# The Death and Life of Great American Cities Study Guide

## The Death and Life of Great American Cities by Jane Jacobs

# Contents

# Plot Summary

*The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs is concerned with the problems of city planning and the strategy that planners followed throughout most of the twentieth century. The strategy of rebuilding has not been successful. It has not accomplished anything in eliminating slums or halting the decay of city neighborhoods. Jacobs blames not only the city planners but places the burden of the blame on the theorists and educators.

Jacobs provides a good analysis of what contributes to the success of neighborhoods by looking at city streets and sidewalks, parks and neighborhoods. She deduces the factors that result in vital neighborhoods. These neighborhoods have streets, sidewalks and parks that are safe, that provide for contact between people, and that provide the opportunity for children to be watched and taught. Jacobs looks at what factors have a positive contribution to each of these areas and what detracts from each. The differences in ages and shapes of buildings in a neighborhood mean something in terms of not only visual presentation but also of functionality and cost of rent. The variety of small commercial establishments creates uses for people. These establishments are the reason that people come to the area, whether the establishments are bars, restaurants, or art galleries. Because of these different establishments, people are in the area at different times of the day.

Jacobs also analyzes the economic interrelationships that exist in successful neighborhoods. One of the reasons for the need for buildings of different ages has to do with rents. New buildings have high costs of construction to cover and therefore have to charge higher rents than older building. A neighborhood with a mixture of older and newer buildings tends to have more mom and pop type stores, required for diversity and watchful neighborhood eyes.

The reasons for the decay and regeneration of certain city neighborhoods are also examined. The factors that contribute to decay and the creation of a slum are in place and are operative years before the area is officially declared a slum. There are steps that can be taken to prevent decay, but taking these steps are not what city planners are doing. There are also steps that can be taken that can reverse the process of decay. Again, this is not what city planning has been involved in. Since rebuilding slums is essentially a form of slum shifting, this is not the solution to end decay of neighborhoods or the solution to eradicate slums. Regeneration requires people who want to stay in the area. Jacobs feels that the proper role for a city planner is to analyze neighborhoods and see what it is that makes them successful or unsuccessful. The planners then should encourage the factors that promote success and discourage the factors that contribute to lack of success. The current planning mechanism does not have the apparatus or structure to do this. Planning should not mean tearing down and rebuilding.

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## Chapter 1 Introduction Summary and Analysis

The book opens stating that it is serving as an attack on city planning and rebuilding. The author is unhappy with the current state of city planning and wants new ideas introduced. The attack is not aimed at the practice of city planning, but rather at the principles, and what they are based upon. The author plans to propose different principles based on common everyday things like sidewalks and parks. The current practice is to lay all of the cause of the problems to a lack of money. If the products of monetary expenditures are examined, one can see that what the money has gone for has produced trappings for vandals and bums. The current expenditures based on the current principles of city planning have not done anything but rather lead to the decay of the cities. The current principles and expenditures are not helping the cities; they are helping cause the problems of the cities.

The practices of city planners result in small businesses being ruined and families being uprooted and moved due to the building of structures and roads. This is not sound investment based on the investment of tax dollars, because displacement and problems result. The city planners and teachers of the principles do not learn from their mistakes. They ignore why something is successful and the reasons for its success just as they ignore the failures and the reasons for the failure. Many people try to lay the blame for city problems on the automobile. Jacob calls the automobile the symptom of the problem, not the cause of the problem. The automobile proves that planners don't know what to do or how to deal with automobiles. The emphasis on the automobile shows the planners' thinking. They solve the problems of the city when they solve the traffic problem. This isn't true, according to Jacobs.

Jacobs uses the North End of Boston as an example. Everything in theory says that the North End is a slum that should be destroyed. Yet, when she visits the area, she finds a thriving, rehabilitated community. She is curious about where the money for rehabilitation and redevelopment came from. The money did not come from any redevelopment project but from businesses and housing revenues within the community. Bankers weren't making large amounts of funds available because the area is considered a slum. This view and practice is the result of the theories underlying city planning.

Jacobs' plan is to examine the problems faced by cities in the first part of the book. She'll do this by looking at how everyday things like sidewalks are used and see what principles can be ascertained from studying these everyday items. Part two examines the economics of the situation. Part three examines decay and regeneration. The last part, part four will make suggestions for change. Jacobs feels that most planners are concerned more with appearances than with functionality. A coherence of both factors is required for success. Jacob's analyses concentrate on inner-city areas.

Jacob's explains how most of the principles of city planning come from the beliefs of Ebenezer Howard and Sir Patrick Geddes and are based on the planning of regions. Their ideas were picked up by a group of Americans in the 1920s called the Decentrists. Their ideas are to decentralize the cities by establishing small towns. The European architect Le Corbusier proposed a city of skyscrapers with municipal buildings opposite the skyscrapers, with the wealthier population living around grassy areas where there are theaters and restaurants. Their views form the basis for theories behind city planning. Modern city planners combine the conceptions of Howard and Geddes with Le Corbusier.

Jacobs does not like the current principles that underlie city planning and building and she makes this fact very clear. She plans to propose a new set of principles. The current principles result in the expenditures of billions of dollars that produce hangouts for vandals and bums. It is the theory that underlies city planning that Jacobs is attacking, because the theory leads to the practice and the practice isn't working to solve urban problems. Jacobs looks at different cities and finds out what is wrong with them, and then looks at why. Her primary concern is inner cities, areas of high population density. Jacobs view is that city planning is not related to functionality, and that this is the cause of the problem.

# Part 1, Chapter 2, The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety

## Part 1, Chapter 2, The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety Summary and Analysis

Streets and sidewalks have other purposes than use by vehicles and people. They functions as borders between buildings. Streets and sidewalks are the most important part of a city. A city is considered dangerous when its population does not feel safe on its streets or sidewalks. When the streets and sidewalks are considered unsafe, the people use them less which leads to the streets and sidewalks being more unsafe. This does not occur only in the slums but in other areas that are considered upper class areas. At the same time, some slum neighborhoods have some of the safest streets.

