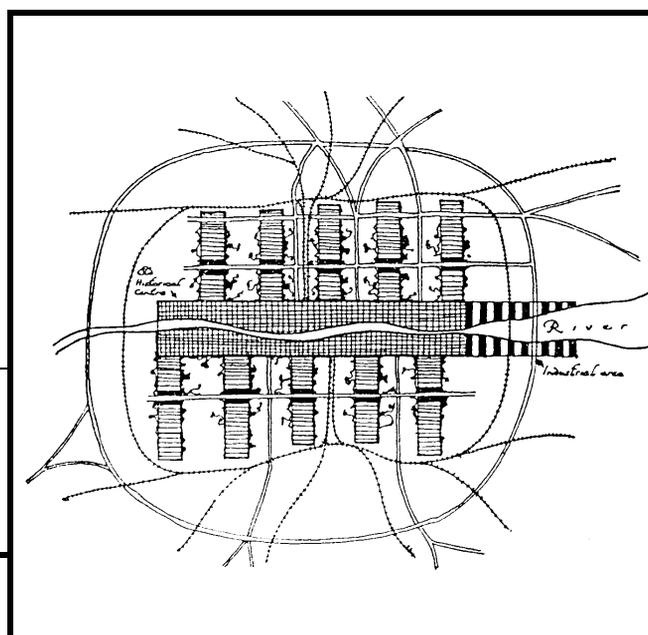




WHAT THE PLANNERS HAVE WROUGHT:

LONDON AND U.S. CITIES EXAMINED

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FOR LIFE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY

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MARC R. BROWN

In terms of human history, the phenomenon of the modern industrial city is one essentially without precedent, and as a result, sociologists, geographers, government planners and the public have had difficulty understanding its evolution and basis for functioning. Although the initial rise of the world's major cities in the 19th and 20th centuries were both manifestations of and in parallel with dramatic shifts in economic progress away from primarily agricultural pursuits and into more advanced institutions involving the division of labor (first, manufacturing, and more recently, the professional and service trades and industries), the reactions of most philosophers, planners, and sociologists were condemnations. These attacks, citing the city as unhealthy, unnatural, and/or destructive to human relationships (anti-community), came as a response to many of the things that might now be called "negative externalities", such as noise, smells, congestion of housing or traffic, etc.. Two common threads seemed consistently to emerge from their criticisms, however: firstly, that total chaos, anarchy, and/or economic cataclysms would result if the city grew and structured itself in an unchecked, unplanned manner; and secondly, that this necessary governmental planning should take into account what was (and often still is) the view that man is a "being of nature" and should always live in close proximity to "nature", in its simple, "uncorrupted" state.

These assumptions are integral to the writings of the acknowledged fathers of city planning, such as Ebenezer Howard and Sir Patrick Geddes, whose intellectual premises regarding cities (though not all their specific visions, fortunately) have influenced many generations of governments and planning agencies the world over. Many of their ideas were enacted in the planning (and re-planning) of the city of London, but also, in a slightly altered, less orderly form, in many U.S. cities. A distinction must be made here, to be elaborated upon later, regarding U.S. cities: these principles are more demonstrable in the older, more regulated/planned cities of the Northeast, such as New York, Washington, or Detroit, as opposed to the more recently burgeoning cities of the Southwest, such as Houston, Phoenix, or Denver, where much less planning is in evidence. This paper will explore these distinctions (i.e. London vs. U.S., U.S. Northeast vs. Southwest) in the context of the ideologies which guided the planning of these cities, and some description of the physical results of this planning.

GARDEN CITIES AND REAL CITIES

Ebenezer Howard, an English court reporter and author of the late 19th century, was one of the first and most influential individuals with a master plan for cities and the way they "should be". His ideas for the *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, his seminal work, came in response to the filthy and otherwise unpleasant circumstance he observed in London at that time (*circa* 1898). The scheme he envisioned in-

cluded repopulating the countryside with "Garden Cities", and not allowing central London to grow further. As one author critically appraised his notions:

He [Howard] not only hated the wrongs and mistakes of the city and thought it an outright evil and an affront to nature that so many people should get themselves into an agglomeration. His prescription for saving the people was to do the city in ...

