnote-ref-142)
143. Kinkela, “Ecological Landscapes,” p.911. [↑](#endnote-ref-143)
144. Quoted in Kanigel, *Eyes on the Street*, p.199. [↑](#endnote-ref-144)
145. Kinkela, “Ecological Landscapes,” p.912. [↑](#endnote-ref-145)
146. Berman also relates Jacobs and Addams in this regard. See Berman, *All That is Solid*, p.322. [↑](#endnote-ref-146)
147. Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, “Introduction,” in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.xv-xxxvi. Roger Montgomery pushes the characterization of Jacobs’s *Death and Life* as a precursor of libertarian conservatism. He cites her distrust of government planning, her veneration of small businesses, her failure to sufficiently account for the role of corporate power in shaping cities, her tendency to downplay race and class in urban life, and her insufficient account of suburbanization and metropolitan dynamics. See Roger Montgomery, “Is There Still Life in The Death and Life?” *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Summer 1998), pp.269-274. On the other hand, Per Svensson sees her as a liberal in the mold of John Stuart Mill, as someone who prized diversity and nonconformity. See Per Svensson, “The Political Jacobs,” in Jesper Meijling and Tigran Haas, eds., *Essays on Jane Jacobs* (Stockholm: Bokförlaget Stolpe, 2020), pp.93-105. [↑](#endnote-ref-147)
148. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, p.62. [↑](#endnote-ref-148)
149. Zipp and Storring, “Introduction,” p.xxx. [↑](#endnote-ref-149)
150. Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead*, pp.34-35. [↑](#endnote-ref-150)
151. Zipp and Storring, “Introduction,” pp.xxiii-xxiv. [↑](#endnote-ref-151)
152. Jacobs, *Systems of Survival*. [↑](#endnote-ref-152)
153. Jacobs, *Systems of Survival*, p.106. [↑](#endnote-ref-153)
154. Jane Jacobs, “Two Ways to Live” (Interview with David Warren, 1993), in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.285-325 (288-289); Jacobs, *Systems of Survival*. [↑](#endnote-ref-154)
155. Jacobs, *Systems of Survival*, p.93. [↑](#endnote-ref-155)
156. Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead*, p.85. [↑](#endnote-ref-156)
157. Jane Jacobs, “Efficiency and the Commons,” in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.370-380 (378). [↑](#endnote-ref-157)
158. Jacobs, *Systems of Survival*, p.147. [↑](#endnote-ref-158)
159. Jacobs, *Systems of Survival*, pp.131-157, 199. In *Dark Age Ahead*, Jacobs continues the theme of creeping corruption, warning of “decay” in society. Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead*, p.24. [↑](#endnote-ref-159)
160. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, pp.8, 71-73, 90. [↑](#endnote-ref-160)
161. Jacobs, *Systems of Survival*, p.214. [↑](#endnote-ref-161)
162. Iseult Honohan, *Civic Republicanism* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p.152. [↑](#endnote-ref-162)
163. Honohan, *Civic Republicanism*, p.153; emphasis in original. [↑](#endnote-ref-163)
164. Jacobs, “Efficiency and the Commons,” p.379. [↑](#endnote-ref-164)
165. Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead*, pp.59-60. [↑](#endnote-ref-165)
166. Jacobs, “Efficiency and the Commons,” p.379. [↑](#endnote-ref-166)
167. Nathaniel Rich, “The Prophecies of Jane Jacobs,” *The Atlantic*, November 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/11/the-prophecies-of-jane-jacobs/501104/> (accessed March 24, 2021). [↑](#endnote-ref-167)
168. Kinkela, “Ecological Landscapes,” p.919 [↑](#endnote-ref-168)
169. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.251. [↑](#endnote-ref-169)
170. Högström, “Relationships, Not Things,” p.56. [↑](#endnote-ref-170)
171. Zipp and Storring, “Introduction,” pp.xxxii-xxxiii. [↑](#endnote-ref-171)
172. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.323-325, 330-331. [↑](#endnote-ref-172)
173. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.333. [↑](#endnote-ref-173)
174. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.332. [↑](#endnote-ref-174)