Jacobs contends that peace on the streets and sidewalks is not a function of the police. The keeping of the peace has to do with the people as a part of the process of civilization. Moving people to suburban areas does not help either. People in cities are strangers, so lower population densities do not prevent crime. In Boston's North End, the streets are safe because neighborhood residents keep them that way. They thwart attacks of all kinds if any occur. In the Elm Hill area of Roxbury, it is the opposite. People stay off the streets and leave the area.

Three factors contribute to the safety of streets. First, there must be a clear line delineating public from private. The line cannot be blurred and public and private cannot be blurred. In addition, the eyes of the neighborhood must be on the street as they are inside the buildings. The third factor is that there have to be people using the sidewalks and streets continuously. The behavior of strangers must be controlled by the streets, which means the neighborhood. Stores, restaurants, and public places should serve to make the streets safer, but it can work both ways.

People attract people. People will sit at busy intersections watching the traffic and pedestrians. People in buildings will watch the activity on the streets and intervene if they sense something out of the ordinary. This is one of the functions of doormen on Park Avenue. Lights help because people are more likely to walk where there are lights than where it is pitch black. The same is true with elevators and stairways in high rises and public housing projects. They function as streets and sidewalks. An experiment was conducted in New York City with corridors open to view. This serves to limit crime in the observable areas. But people come in from the outside and go to other areas of the project that aren't subject to the same surveillance for their commission of crimes.

Jacobs says there are three ways of dealing with the insecurity of the cities. The first is to ignore the situation and allow it to continue. The second is to spend as much time in a vehicle as possible and as little time as possible walking on the sidewalks. The third mechanism is based on territoriality where one group doesn't enter the territory of

another group without permission. This later is a concept supported by the Rebuilt American City organization. "Wherever the rebuilt city rises the barbaric concept of Turf must follow, because the rebuilt city has junked a basic function of the city streets and with it, necessarily, the freedom of the city" (p. 50).

Jacobs discusses the streets and sidewalks and the functions they serve. They not only serve as a medium for vehicles and people, but they also determine the safety level of the area. If they are watched by the neighborhood and well trafficked, then they are safe. By streets and sidewalks, Jacobs is inferring the people of the neighborhood. In Jacobs' neighborhood in New York City, there is a famous bar, the White Horse, which has people coming and going until the wee hours of the morning. This serves to keep her street safe.

According to Jacobs, the neighborhood residents keep the streets and sidewalks safe by their presence and actions. They watch what happens on the streets in their neighborhoods and act if there is anything suspicious. This is where the deterrent to crime comes from and what makes neighborhoods safe.

# Part 1, Chapter 3, The Use of Sidewalks: Contact

## Part 1, Chapter 3, The Use of Sidewalks: Contact Summary and Analysis

City sidewalks also serve a social function. They are places where people can meet and socialize. They are a place for public contact, where people can willingly engage in dialogue upon encountering one another. This camaraderie is not forced upon the locals by government, but is entered into willingly, and serves to enhance trust among those living in the neighborhood or those passing through as they conduct errands. The absence of this trust is considered by Jacobs to be a disaster for the city street.

City streets and sidewalks function as meeting places for people, especially when there are stores, bars, candy stores, etc. in the area. Trust is a necessary element if the streets are to be successful in their social function. The author uses as an example of trust various residents of her neighborhood leaving keys with the owner of the delicatessen. They do so because they trust the man - that is why they leave their house keys with him. Each group of residents has a different shopkeeper that they leave their key with. The shopkeepers in each case are trusted and do not abrogate the resident's privacy.

The system of the streets, in this respect, allows people to be acquaintances without intrusion on anyone's privacy. There are no entanglements and excuses and explanations are not required. Sharing, and how much of what is shared with whom is also a factor. When there is a lot of sharing, people become fussy about whom their neighbors are. As an example, Jacobs uses a neighborhood with a small park, but no stores in the area. The neighborhood mothers know each other and can go the houses of the ones living by the parks for bathroom stops, phone calls, etc. People need to have a lot in common in terms of race, economics class, etc. in order to share. If they don't, they are considered outsiders. Most city dwellers, if given the choice, choose not to share. They prefer to remain isolated from other city dwellers. Some of this choice has to do with suspicion and fear. There can be no togetherness if there is suspicion and fear.

A successful street with a social structure has to have a public character. This is someone who is public with a lot of social contacts on the street, like shopkeepers. This is where the neighborhood grapevine comes from, where the neighbors learn the latest gossip. Sharing is much more difficult in the presence of racial discrimination. Safety is also a factor.

The streets and sidewalks also serve as the meeting place for social contact. In order for the streets to function in this manner, there must be trust. People have to trust those with whom they have social contact. Shopkeepers and others function as public

characters on successful streets with a social structure. They serve to pass information around the neighborhood. Jacobs is describing a situation that can exist in cities that have neighborhoods with people that shop in the neighborhoods. This is not what one would find, for the most part, in high rises.

# Part 1, Chapter 4, The Uses of Sidewalks: Assimilating Children

## Part 1, Chapter 4, The Uses of Sidewalks: Assimilating Children Summary and Analysis

The thought is always to get the children off of the streets and into playgrounds or other areas. Every time there are problems on the streets, the movement is for more parks and playgrounds. This is in spite of the fact that the biggest gang problems are in the projects with their park mall-like settings. There are fewer people watching in these areas than on the streets. The author confirms this fact by walking around her own neighborhood in New York. The children are safer playing on the streets and sidewalks where the adults are than they are in the deserted playground areas. Parents in many areas seem to feel the same way. Children use playgrounds for the first four or five years of their lives. After that, it is difficult to keep them confined in the area.

Children need a variety of play areas, not just one. City streets perform a function for children, just as they do for adults. Streets and sidewalks populated by neighborhood people are important for children. Children learn from the people on the streets. They learn a sense of responsibility for themselves and each other from the people of the neighborhood. They are responsible for the behavior on the streets, like other people of the neighborhood. The children learn to imitate the adults in making the streets of the neighborhood a safe place.