The programme proposed ... the building of a new kind of town - the Garden City, where the city poor might again live close to nature. So they might earn their livings, industry was to be set up in the Garden City ... His aim was the creation of self-sufficient small towns, really very nice towns if you were docile and had no plans of your own and did not mind spending your life among others with no plans of their own. As in all Utopias, the right to have plans of any significance belonged only to the planners in charge. The Garden City was to be encircled with a belt of agriculture. Industry was to be in its planned preserves; schools, housing, and green spaces in planned living preserves; and in the centre were to be commercial, club, and cultural places, held in common. The town and the green belt, in their totality, were to be permanently controlled by the public authority under which the town was developed, to prevent speculation or supposedly irrational changes in land use and also to [control] its density - in brief, to prevent it from ever becoming a city.¹

Clearly, what is being discussed here is more than just the shape of a city, but rather a paternalistic vision of an entire society, directed (planned? forced?) to fit the rather pastoral image nurtured in the mind of the benevolent Mr. Howard.

On a broader front, Sir Patrick Geddes, a Scottish philosopher, described whole regions composed of scientifically arranged Garden City type settlements, artfully interspersed between key agricultural or natural resource areas. His ideas were followed in America by a group referred to as the "Decentrists", having Lewis Mumford, Catherine Bauer and others among their number.

Among the "English School" and the "Decentrists", there is evidence of undercurrents of blatant anti-urbanism running throughout. In the words of another reviewer:

The dominant message of the urban planning tradition in all its variants - the 'classic' English school, the 'Garden City', 'Radiant City', 'City Beautiful', 'Decentrist' schools, etc. - can best be summed up in the two words of "control" and "segregation". For the planners the city was nothing but - in Lewis Mumford's phrase - "solidified chaos", a loathsome, formless flux resulting from the unregulated and foolish behaviour of selfish individuals. To rectify the dirt and

disorder of the city the general aim of the planners had been to segregate commercial and residential areas to reduce the density of population, ... and to regulate communities' demands scientifically, by eradicating needless and wasteful competition.²

This viewpoint later carried over to the "Chicago School" of urban sociology, one of whose leading exponents, Louis Wirth, bemoaned the "unnatural" status of urban life: "Nowhere has mankind been further removed from organic nature than under the conditions of life characteristic of great cities."³ He then goes on to characterize the anonymity and lack of more than "segmental links" between persons that develop within cities because they are so divorced from the true, rustic, 'organic' settlements that were typical of earlier periods of history.

The bottom line of all of this is that the co-called "social scientists", who write about and engage in urban planning and evaluating cities, have in numerous cases not approached their field in terms of empirical science, but instead have brought to it a very powerful and single minded *value* orientation. It is as though these schools of thought have taken the values that the only proper human life exists within certain arbitrary constraints, i.e. closeness to nature, carefully controlled, segregated, and parcelled environments, etc. as unassailable universal truths. And, further, in situations where the populace will permit their government to undertake to plan their living environments, these values will be imposed to varying degrees on various groups within society - businesses and lower middle income groups in particular. The former are affected in that they must cope with the ever-changing (due to political motivations) political bureaucracy in planning locations and paying taxes; the latter, on the other hand, are generally the ones whom the planners are most likely to displace in their "de-congesting", de-centralizing, etc.. On another level, the whole urban society is affected in that, to begin with, the faces of their neighbourhoods may constantly be changing according to the "perceived needs" of the various planners, and, more importantly, because it is their money that is financing the whole operation, through taxes.

At this point, it is instructive to examine our various cities to see to what degree the planners have been effective in directing the shape and character of urban areas, bearing in mind the basic values which they have been trying to fulfill.

LONDON

The British in the early 1940s were particularly receptive to planning, and the planners and government bodies were even more anxious to provide their visions and plans for London's future. In 1940, the Barlow Report, named after the chairman of the newly established Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population, strongly urged decentralization of London's population (meaning relocation), and severe restrictions to be imposed on any further industrial development within the immediate London area. As one author wrote, "Barlow's broad recommendations have been accepted as articles of faith, and they were given substance in the visionary plans of Prof. Patrick Abercrombie."⁴ Perhaps.