175. Jane Jacobs, “Time and Change as Neighborhood Allies” (2000), in Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storring, eds., *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp.352-363 (360). [↑](#endnote-ref-175)
176. Gratz, “Central Elements,” p.18. [↑](#endnote-ref-176)
177. See Judith A. Layzer, *The Environmental Case*, 3rd Edition (Washington: Sage, 2012), pp.83-108; William Shutkin, *The Land That Could Be: Environmentalism and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), pp.143-165; <https://www.dsni.org/> (accessed March 30, 2021). [↑](#endnote-ref-177)
178. See also Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, p.97. [↑](#endnote-ref-178)
179. Zipp and Storring, “Introduction,” p.xxviii. [↑](#endnote-ref-179)
180. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.266-267. [↑](#endnote-ref-180)
181. Zukin, *Naked City*, pp.17-18. [↑](#endnote-ref-181)
182. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.226. [↑](#endnote-ref-182)
183. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.223; Cannavò, *Working Landscape*; Rybczynski, *Makeshift Metropolis*, p.64. [↑](#endnote-ref-183)
184. Gans, “Review of *Death & Life*. [↑](#endnote-ref-184)
185. Paul Cozens and David Hillier, “Revisiting Jane Jacobs’s ‘Eyes on the Street’ for the Twenty-First Century: Evidence from Environmental Criminology,” in Sonia Hirt and Diane Zahm, *The Urban Wisdom of Jane Jacobs* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.196-214 (205). [↑](#endnote-ref-185)
186. Berman, *All That is Solid*, p.324. [↑](#endnote-ref-186)
187. See Gans, “Review of *Death & Life*,” and, also, for example, Kinkela, “Ecological Landscapes,” p.922. Also, despite his overall sympathetic biography, Kanigel also faults Jacobs for largely overlooking race, class, and ethnicity. See Kanigel, *Eyes on the Street*, pp.221-222. [↑](#endnote-ref-187)
188. Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, pp.170-172, 174. [↑](#endnote-ref-188)
189. Jacobs, *Economy of Cities*, pp.224-226. [↑](#endnote-ref-189)
190. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.285. [↑](#endnote-ref-190)
191. Berman, *All That is Solid*, p.323. [↑](#endnote-ref-191)
192. Abraham Akkerman, *The Urban Archetypes of Jane Jacobs and Ebenezer Howard: Contradiction and Meaning in City Form* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), pp.17, 162, 221. See also Ceccato, “Apps on the Street.” [↑](#endnote-ref-192)
193. Herbert J. Gans, “Jane Jacobs: Toward an Understanding of “Death and Life of Great American Cities,” *City & Community*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (September 2006), pp.213-215 (214). See also Gans, “Review of *Death & Life*.” [↑](#endnote-ref-193)
194. Gans, “Jane Jacobs.” See also Gans, “Review of *Death & Life*.” [↑](#endnote-ref-194)
195. Kanigel, *Eyes on the Street*, pp.234-235. Sennett also disputes the idea that Jacobs romanticized the West Village. See Sennett, *Building and Dwelling*, p.81. [↑](#endnote-ref-195)
196. Zipp and Storring, p.xvii. [↑](#endnote-ref-196)
197. Zukin, *Naked City*, pp.23-24. [↑](#endnote-ref-197)
198. Adam Gopnik, “Cities and Songs,” *The New Yorker*, May 10, 2004, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/05/17/cities-and-songs> (accessed February 15, 2021). [↑](#endnote-ref-198)
199. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.23. [↑](#endnote-ref-199)
200. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.233. [↑](#endnote-ref-200)
201. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.x. [↑](#endnote-ref-201)
202. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.25. [↑](#endnote-ref-202)
203. Zukin, *Naked City*, pp.25-26. [↑](#endnote-ref-203)
204. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.15. [↑](#endnote-ref-204)
205. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.26. [↑](#endnote-ref-205)
206. # Zukin, *Naked City*, p.59. For the full text of Jacobs’ letter, see Jane Jacobs, “Letter to Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council,” April 15, 2005, *The Brooklyn Rail*, May 2005, <https://brooklynrail.org/2005/05/local/letter-to-mayor-bloomberg> (access March 17, 2021).