Jacobs points out that most city planners are men and they plan for women and children as a part of normal daily life, and not for men. Chatham City is representative of this as are all other building projects. There must be places for work and commerce in the immediate area if men are to be taken into consideration. In this way, then, men are a normal part of the neighborhood streets and sidewalks.

Wide sidewalks accommodate both play and other sidewalk uses. Children play in one part of the sidewalk while the remainder of the sidewalk accommodates other functions. In this way, there is proper surveillance of the neighborhood. Jacob recommends sidewalks of thirty or thirty-five feet because they allow for all activity, including rope jumping. Twenty-foot sidewalks don't allow enough room for rope jumping. In neighborhoods where the sidewalks are dangerous, society should promote the practices needed to make them safe.

Jacobs feels that children are safer on the streets and sidewalks of a neighborhood than they are in the playgrounds. The eyes of the neighborhood are not the same in the playground area as they are on the streets. The sidewalks and streets perform an important teaching function for children. They learn to be responsible for behavior on the streets and sidewalks from watching adults and imitating what the adults of the neighborhood do. Children prefer the sidewalks and streets to playgrounds because

they are more interesting because of the people on them. City planners should learn to promote this function of streets rather than try to mitigate the social function of streets and sidewalks in their planning.

# Part 1, Chapter 5, The Uses of Neighborhood Parks

## Part 1, Chapter 5, The Uses of Neighborhood Parks Summary and Analysis

City parks may or may not be successful, depending on their usage. Even though each park is an entity of its own, there are some principles that apply to all parks. Neighborhood parks are the most prevalent form of parks. When parks are not popular or used, there are no eyes watching behavior in the parks, and they become dangerous as do the streets that border them. The diverse nature of the buildings that border the park contribute to the success of the park. Building used as restaurants, stores, etc. contribute to people walking through the park at different times. An example of this kind of park is Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. The park is well used at all hours of the day. When parks aren't used and are more or less abandoned, then they attract bums and crime. Washington Park is another park in Philadelphia. However, unlike Rittenhouse Square, high-rise office buildings surround it. The only people that use the park are there during their breaks from work. Parks surrounded by residences face the same problem. Mothers are there a few hours during the day. The rest of the time, there is no one there to "watch". Franklin Square in Philadelphia and Pershing Square in Los Angeles are Skid Row parks. These are parks that are inhabited by bums and the homeless.

A park's success is determined by its uses, and city planners make the mistake of trying to make the park substitute for why people populate the streets and sidewalks. The park should serve to tie together the diversity of a neighborhood. To accomplish this, the park needs to have intricacy, centering, sun, and enclosure. Intricacy has to do with how people use the park and their reasons for going there. This means it must have areas that appeal to the different uses; such as, different settings, different areas with and without trees, different ground levels, etc. The park must be designed in ways that make people feel that they are in different places when they are in the park. The center of the park is where people's paths cross, the point where the action in the park takes place. Parks also need sun and shade. Park users do not want all of one and none of the other. There must also be enclosures for people to take shelter in. Special use parks are created by the provision of demand goods. Demand goods are things like concerts and music and theater.

Just because a park is located in a neighborhood does not mean that the park is successful. Like streets and sidewalks, the parks need neighborhood eyes for surveillance. Successful parks are created by the diversity of the surrounding area. A park surrounded with buildings with a variety of diverse cultural and commercial uses is more likely to be successful than one surrounded by high-rise office buildings.

According to Jacobs, the park should serve to draw the community together. It should be able to provide different uses to different people which means its must have a lot of variety in its physical design and layout. People will go to different places within the park for different reasons and activities. This is view Jacobs has of different parks in the nation. She compares them and discusses why some are successful, like Rittenhouse Square, and others are not, like Washington Square, both of which are located in Philadelphia. By examination of parks in different places, Jacobs determines the attributes that make parks successful.

# Part 1, Chapter 6, The Uses of City Neighborhoods

## Part 1, Chapter 6, The Uses of City Neighborhoods Summary and Analysis

The city neighborhood is also a unit that is studied by Jacobs. A successful city neighborhood determines what its problems are and takes steps to solve them. An unsuccessful city neighborhood is one that doesn't do this, but is instead overcome by the problems. Cities are comprised of all combinations of these successes and failures. A good neighborhood is not dependent on economic class. Neighborhood success is a function of neighborhood self-government and self-management.

City planners view a neighborhood as an introverted group of about 7,000 people. This is large enough to support a grade school, a community center, and convenience shopping. This is the ideal sized planned neighborhood. They can't recreate the small town atmosphere where people grew up together, went to school together, and have known each other all of their lives. This kind of situation can't be forced and if it could, it would destroy the nature of the city.

Jacobs claims that only three kinds of city neighborhoods serve any useful purpose when it comes to self-government. She calls them: (1) the city as a whole; (2) street neighborhoods; and, ( 3) districts of large, sub city size, composed of 100,000 people or more in the case of the largest cities" (p. 117). These different kinds of neighborhoods have different purposes and serve different functions but they each need each other. The city as a whole is the source of funding and the place where decisions are made. The city as a neighborhood is where people who share common interests come together and meet, whether it is through theater, concerts, etc. The neighborhoods of city streets have been discussed above along with the need for neighborhood surveillance. The district is the final neighborhood unit. The district is the medium between the street neighborhood and the city as a whole. The district must function to secure what the street neighborhood does or doesn't want from the city. This means that people in the streets neighborhood must know influential people in the district. If they don't, the streets neighborhood is helpless when confronted with problems too big for them to handle.

The size of the city neighborhood in city planning is too big to be a streets neighborhood and too small to be a district, so it really serves no purpose. City planners should work within the parameters of what functions, which means the three kinds of neighborhoods that Jacobs describes. They should promote city streets into a continuous network in the district. Parks and squares should function to tie together the community, not to separate it from others. City planners should identify the functional districts and work to emphasize them and their role. There is no optimal district size. It varies from situation

to situation, just as the character of the district varies. Cities are not collections of repetitive districts.