What followed was Abercrombie's County of London Plan (1943) and Greater London Plan (1944), which were to address five problems: traffic congestion, depressed housing, "inadequate and maldistributed open spaces, and the inchoate intermingling of houses and industries", and Lon-

don's "sprawl" into the Home Counties. (Notice that the "open spaces" must be of "adequate size" and "proper distribution". Also compare the accusatory tone regarding the "inchoate intermingling", which author Jane Jacobs regards as promoting a successful city environment - her notion of "close grained diversity" of city uses.) At any rate, decentralization was to be undertaken such that about 40% of central London's population (about 500,000 people), "... would have to leave for *satisfactory* reconstruction of the place." (Not stated is to whom this will be satisfactory.) Abercrombie based his plan on assumptions that no new industry would be permitted in London or the Home Counties (which more or less enforced with regard to manufacturing, but not office employment); and that no growth in either jobs or population in the overall area was to take place - a rather inflexible (and subsequently violated) assumption. He also assumed that government would have even greater planning powers, including the ability to "control land values".⁵

The other vital part of Abercrombie's plans was the Green Belt, a thick circular girdle around London upon which no new growth could be initiated. Quoth Abercrombie: "A stretch of open country at the immediate edge of the unwieldy mass of building is *imperative*." Functions the green belt was to serve (thus constituting its imperative nature) included (1) limiting London's outward expansion, (2) "preserving the character and size of existing settlements in the Green Belt area", and (3) ensuring an accessible area for recreation, solace, gardening, and/or whatever other functions large open spaces might provide for city people.

It is possible to begin appraising these goals, since the Green Belt is one element of Abercrombie's grand design that was put into place more or less as ordered, and still remains. Regarding the first goal, London's outward expansion *has* been limited, but possibly at very great cost. For one thing, congestion in many of the London suburbs has worsened, despite the export of large numbers of people to the New Towns, described below. Further, this congestion is particularly manifested in multiple occupation of single family dwellings in North and West London by families who, because of their job status, are not able to move to New Towns. Were the Green Belt open to development, it is indeed possible that land values would be more aptly suited to their most appropriate uses and that these people might find housing more to their liking (i.e. at least offering a greater *choice*) at a similar price. As for goal (2), the "character and size" of that which existed on the Green Belt may have been preserved, but at advantage to whom? Certainly not to a Green Belt resident who might have wished to erect an economically productive apartment building on what might be an economically unproductive plot of low agricultural value. And, as regards goal (3), a careful study at one time showed that only 5.4 percent of Green Belt land was used for recreation, and only 3.4 *percent* was open to the public for their enjoyment.⁶ One gets the impression, however, that planners such as Abercrombie, Howard, Geddes, et al. consider the air over open fields somehow magical, so that even if nobody visits them or uses them for anything at all, they still somehow manage to fortify the collective psyche of the residents of the nearby city and keep them (subliminally?) in touch with the agrarian past of their species.

Another problem with the Green Belt is transportation across it. As well as not anticipating the substantial population growth of southeast England in the coming decades,

Abercrombie and the planners did not foresee the mercurial rise in automobile ownership and use. The major studies and plans for the SE England region have rejected suggestions such as the replacement of the present Belt by a wedge-shaped arrangement similar to other European cities, allowing major transport across specific, strategically chosen areas. As Peter Hall writes, regarding these plans:

Though this form is almost certainly preferable for a rapidly growing metropolis like London, these studies point out that London has been planned on the basis of a Green Belt for nearly twenty years and that [it] is now an accepted part of the structure of the London region. But this does not at all weaken the force of the criticism that the function of the Green Belt needs rethinking. In the Britain of the 1970s it is arguable that the needs of the city dweller should take first place, and his rights of access to the countryside should be greatly strengthened.⁷

And with the continually increased uncertainties regarding rail access to the countryside, the planners' obstinacy seems quite shortsighted and arbitrary.