     [↑](#endnote-ref-206)
207. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.xii. [↑](#endnote-ref-207)
208. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.xii. [↑](#endnote-ref-208)
209. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.18. [↑](#endnote-ref-209)
210. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, pp.70-71. [↑](#endnote-ref-210)
211. Jacobs, “Time and Change,” p.358. [↑](#endnote-ref-211)
212. Jacobs, “Time and Change,” p.358. [↑](#endnote-ref-212)
213. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.25. [↑](#endnote-ref-213)
214. Gans, “Review of *Death & Life*.” [↑](#endnote-ref-214)
215. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.227. [↑](#endnote-ref-215)
216. Zipp and Storring, “Introduction,” p.xxx. [↑](#endnote-ref-216)
217. See Max Page, “Introduction: More Than Meets the Eye,” and Thomas J. Campanella, “Jane Jacobs and the Death and Life of American Planning,” in Max Page and Timothy Mennel, eds., *Reconsidering Jane Jacobs* (Chicago: American Planning Association, 2011), pp.3-14, 141-160. [↑](#endnote-ref-217)
218. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.253. [↑](#endnote-ref-218)
219. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.254. [↑](#endnote-ref-219)
220. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.255. See also Jason Leslie Combs, “Using Jane Jacobs and Henry George to Tame Gentrification,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (May 2015), pp.600-630. [↑](#endnote-ref-220)
221. Jacobs, “Time and Change,” pp.259-260. [↑](#endnote-ref-221)
222. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.255. [↑](#endnote-ref-222)
223. On this point, see also Rybczynski, *Makeshift Metropolis*, p.89. [↑](#endnote-ref-223)
224. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.199. [↑](#endnote-ref-224)
225. Zukin, *Naked City*, pp.243-244. [↑](#endnote-ref-225)
226. Christopher Klemek, “Jane Jacobs’s Urban Village: Well Preserved or Cast Adrift?” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* , Vol. 66, No. 1 (March 2007), pp.20-23 (22-23). [↑](#endnote-ref-226)
227. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.255. [↑](#endnote-ref-227)
228. Sennett, *Building and Dwelling*, p.79. [↑](#endnote-ref-228)
229. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.245. [↑](#endnote-ref-229)
230. Zukin, *Naked City*, p.245. [↑](#endnote-ref-230)
231. Emily Talen, “Jane Jacobs and the Diversity Ideal,” in Sonia Hirt and Diane Zahm, *The Urban Wisdom of Jane Jacobs* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.139-149 (145). [↑](#endnote-ref-231)
232. See, for example, Peter Katz, ed., *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994); Emily Talen, ed., *Charter of the New Urbanism*, Second Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2013); Andres, Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*, Tenth Anniversary Edition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010); Peter Calthorpe, *The Next American Metropolis: Ecology, Community, and the American Dream* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993); Peter Calthorpe and William Fulton, *The Regional City: Planning for the End of Sprawl* (Washington: Island Press, 2001)*.* [↑](#endnote-ref-232)
233. James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America’s Man-Made Landscape* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), p.257. [↑](#endnote-ref-233)
234. On this criticism of New Urbanism, see especially David Harvey, “The New Urbanism and the Communitarian Trap,” *Harvard Design Magazine*, No.1 (Winter/Spring 1997), pp.68-69, and Amanda Rees, “New Urbanism: Visionary Landscapes in the Twenty-First Century,” in Matthew J. Lindstrom and Hugh Bartling, eds., *Suburban Sprawl: Culture, Theory, and Politics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp.93-114. [↑](#endnote-ref-234)
235. Kunstler, *Geography of Nowhere*, p.257. [↑](#endnote-ref-235)
236. See also Rees, “New Urbanism,” p.97. [↑](#endnote-ref-236)
237. For these criticisms, see Harvey, “New Urbanism and the Communitarian Trap,” and Alex Marshall, “Putting Some ‘City’ Back In the Suburbs, *The Washington Post*, September 1, 1996, p.C1 ([www.alexmarshall.org](http://www.alexmarshall.org), accessed July 8, 2003). See, for example, Feller, “Urban Impostures.” [↑](#endnote-ref-237)
238. Grant, “Time, Scale, and Control”; Gratz, “Jane Jacobs,” p.229; Kanigel, *Eyes on the Street*, pp.371, 376; Roger Montgomery, “Is There Still Life in The Death and Life?” *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Summer 1998), pp.269-274. [↑](#endnote-ref-238)
239. Grant, “Time, Scale, and Control,” p.98. [↑](#endnote-ref-239)
240. # On regionalism and climate change, see Peter Calthorpe, *Urbanism in the Age of Climate Change* (Washington: Island Press, 2011).

     [↑](#endnote-ref-240)
241. On regionalism, see Cannavò, *Working Landscape*; Calthorpe, *Next American Metropolis*; Calthorpe and Fulton, *Regional City;* Bruce Katz, ed., *Reflections on Regionalism* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2000); Douglas S. Kelbaugh, *Repairing the American Metropolis: Common Place Revisited* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2002); Gerald E. Frug, *City Making: Building Communities Without Walls* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Tony Hiss, *The Experience of Place: A New Way of Looking at and Dealing With Our Radically Changing Cities and Countryside* (Random House: New York, 1990); Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). [↑](#endnote-ref-241)
242. Jacobs, “Metropolitan Government.” See also Laurence, *Becoming Jane Jacobs*, pp.225-228. [↑](#endnote-ref-242)
243. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.426. [↑](#endnote-ref-243)
244. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.425. [↑](#endnote-ref-244)
245. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.410. In *Dark Age Ahead*, she criticizes the Toronto area’s metropolitan government because it enabled the suburbs to politically dominate the city. Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead*, p.118. [↑](#endnote-ref-245)
246. Jacobs, *Death and Life*, p.427. [↑](#endnote-ref-246)