A successful city neighborhood is one that is alive, vibrant, and safe. Success and safety have nothing to do with economic class. Neighborhoods are not self-contained units but parts of a much larger city. As such, there are certain characteristics that are required for the neighborhood to be successful, which Jacobs describes. City planners should try to foster and aid the neighborhoods along the lines they develop and not try to force them to be a way they think they should be. A successful neighborhood can keep its areas safe and belong to a district that can help it fight city hall when it needs to. If a neighborhood does not have this capability within its district, then it cannot solve certain problems, as Jacobs illustrates.

# Part 2, Chapter 7, The Generators of Diversity

## Part 2, Chapter 7, The Generators of Diversity Summary and Analysis

Cities are diverse in nature. In examining cities, one cannot consider the uses on a one-by-one basis. The uses are mixes and combinations. These mixtures and combinations are what are meant by diversity. Cities need manufacturing establishments and commercial establishments in order to survive. Areas can only support so many grocery stores and other kinds of establishments so cities can support more than the suburbs can. City commerce and manufacturing is diverse in size and in nature. Cities generate diversity.

Jacobs proposes four conditions that are necessary for the existence of diversity. The district has to have more than one purpose and serve more than one function. The blocks in the neighborhood should be short and there must be a variety of buildings in the neighborhood. The population density must be high. These four factors results in different diversity conditions in different areas of the city.

Cities breed diversity, which is based on combinations or mixtures of uses and functions. Areas differ in the degree of diversity that they contain and generate. Jacobs proposes four conditions that are required for diversity and plans to examine each in the next four chapters. These are vital elements to the success of city neighborhoods.

# Part 2, Chapter 8, The Need for Mixed Primary Uses

## Part 2, Chapter 8, The Need for Mixed Primary Uses Summary and Analysis

The first condition is that the district has to have more than one purpose. The neighborhood people have to be in place to perform their numerous functions. As pointed out earlier, different people must be on the streets at different times at all times of the day and night to provide the eyes that are needed. The parks require people doing different things at different times. Just as streets and parks need users, stores, and other commercial establishments need users and customers. Lower Manhattan is used as an example. During the lunch hour of the working day, the places are mobbed. Outside of working hours, there is no activity. To balance the time use they would have to find a way to attract visitors to the area, since there are not enough residents to sustain a viable time use. What can they do? Jacobs feels they could build an aquarium, a library branch, schedule concerts, and other attractions in the evenings to draw people to the area.

Primary uses are what attract people to an area whether the uses are offices, factories, or residences. This creates some diversity. Secondary diversity comes from the commercial establishments that arise to serve the primary users. If the area has enough, it will attract different people throughout the day, which in turn attracts more commercial establishments. The process then will feed upon itself and secondary diversity can become a primary use. To be effective, people must use the same streets and different times and they must use some of the establishments in the area if that area is to be economically viable.

Most downtown areas do not have the proper primary use structure. They are basically places of work, not places of residences. They are referred to as Central Business Districts or CBDs, in planning jargon. In most major cities, they are dead at night. Jacobs looks at Pittsburgh, New York, San Francisco, and Washington D.C. The problem is the separation of work places from residence places. Streets and buildings are not difficult to obtain. Residences are more difficult and all are needed for diversity.

Jacobs uses Lower Manhattan as an example of a problem area with unequal time uses. The commercial establishments are busy during working hours and there is nothing outside of working hours. She formulates several recommendations that could lead to a more balanced time use of the area.

The separation of work areas and residential areas is a problem for cities. Streets and buildings are easy enough to build in areas, but attracting residents can be a problem. All are needed for diversity. This is a problem for the cities.

# Part 2, Chapter 9, The Need for Small Blocks

## Part 2, Chapter 9, The Need for Small Blocks Summary and Analysis

The second factor required for successful city areas are small blocks with a lot of places where people can turn. If not, the street is isolated. This is the case with long blocks. Long blocks have no breaks in them. People are stranded when they uses areas with long blocks. Short blocks give people more choices, allow for more mingling, and result in more diversity. Long blocks are a barrier to use mixtures and diversity. People try to avoid areas that have long blocks. Long blocks result in fewer people with different uses and this means that people with different uses don't mingle in the area as they do in areas with short blocks.

Jacobs's point that blocks must be short is discussed in greater detail. She feels that long blocks are boring and prevent different people from mixing. People are not on the same street for different reasons, as they are more apt to be with shorter blocks. People try to find short cuts when they are confronted with long blocks. She gives examples in New York City to prove her point.

# Part 2, Chapter 10, The Need for Aged Buildings

## Part 2, Chapter 10, The Need for Aged Buildings Summary and Analysis

The third condition put forth by Jacobs has to do with the buildings in the area. There must be a mixture of old and new buildings. New buildings represent construction costs, which are evidenced by the higher rents in the area. Old buildings represent lower rents. This has implications for the kinds of commercial establishments that can exist in the neighborhood. The mixture of old and new buildings then is an economic necessity. The mixture is also needed for purposes of diversity, both primary and secondary. Certain neighborhoods that have this mixture are more successful than other neighborhoods since they have more mom and pop type businesses that lead to more public figures that watch the streets of the neighborhoods.

Jacobs makes a good point in saying that the mixture of buildings in an area must be a combination of old and new. The economic reason has to do with the level of rents. New buildings have higher rents than older buildings. This then affects the kind of merchant that can inhabit the building and the prices they charge. It also affects primary and secondary diversity. Successful neighborhoods need a combination of both in order to promote the conditions required for public figures and safe streets.

# Part 2, Chapter 11, The Need for Concentration

## Part 2, Chapter 11, The Need for Concentration Summary and Analysis

Population density is another of Jacobs' success factors. This concentration includes visitors as well as residents. High population densities in residential areas do not necessarily lead to slums. Jacobs discusses neighborhoods in various cities with comparable high population densities and finds that some are successful, such as Greenwich Village and some are not, like Roxbury. Many city slum areas have low population densities as in Oakland, Cleveland, Detroit, and New York. Population densities are not the whole story of diversity.