The final major outgrowth of Abercrombie's planning are the New Towns, nine of which have been placed just beyond the outer boundaries of the Green Belt, encircling the city in satellite fashion. These were to be fully planned towns of the Garden City variety, designed to house the half to one million people referred to as "overspill" from the reconstructed London centre. Industry, too, was to be properly placed within the New Towns so as to obviate the need for out-commuting, as were shopping centers, schools and community centers, each in its planned place. Furthermore, the only people who were to be admitted to these towns were predominantly skilled and semi-skilled factory workers who already had jobs or were signed on at the new factories.

It is evident here that this is a program of social engineering of an overt kind. Discrimination and coercion on the part of government (even if obscured by the use of financial incentives) is employed on two fronts: firstly, in that certain people (mainly factory workers) are being forced to abandon their residences and communities to be "relocated" elsewhere; and, secondly, that the governments, through their rules about New Towns, are restricting access to these places to only the kind of people they choose.

These very serious considerations aside, the New Towns have had some success on their own terms. Industries (perhaps in response to artificial planning incentives, in the sense that they might not have otherwise) have been drawn to the towns, and the shopping areas are more appropriate for the car-dominated society, so that there has been minimal need for regular out-commuting. Also, they have grown substantially in population; but this may or may not be seen an advantage: they are nearing their population targets, but not necessarily in tandem with reducing London's congestion. More importantly, however, is that the New Towns have been proliferating in a manner that the planners hadn't expected. As Hall writes: "Thus the problem of the growth of London, which overspill policy was designed to solve once for all, has been exported to the New Towns and the ring of countryside in which they lie."⁸ This begins to sound like something approaching the suburban sprawl of which America is accused; as another author writes: "Thus, the London region is becoming a more polycentric city region ...", which is precisely that author's criticism of some

American cities.⁹ It has resulted, in major part, from forces which at first planners encouraged, but then were not quick, flexible, or adaptable enough to discourage; insidious economic forces presumed to trample on their blueprints for Utopia. Even the planners were forced to admit, in the *Strategic Plan for the South East* (1970), that they couldn't hope to mold everything in their desired image.

The SPSE emphasizes the fact that previous regional plans have demonstrated the impracticability of accurately forecasting the scale and rate of growth (or now decline) of people and jobs for more than a few years ahead. In addition, it is recognized that many important decisions which affect a region's prosperity are made by individuals and firms outside the realms of government and local authorities.¹⁰

AMERICA

In appraising the growth and proliferation of American cities, it is important to first make some initial distinctions and focus the perspective somewhat. European critics often are wont to heap all of America's cities into the same formless, mindless sprawl (taken as codeword for 'waste') and frippery. Part of this is undoubtedly traceable to these planners' entrapment within something of a paradigm of urban thinking - i.e. the ethos that the only proper city anywhere in the world is the European-style planned city, with its green belts and new towns, etc.. But another part may be the unfortunate result of superficial analysis and lack of comparison: the cities in the U.S. are far from uniform in terms of design, degree of overt or indirect planning, or economic *stimuli*. It would be impossible in the short space of this paper to explore all the permutations of these variables which have given rise to the diverse cities of the U.S., so only central bits and pieces will be drawn out here, in the discussion of what may only be a hypothetical composite of models for U.S. cities.

The classically taught picture of this hypothetical city runs along some of the following lines. The city started out monocentrically, with major businesses perhaps forming a skyscraper cluster at the very center. As the population and incomes grew, there was a greater desire to live in suburbs. First near to the city center, and then, as the automobile attained dominance and the "cheap land" outside the cities became developed, farther out. Eventually, many of the service industries and other various forms of employment moved out to these more distant suburbs, and substantial shopping centers developed there too, so that eventually these became scattered mini-cities. As these mini-cities tended to attract middle and upper middle income groups, the central city's tax and skilled employment base began to erode, and it gradually declined in importance. What eventually resulted, the model says, was a polycentric, suburb dominated sprawl peppering the area in a dubiously economic or efficient fashion. Furthermore, since there was no guiding plan or grand design (supposedly), this emerged as a singularly tasteless, unattractive hodge-podge, without sense or worth.