A high population density is not the same thing as overcrowding. Overcrowding is defined as 1.5 persons per room. Overcrowding can occur in high-density areas or in low-density areas. Densities should be at a level that promotes diversity. Jacobs calls a figure of 100 dwellings an acre the "in-between" densities. How high can a density figure go? It can go high enough to suppress diversity. High rises have high population densities. In cities, the only way to go over 40 dwellings per acre is to have standardized housing units. This detracts from diversity. There can't be one hundred percent ground coverage because some open space is desirable and necessary.

High ground coverage areas with high population densities need frequent streets. This gives some openness to the area since the streets are a break in the buildings. This is also a requirement for diversity.

The last requirement for diversity is concentration of populations. Population densities have to be at a level sufficient for diversity within a district. If the population density is too high or two low, diversity will suffer. The appropriate density is whatever works for a particular community. What works for one neighborhood doesn't work for another.

Jacobs believes that the population densities found in cities are an asset to the city. They should be accepted as fact and they should be promoted where they result in a vibrant city life. Cities are places that have higher densities than rural areas. That is a part of city life.

# Part 2, Chapter 12, Some Myths About Diversity

## Part 2, Chapter 12, Some Myths About Diversity Summary and Analysis

Diversity results in congestion. Cities end up fighting diversity through zoning regulations to reduce the congestion. This ends up destroying that which makes the neighborhoods alive and vibrant. Diversity means that there are differences, like old buildings and new buildings. This doesn't mean that the mix has to be bad or ugly to look at. Homogeneity would be boring and monotonous, or what Jacobs calls, the Great Blight of Dullness. Even in areas without diversity, people take actions to distinguish themselves and their belongings from those of others. In certain successful areas, there are short blocks of houses that are very similar that do not result in monotony. This wouldn't be true if they were repeated on the next block, but as they exist, they stand out as a unit. Resident building with stores and other uses also break the monotony. The problem with zoning laws is that they try to restrict an area to be confined to a single use.

Population density leads to traffic congestion, not diversity. Scale is also another factor that affects the success of diversity. There is a big difference in the effects of a small mom and pop grocery store and a large supermarket on the block. Zoning controls are needed to control the scale of the uses, not the uses themselves. Jacobs says that this is an area that is not even covered in zoning theory.

Jacobs makes the point that the mixed uses results in diversity, which is what city areas need. City zoning stifles diversity since much of it is aimed at limiting multi use of areas. Residential areas are supposed to be residential without the mix of commercial establishments that contribute to diversity. They could allow the commercial establishments if they pay attention to scale. These, according to Jacobs, are the two biggest flaws of planning theory. This greatly diminishes the amount of diversity in a neighborhood. It also limits the public characters that are required for the kind of street watching that makes the neighborhoods safe.

# Part 3, Chapter 13, The Self-Destruction of Diversity

## Part 3, Chapter 13, The Self-Destruction of Diversity Summary and Analysis

Jacobs states that diversity is inherently required for city life to work in a constructive manner, and provides the basis for the perpetuation of the city. Although the responsibility for public use entities such as schools, parks, community centers and more is to be undertaken by public and "quasi-public" sources, it is the individual city dweller and the various private organizations, each with their own diverse contributions and needs that create city diversity. City planners should try to provide the framework for this variety of uses.

There are forces that tend to destroy diversity. Jacobs describes four forces. First, diversity can destroy itself. The area becomes too popular and there is competition for the available space. Streets are most affected by retail competition, while districts are affected by competition over working and living space. Eventually, the losers in the competition are squeezed out. The winner results in less diversity because the losers are forced out and those people that used to frequent the area to visit the losers also stop coming. This refers to areas where there is one restaurant after another or one bar after another, with the other small business establishments being forced out as more restaurants and bars move in. The more homogeneity there is in commerce the less the diversity and the fewer the number of other uses. The duplications of the successes destroy the diversity of the area. These same phenomena occur in city residential areas.

One way to preserve diversity is through zoning. This usually results in the preservation of historic buildings. This helps preserve the mixture of old buildings and new buildings. Zoning should be done in a way that would result in differences in replacements and changes in a neighborhood. They should not allow the same kind of changes or replacements. This should also be reflected in the assessments and tax base. A second way to impede excessive duplication is to locate public and quasi-public buildings in areas where they contribute to diversity. Jacobs refers to this as the staunchness of public buildings. There must also be competitive diversion. There must be protection against excessive duplication, which leads to the destruction of diversity.

Diversity, which is needed so badly for the success of cities and their neighborhoods, is capable of being destroyed by itself. As competition for space increases, the losers leave the area and take their visitors and customers with them. Diversity also suffers at the hands of city planning. Zoning should prevent duplication in order to preserve the diversity of an area. As a successful business finds others of the same kind opening up, these other businesses are forcing out other types of businesses and the people who frequent them. This results in the destruction of diversity in the area.

The diversity of an area should be protected. Jacobs looks at three factors that would help to protect the diversity: zoning, the staunchness of public building, and competitive diversion.

# Part 3, Chapter 14, The Curse of Border Vacuums

## Part 3, Chapter 14, The Curse of Border Vacuums Summary and Analysis

Single use areas form borders in cities, like railroad tracks do. There is usually blight in areas adjacent to the tracks just as there sometimes is in areas along the waterfront. Neighborhoods around universities, hospitals, and civic centers are usually stagnant instead of vibrant. City land falls into one of two categories, according to Jacobs. The first is general land. People who walk around and circulate use it. In this category are streets, parks, and some building lobbies. Special land is the second kind of land and usually isn't used by the walking population. It functions as an obstacle to the use of general land because it blocks general land. Both serve to contribute to circulation. When special land interferes with the use of general lands in downtown areas, the result is a dead area.

Borders serve to carve up a city into pieces. This is not all bad, though if the carved pieces are strong enough they can form an effective district. It is when the carved pieces are fragmented and ineffective that they cause problems. Jacobs feels that borders are the easiest problem to correct. They can figure out ways to mount the barriers and connect the two areas with uses.

In this chapter, Jacobs considers the problem of borders. Borders function to fragment the city, but this doesn't always have to have a bad effect. Sometimes the fragments are large enough and effective enough to function as districts. If this is the case then the border functions as a positive thing. The problem arises when the fragmented area isn't effective as a district. The borders between fragments areas can be crossed and the areas can be linked to allow uses across the border. Jacobs feels that this is one of the easiest problems to solve. Some borders can be crossed very easily. Other borders, like waterways, make it more difficult to link fragmented areas to provide for uses across the borders.

# Part 3, Chapter 15, Unslumming and Slumming

## Part 3, Chapter 15, Unslumming and Slumming Summary and Analysis

The term "vicious circle" applies to slums. The slum areas are the perpetrators and victims of the problem. Moreover, slums tend to spread. Urban renewal projects try to stop slums but the attempts have mostly failed. Jacobs identifies conventional approaches to slums as being paternalistic. Viewing slum dwellers with a superior eye is condescending and does not allow for individual participation in revitalization. By respecting the people who live in the slums, acknowledgning their history in the area, and building on the inherent desire of those living in and patronizing the slums to better their area, revitalization can be accomplished. The problem with the slums is that people move in and out too quickly. Slums can be "unslummed", but not easily. The term "perpetual slum" designates a situation where there is no improvement in the social or economic conditions of an area, or an area in which there is a worsening of the conditions. Jacobs believes that diversity can be introduced to halt the problems of slums.

Stagnation and dullness, according to the author, are the first symptoms of the beginning of a slum area. People tend to leave dull neighborhoods. The overcrowding isn't relieved because other people move in. There may or may not be a change in ethnicity. People try to get out quickly. Progress in the area is backwards instead of forward. This is true in the planned slums, which means the projects. The tearing down of areas and relocating residents to projects is called slum shifting. This does not break the link that causes the slum to be a slum.

An area can "unslum" if its population can create sidewalk safety and if they enjoy city life. Sometimes people who can leave don't leave. They stay to try to make the area a better place. A decline in overcrowding is an indication that an area is beginning to unslum, especially if there aren't increases in vacancies. Many people move into the middle class areas out of the local area. Some of them are able to move out due to the easing of discrimination. The unslumming area needs an increase in diversity and uses.

In many cases, once the overcrowding of an area ends it is usually a prime target for urban renewal. As Jacobs points out, nobody is becoming rich in an "unslumming area. The landlords don't have the population they used to have to exploit and there are no new buildings for high-income residents that are making builders wealthy. When areas unslum, they do so in spite of city planners.

Jacobs points out the problem for slum dwellers. The slum and its populations are, at the same time, both the perpetuators and the victims of the slums. The solution is not

just better housing or relocation. That is called slum shifting. The area needs diversity, uses, and people who care for the area.

Jacobs's analysis of how an area becomes a slum is good. Slums begin out of boredom. When a neighborhood becomes boring, its inhabitants move out. Boring places with lower rents attract lower classes, who are also bored there and wanting to move out. The turnover progresses and the area regresses until it becomes a slum.

# Part 3, Chapter 16, Gradual Money and Cataclysmic Money

## Part 3, Chapter 16, Gradual Money and Cataclysmic Money Summary and Analysis

There are things that money can and can't do. Money cannot make unsuccessful areas successful with having the necessary conditions for success fulfilled. Money can be spent that helps in the creation and fulfillment of the conditions required for success. There are different kinds of money that can be used in a community. Money from private lending institutions is one kind of money. This is the most important kind of money for a community. Public government money is the second kind of money and second in importance for a community. Most of these kinds of funds come with some sort of government guarantee. The third kind of money can be classified as other and rather shady. This category of funds is like loan shark funds with high interest rates.

Insufficient private and public lending and financing activity is the reason for decline in city areas. When there is little or no money available, there is no money for improvements and the area falls into disrepair and then declines. For slums, there is usually little or no money available from lending sources. Slums can be subject to credit blacklisting. Some neighborhoods, like Boston's North End and Chicago's Back-of-the-Yards are strong enough to overcome this blacklisting and survive. Most of the neighborhoods do not survive when they are blacklisted. The next step is to be targeted by the planning authorities for urban renewal.

The mentality of tearing down slums began in the 1930s. Rexford G. Tugwell, an FHA administrator, announced this fact. In many cases, a government uses its power of eminent domain to obtain land from private landowners. The local businessmen in the area are the losers in this scheme because they are not reimbursed for the value of their businesses.

Public funds are disbursed on a cataclysmic basis, not on a gradual basis. They are used for the purposes of slum shifting.

City areas need money for various purposes. Jacobs distinguishes between the kinds of money that can be used for funding projects or other needs in the area. She identifies the cycle that takes place in city after city. The neighborhood area is not receiving much in the form of private or public lending money because it is classified as a slum. With the lack of private and public money, some turn to other sources for money at extremely high interest rates in order to make improvements and repairs. People begin to leave the area. The planning authorities then target the area for urban renewal. City neighborhoods need money on a gradual yet continuous basis. They don't need what Jacobs calls a cataclysmic flood of money. Tearing the slums down is a form of slum shifting. The people making money on this practice are the slum landlords that are

exploiting the tenants for as much as they can in the form of rents. The higher rents lead to more money when the land is condemned under eminent domain.

# Part 4, Chapter 17, Subsidizing Dwellings

## Part 4, Chapter 17, Subsidizing Dwellings Summary and Analysis

City planners do not have plans for unslumming slums, stimulating diversity or street uses, etc. Planning does not exist for these purposes. They deal with things like subsidized housing, traffic, visual design, and analytic methods, according to Jacobs.