While there are numerous American cities which embody many (if not most) of these characteristics, it would be more accurate to say that there is a spectrum of city layouts throughout the country, and both the physical outcomes and the principles which led to these outcomes very markedly with the area in question. This latter consideration, moreover, may hold the key to a greater set of misconceptions

regarding American cities namely, the intellectual ethos under which these cities were planned and/or allowed to grow.

Perhaps a useful place to begin might be with some of the “conventional” European criticism of American cities, as expressed in and by Peter Hall:

Essentially, unlike the old [European] urban culture, this new [American] phenomenon has found few intellectual defenders. After all, Las Vegas was effectively created by a gangster, and most of the entrepreneurs and politicians who built up the new Western civilization, though doubtless respectable men, were too busy to be philosophical. And because American planners themselves were suffused with European notions about the good city, their reaction has been one of pure indignation.

In every department form disintegrated: except in its heritage from the past, the city vanished as an embodiment of collective art and technics. And where, as in North America, the loss was not alleviated by the continued presence of great monuments from the past and persistent habits of social living, the result was a raw, dissolute environment and a narrow, constricted and baffled social life.¹¹

Here, Hall notes that he is lifting ideas from the earlier writings of Lewis Mumford, which is not surprising judging by the blind lashing-out at the unblueprinted city, but is nonetheless unsettling in its virtual intellectual hooliganism. Where does one go from the idea of Las Vegas being founded by a gangster? Does that indict Las Vegas as morally uninhabitable? And what constitutes a “raw, dissolute environment”? It sounds like a place where no living being could survive, if he could figure out what these adjectives actually meant. And Hall’s comments here about social life are directly contradicted by evidence that he offers later in the same paper, as he quotes data from sociologist Herbert Gans that “[Gans] ... looked at ordinary people in suburbia and concluded that these people would be living in much the same way, with the same pattern of social relationships, whether they lived in areas called urban or areas called suburban.”¹² But stay, the criticism continues:

Sprawl is bad aesthetics, it is bad economics ... The question is, shall we have “slurbs”, or shall we plan to have attractive communities which can grow in an ordinary way while showing the utmost respect for the beauty and fertility of our landscape? ... The argument thus takes place on many fronts: the suburban form of development is attacked for wasting land, increasing commuter times, raising service costs, failing to preserve park land. But essentially the argument comes back to the *lack of form*. Mumford puts it best, in his appreciation of the ideas of regional development of the garden city pioneer, Ebenezer Howard:

A modern city, no less than a medieval town ... must have a definite size, form, boundary.¹³

Here again, as earlier, we are being bludgeoned by the personal tastes and values of a planner. “Form” and “taste” are highly subjective notions, and proclaiming your own as the (lawfully enforced) standard for everyone is, at the very least, irresponsible. And these true colors are shown when the ideal theories for the modern city are equated with the medieval town. It is as if Hall and/or Mumford are condemning the American city for being *sui generis*, new and

different, rather than examining its appropriateness in the culture from which it has developed.

American culture has been suffused with a much greater respect for the free enterprise system, and the freedoms, choices, and benefits it can provide (and has provided). The country’s unprecedented economic growth, expansion, and concomitant vast increase in standard of living that occurred in the 1950s and 60s reinforced this ethos. American cities, though in general developing in a manner partly divorced from the market system (more about this later), still tended to reflect both these increased living standards and desire for greater choices in terms of housing and land use. Moreover, while European cities were planned to maximize face to face contact in an urban center anathema to automobiles. American urban areas exhibited a greater adaptability and flexibility, and attempted to respect the attachment of Americans to their cars as an expression of individualism and a means by which the individual can most conveniently obtain his particular needs. If, in this arrangement, a greater quantity of land is consumed, this has its necessary price: however, that price may best be determined in the way the market values each particular parcel of land. In many cases, developers have been able to acquire land for residential building fairly cheaply because much of this extra-urban land was not useful for very much (i.e. minimal agriculture, etc.) anyway. Here, too, it is implicit that economic realities are different in America, where vacant land has been relatively abundant, as compared to Europe, where each country has a much scarcer supply (and therefore higher economic value per unit) of this commodity.