Jacobs identifies that cities do have a population of people who are too poor to afford an adequate level of housing. Many cities have a shortage of low-income housing. The view is that since some people can't be housed by the private sector because they can't afford the rental payment: they must be housed by the public sector. . Jacobs does not believe that low income means that government has to take over the housing responsibility. Some sort of subsidized housing is required. Payments or rent supplements are preferable to government owned buildings. This would result in gradual construction in neighborhoods, which would lead to uses and diversity.

Jacobs advocates the use of guaranteed rent buildings for this method. They would not be standardized and would not result in dullness. In order to perform this sort of project, the builders would need financing guarantees and the buildings' owner would have to have sufficient rent guarantees. The owner would have to guarantee that he would build in a certain area and choose his tenants from a designated area. The tenants who couldn't afford the full amount of the rent would have the rent subsidized by the government agency, which Jacobs calls the Office of Dwelling Subsidies, or ODS. The government would not be competing with the private sector in the housing market because all housing is privately owned.

This plan would bring financing into areas that face credit blacklisting and it would keep people in the neighborhood, as opposed to the slum shifting techniques. This approach would solve a lot of problems. It would add to the diversity of buildings and lower densities. This would lead to more stability in the population of the area.

Jacobs proposes a rent subsidization program as opposed to public housing. This kind of program would have a government agency financially encouraging the building of rental units for use with rent subsidies. This would result in gradual construction instead of sudden bursts of standardized housing units. Neighborhoods would have more diversity and uses because they would have time for gradual changes in the neighborhood.

The rent guarantee program that Jacobs proposes would do away with the massive relocation problems that public housing construction causes. It would also preserve neighborhoods.

# Part 4, Chapter 18, Erosion of Cities of Attrition of Automobiles

## Part 4, Chapter 18, Erosion of Cities of Attrition of Automobiles Summary and Analysis

Much of the cities problems are due to the automobile and the things that are done to accommodate them. Cities need multiplicity of choice and trade and commerce. This means that people have to have a way to travel around the city. Automobiles didn't ruin cities. They had the same complaints about horses in London. Both pedestrians and automobiles have to exist within cities, which are congested with cars. Cities have looked at different plans that try to minimize the congestion between truck, cars, and people. Some have tried to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic. However, this isn't a workable solution.

Jacobs explains how congestion instigates first street widening, then route changes, and then triggers complete roadway changes with new bridges and greater areas of land devoted to parking. All of these pieces feed on themselves. The more space that is devoted to cars, the more cars come to use the space, and the greater the need for more space. Eventually people have to drive because everything is so spread out. This is the erosion process. Once it begins, it is very difficult to stop. As areas thin out, the car is relied on more heavily for people to reach places for their everyday uses.

Just as there is erosion of cities by automobiles, there is also attrition of automobiles by cities. This is when cities do things that result in less vehicular traffic. This refers to things like sports events where it is so crowded that people decide not to drive. Attrition usually just happens. It isn't usually the result of planning. It is the result of conditions making it inconvenient for people to drive cars.

Cities could do things to cause attrition, like widening the sidewalks instead of the streets. They could do things that lead to the inconvenience that results in less car use. This would lead to greater diversity and livelier streets.

Cities mean cars and traffic congestion. There isn't much that can be done to get around this problem. Jacobs makes a good analysis of the problems cities are facing with erosion. Erosion occurs when they begin to allocate land for the parking and widening of streets and other things to accommodate automobiles. This attracts more automobiles, which creates more need for land. Attrition of automobiles by cities occurs when things happen, like congestion, that make it inconvenient for people to drive so they stop using the car in the area. Jacobs suggests that maybe they should widen the sidewalks and not the streets.

# Part 4, Chapter 19, Visual Order: its Limitations and Possibilities

## Part 4, Chapter 19, Visual Order: its Limitations and Possibilities Summary and Analysis

Designing cities means dealing with people's lives. However, cities also need art, but they cannot be viewed as an architectural problem and solved with visual works of art. Streets represent our visual views of cities. They have different kinds of buildings, storefronts, and businesses. When they are used intensely, they need some sort of visual interruptions or they look like they are endless. This is due to the grid-like nature of streets in a city. If they aren't gridlike, too many people get lost in the neighborhood. San Francisco doesn't have this problem because of the hills and slopes.

There are ways to put interruptions to straight streets so they don't have the appearance of being endless. Buildings can jut out to the street edge. They can build squares or parks. However, not all streets should have interruptions. Streets that end at borders are examples. When there are interruptions in streets, they should not be obstacles to pedestrian traffic. Pedestrians must be able to go through or around.

Landmarks also serve a dual purpose. First, they represent the diversity of the city. Landmarks distinguish one city from another. They can also emphasize the functionality of certain city areas. Landmarks can be major or minor. Local landmarks can be things such as schools, due to their special uses. Nodes are spaces that become focal centers for people. They are distinguished by their uses. Rockefeller Center is a node. Nodes are like landmarks but not as powerful. There is an attachment to landmarks. People feel sentimental about them and do not want to see them torn down.

Interruptions or eye-catchers are necessary. As already mentioned, they function as street interruptions. Location is the only condition that makes an eye catcher an eye catcher. Groups of different or interesting buildings can also be eye catchers. These differences are required for diversity. City design is concerned with where the interruptions are. First, there must visual interruptions and secondly, they must add to the character of the neighborhood.

Streets can be unified with the use of various design elements. These elements can be as simple as trees. There are other ways to tie together the elements on the street to give it a unified look. Color coordination is a way of providing a unified appearance.

Jacobs's point of view is that cities cannot be treated as architectural problems. When one sees cities, one sees the streets. If there are no interruptions of some kind on city streets, when they are of the grid-like design, the streets look endless. In San Francisco, they don't have the problem of endlessness because of all the slopes and hills. These are natural interruptions. Since not all cities have the topography of San

Francisco, they face the problem of endlessness. They can add interruptions of various kinds, and some of them have. Too many interruptions, however, are just as boring as the sensation of endlessness.

Jacobs discusses the importance of landmarks. Landmarks serve to distinguish one city from another and are important to the people who hold a sentimental attachment to them. Because of this, people always attempt to preserve landmarks. Landmarks contribute to the diversity of an area and serve to define the area.