And this modern city, more an expression of citizens’ economic desires rather than planners’ visions, does have its intellectual defenders, such as Frank Lloyd Wright, whose picture of “Broadacre City” asserted that urban life no longer required facilitation of face to face contact and urban containment. His vision, prior to the last few decades’ realization, included the highway as a pivotal feature.

Giant roads, themselves great architecture, pass public service stations now no longer eyesores but expanded as good architecture to include all kinds of roadside service for the traveller ... and imagine man-units so arranged and integrated ... that every citizen as he chooses may have all forms of production, distribution, self-improvement, enjoyment, within the radius of, say, ten to twenty miles of his own home. This integrated distribution of living related to the ground composes the great city that I see embracing this country. This would be the Broadacre City of tomorrow that is the nation. Democracy realized.¹⁴

What emerges, in the parlance of sociologists, is the utterly new conception of the “non-place urban realm”, which is marked by the lack of a magnetic centrist orientation and a uniformly lower housing density. The very fact that a flagrantly “non-place” city such as Los Angeles even manages to exist and function (much less thrive) constitutes a direct attack on the old school of planners’ inviolable assumptions about accommodating urban functions within a discrete, controlled urban shape. As one of the western American school of the 1960s expounds:

It is fashionable, if extremely trite, to refer to the [“non-city”] urban area as a shapeless sprawl, as a cancer, as an unrelieved evil ... The erroneous assumption that no such structure exists must result from a

failure to study the dynamics of urban growth, or possibly from the desire to put forward a doctrine of what is “right” or “good” urban growth.¹⁵

This notion of progression of urban thought and values is further delineated by another Berkeley author, Marvin Weber:

I contend that we have been searching for the wrong grail, that the values associated with the desired urban structure do not reside in the spatial structure per se. One pattern of settlement and its internal use form is superior to another only as it better serves to accommodate ongoing social processes and to further nonspatial ends of the political community. I am flatly rejecting the contention that there is an overriding universal spatial or physical aesthetic of urban form.¹⁶

Hall then goes on to muse whether the phenomenon of Los Angeles-like cities represent the collapse of the five thousand year old tradition of cities giving birth to a new form and culture and that:

... After all, it should never be forgotten that California had by 1925 reached the general living standards and, in particular, the level of car ownership, of Europe in the late 1960s. It is possible therefore to regard the American Far West as a sort of vision of the entire Western world about the year 2000, modified only to the extent that different social and cultural traditions react to the patterns it offers.¹⁷

Curiously enough, if this is the culture and form of the future, it will have to spread from America’s West and South to its Northeast, which is the opposite direction from that which life and culture has spread in the last two hundred years. Many of America’s older Northeastern cities are clinging to the vestiges of the European ideals of form and structure; it would be instructive to explore the implications of these regional divergences, and pursue such questions as whether these aging, quasi-structured Eastern cities (Washington D.C. and Boston come to mind first) have been in stagnation and/or decline and the new, expanding Southwestern cities (Houston, Phoenix, Los Angeles) have prospered in part as a result of this planning process.

An exploration of the sociological implications of the new “non-urban realm are beyond the scope of this paper. However, suffice it to say that those of the older, European school have attacked suburbia on various grounds, particularly as being dehumanizing, destructive of relationships and “normal” community bonds and structures, and promoting a pathological homogeneity of cultural environment. The “other side” of these issues, most notably presented by Herbert Gans, argues that, for one thing, many of these assertions have no basis in empirical fact; moreover, while it is true that suburban life is very different than the conventional urban culture, these differences are unfairly condemned by planners whose values are inextricably class-linked, and that suburban planners are altogether too guilty of projecting their own values on people who don’t share them. This, he underlines, is undemocratic and occurs all too frequently.

Another important aspect of American cities deserves mention: zoning. In many American cities, as well as self-incorporated suburbs which collect their own taxes and provide their own services, zoning is a powerful and capriciously employed form of local planning. Zoning is a tool generally supported by, on the one hand, governmental

agencies and planners seeking to address what they perceive to be the ills of the city and “improper” uses of land (and, frequently, in a broader sense, to project the way the city “should” look, with these businesses here, those businesses there, etc., etc.). On the other hand, zoning may be used by middle and upper-middle income suburbs to maintain the “standards” of their suburbs, which more often translates to: “keeping out the undesirables”, i.e. minorities or lower-income groups.

Planning authorities may also have considerable leverage on the functioning of the free market, in that, by merely moving some zone boundaries, they can create “windfalls and wipe-outs”. This, in turn, leads to a situation wherein business and other groups are motivated to form lobbying groups, commission “studies”, and play a new “market” other than the economic one: the game of how best to convince/force/buy off planners to “see things their way”. And to further compound this sad state of affairs, there are usually several layers of bureaucracy (and thus, planning agencies with their own perceptions of “the public interest”) with which the market (businesses, developers, communities) has to cope. There may be city, county, state, and federal planning agencies, as well as “environmental watchdog” extensions of these governmental organs. Thus, businesses tend to develop large, expensive legal apparatuses to cope with this flood of ever-shifting rules and commissions prior to making any major business decisions. After a while, it has been asserted, any sense of ethics or reality has been lost from this whole system, and everything comes down to the (counterproductive) competing and in-fighting of every conceivable interest group. As might be expected from such a situation it is usually the unrepresented individuals or smaller business enterprises that get the worst of everything. An example appeared in a recent article about the proposed “free enterprise zones” for cities (*The Times*, London, 25th February 1982, p. 16.):

Past experience has shown that the kinds of businesses likely to locate in a United States inner city zone are smaller, labour intensive companies such as food retailers or makers of parts for motor cars. Another problem which must be addressed by the Reagan administration is the difficult task of untangling snarled federal and state regulations which impede business operations.

Mr. Brandwein, who supports enterprise zones as a fresh approach to an old problem, nonetheless remains unconvinced that the regulatory problem can be solved. He said the New York City administration, for example, makes life so difficult for minority entrepreneurs that many potentially good business ventures are killed because of bureaucratic delays.

Recently, a group of black businessmen in the south Bronx raised \$5m to buy an abandoned gypsum plant in an old industrial park far removed from residential areas. The deal was just about to be closed when the group received a notice from a minor official in the city’s department of the environment who ordered a halt in the proceedings.

The official said he had to complete a traffic surge survey to make sure that reopening the plant would not cause unnecessary noise and traffic congestion resulting from trucks moving in and out of the area. His survey dragged on and on, until finally the group’s financial backers became impatient and decided to put

their money elsewhere. If the Reagan administration succeeds in beating city hall, it will have accomplished something big for American business, Mr. Brandwein says.

The alternative to this is described in an illuminating article by Bernard H. Siegan, entitled "No Zoning is the Best Zoning", wherein he describes the evolution of the city of Houston, which has no zoning, and compares its functioning with the processes involved in planners' deliberations about how to zone a few acres in another city, which might be:

The city council or other governing board will zone or re-zone the property after hearing from all the interested parties, their planners, lawyers, and other representatives. These include the owner, the neighbors, the local civic or homeowners groups, political organizations, the school and park boards, do-gooders and do-badders, perhaps the Chamber of Commerce, labor groups, etc., etc.. Almost everyone except those who will directly benefit from the development, such as the potential homeowners, tenants and shoppers, seem to be entering the fray these days. Each side will have no difficulty in producing a planner to prove conclusively that its position is the only correct one.

How it will come out will depend on who or what are best able to influence or pressure or even pay for the vote of the council members. That there may be an enormous demand for apartments in the community is likely to be a less important factor than the opposition of such use by certain politicians or by a homeowners or civic group. It is always an interesting speculation as to how it will come out - and to what extent the demand of consumers within the real estate market will be satisfied ...

By contrast, the answer where there is no zoning is relatively clear. The property is likely to be used in accordance with the demands of the market which means that directly or indirectly it will be used to satisfy the predominant consumer demand. The more a developer or successor in ownership succeeds in supplying consumer demands, the greater his profits are likely to be.

This is, I submit, the highest and best use of the property as determined by the least fallible of the city planners, the marketplace ... And the precious land will be used to provide for the needs and desires of human beings and will not be wasted for the sake of political expediency and planners' speculations.¹⁸

He then goes on to produce evidence for how the absence of zoning has substantially benefited Houston, particularly in satisfying consumers' demands (and they have been heavy in this fast-growing city) for housing.

A similarly incisive analysis of how American suburbs have used zoning to maintain their affluence and evade supporting city functions and services they might otherwise use is given by R. L. Johnston, who claims that zoning gave rise to:

... a ring of balkanized local governments in which the relatively affluent, in particular, can escape paying local taxes to provide services for those less fortunate than themselves and can use the zoning procedures to protect their escape from communal responsibility.¹⁹

Though what that responsibility is remains unclear.

IDEOLOGY OR SCIENCE

In sum, then, what can be seen is something of a morass on both sides of the Atlantic in that planners, by one method or another, have attempted (and, to widely varying degrees, succeeded) in projecting their often antiquated and rather interventionist values on urban centres. The results are mixed and not easily quantifiable; the "how much?" gives way to "what if?"

Differences in culture and ideology are also evident in comparing the two cultures; one difference is in the amount of planning each will accept and, perhaps more importantly, in the overt form that planning will take. Certain economic and physical realities which are different in the two countries may be appealed to in part for the logical dissimilarities in their cities, but these may be overplayed, particularly when the debate centers on idyllic visions instead of economic forces.

But the theme that seems most to recur is that of the planners' values having been so uniformly perpetuated that a virtual paradigm seems to have resulted for the whole "social science" of urban planning. This paradigm equates concepts of centrism, density, shape, and greenness with concepts of right and wrong, or good and evil. Where this has occurred, urban studies has ceased to become a social science, and has assumed the guise of a perverted forum where similar ideas about "form", "taste" and "style" become the centers of discussion.

As the world grows and progresses, and the purpose and functioning of cities flex and adapt to civilization's changed needs, the science of studying cities must be prepared to follow these changes, and evaluate them in direct, empirical terms rather than in the context of how they can halt, control, or distort these changes in order to fulfill one man or another's scheme for achieving Utopia.

FOOTNOTES

1. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1975, pp. 27-28.
2. Chris Tame, *In Defense of the City: The Rise of Urban Revisionism*, unpublished, 1980.
3. Louis Wirth, quoted in Tame, p. 19.
4. J. M. Hall, from *Problems in Regions of Europe*.
5. J. M. Hall, op. cit.
6. David Thomas, cited in Peter Hall, *The World Cities*, p. 36.
7. Peter Hall, op. cit., p. 40.
8. J. M. Hall, op. cit., p. 42.
9. J. M. Hall, op. cit., p. 24.
10. J. M. Hall, op. cit., p. 26.
11. Peter Hall, "The Urban Cultures and the Suburban Culture", from Eells and Walton eds., *Man in the City of the Future*, NY, 1968, pp. 103-104.
12. Peter Hall, op. cit., p. 119.
13. Lewis Mumford, cited in Peter Hall, op. cit., p. 120.
14. Frank Lloyd Wright, *When Democracy Builds*, London, 1945, p. 66.
15. James E. Vance Jr., *Geography and Urban Evolution in the Bay Area: Its Problems and Future*, Berkeley, 1964, II, pp. 68-69.
16. Melvin Webber, "Order in Diversity: Community without Proximity" in L. Wingo ed., *Cities and Space: The Future Use of Urban Form*, Baltimore, 1963, p. 52.
17. Peter Hall, "The Urban Cultures and the Suburban Culture", p. 109.
18. Bernard Siegan, "No Zoning is the Best Zoning", in *No Land is an Island*, Institute for Contemporary Studies, San Francisco, 1975, pp. 165-166 & passim.
19. R. L. Johnston, "The Political Element in Suburbia", in *Geography*, November 1981, p. 296.