Jacobs acknowledges several ways of using simple design elements to give a street a unified appearance. These design elements include trees and awnings. Since most of these places are private property, it is up to the people of the neighborhood to introduce these design elements. City planners cannot tell a property owner what color awnings he can or cannot have.

# Part 4, Chapter 20, Salvaging Project

## Part 4, Chapter 20, Salvaging Project Summary and Analysis

Projects are necessary for cities. These represent pieces of work that are being done. The projects should represent something that is worked back into the framework of the city. Projects are a part of city planning. The planners must correctly assess what is needed for diversity on the project borders.

The low-income housing projects are where work is needed. They must be made livable and become assets to the people living there and to the city. The housing projects must be unslummed. People must freely choose to live there. They need all of the elements that are required for a lively, healthy neighborhood. Jacobs view is to begin at the ground level and develop new streets that have uses. The new streets should unite both sides of the project border and must fit in with the characteristics of the housing project itself. The new streets should contain uses for day and evening. Jacobs recommends allowing street vendors in these areas and constructing sheds as garages for them. Another plan is to construct subsidized housing duplexes or row houses on the new streets. High rises make it impossible to supervise children playing on the ground. The projects' ground level area needs small business, and the generation of public characters to have streets that will be watched by the neighborhood eyes. The halls of the project buildings and elevators must also be made safer. Jacobs represents a solution that was used in Venezuela: hiring the women of the building as elevator attendants during the day. At night, Jacobs acknowledges, they would have to have men because of the increased danger of crime. The other aspect mentioned by Jacobs is income limits. To unslum an area people have to want to stay in the neighborhood. In the project, they must move when they reach a certain level of income, so Jacob recommends removing income limits and allowing the rents to change in response to changes in income. Civic Centers are also projects that are outside the fabric of the community. They need to do things with their borders so that there are uses on both sides.

Jacobs looks at the problem of the low-income housing projects and sees them as requiring unslumming. The first requirement for unslumming is that people have to want to stay in the neighborhood. The halls and elevators of the housing projects are dangerous places for the residents, so Jacobs suggests hiring the buildings' people as elevator attendants to help mitigate the crime. The problem is those crimes can also take place against the attendants. Unslumming some of these projects may be impossible, given the nature of the problem.

Most Civic Centers are isolated areas cut off from the community by their borders. Some way must be found to make the borders crossable and tie both sides of the border together so uses can occur on both sides. The problem is that most of the buildings in a Civic Center complex don't have uses all day and evening.

# Part 4, Chapter 21, Governing and Planning Districts

## Part 4, Chapter 21, Governing and Planning Districts Summary and Analysis

Public hearings are held on planning issues. Citizens can attend and speak at them. In many cases, they find that issues have been decided before the formality of a hearing. People of all kinds attend these hearings and speak out. The Commission members must deal with a large city. They are "unbuilding". They have an insurmountable task. They should try to plan for diversity and vitality. This means they have to find ways to stimulate the diversity of uses in areas. They have to be able to properly ascertain what is missing in the factors needed to stimulate vitality and diversity. They have to have streets whose users keep the area safe. They have to overcome the border vacuums and unslum the slums. They have to create the conditions that lead to the events happening. This would require the planners to have information from the neighborhoods. They would need this information for each neighborhood. This piece is missing in city planning.

The structure of government with the different agencies and departments each handling a different piece, like parks, or streets being separate, prevents the overall picture from being seen. The bigger the city, the bigger the separation between the agencies and the less cohesiveness there is, as in New York City with the five borough presidents. Smaller cities or towns are not as piecemealed.

Political action is required in most cases. Residents have to do something to find and call to the attention of the right people in the right agencies when they have a problem that needs to be solved. The planning commission is supposed to be able to overcome this problem of the different agencies. This was the reason for their formation. However, the planning commission, itself, is just another piece of the bureaucracy. It has the same structure as other bureaucratic agencies. To overcome this problem, Jacobs recommends that each agency be subsided into different municipal districts with a separate staff member in charge of each districts. In this way, they would be more familiar with the district. Each would have a staff that worked specifically in the assigned district and no place else. Administrators usually ignore these kinds of suggestions. The bigger the government is, the more difficult the problem of understanding local issues becomes.

The optimal size for a district, according to Jacobs, is a one and one half mile square. Standard Metropolitan Areas, or SMAs, are units that include cities and the areas around cities. This is the unit used in measurement, like for pollution. Governmental units in areas try to form their own massive units, combining all localities in an area into one with all kinds of overlapping units. This is referred to as the "crazy quilts" pattern. Voters continually vote down this kind of arrangement.

Jacobs analyzes the problems existing in city administrations. Government structure is such that it is unknowledgeable about specific problems in specific neighborhoods. The planning commission was supposed to span the bureaucracy and solve the problems of different agencies controlling different factors in each neighborhood. However, the planning agency is itself a part of the bureaucracy with the same problems as other government agencies. Jacobs plan for the administrative departments to be divided into units that handle specific geographic areas in a city, each with its dedicated staff, is not too logical. How many people would it require in a big city? What would the street workers do on days when there are no streets to be fixed?

Governments tend to want to move in the opposite direction than the population wants. They want to form larger units, as in the "crazy quilts" pattern. That only increases the size of the bureaucracy and moves them further away from the problems of the neighborhoods. As Jacobs indicates, the voters consistently vote them down.

# Part 4, Chapter 22, The Kind of Problem a City is

## Part 4, Chapter 22, The Kind of Problem a City is Summary and Analysis

Cities have different kinds of problems that must be approached and handled in different ways. Time brings with it new ways of thinking, and new strategies. Dr. Warren Weaver, writing in the 1958 *Annual Report of the Rockefeller Foundation,* defines "three stages in the history of scientific thought: (1) ability to deal with problems of simplicity; (2) ability to deal with problems of disorganized complexity; and (3) ability to deal with problems of organized complexity" (p. 419). Jacobs fits the development of city planning into this framework.

The first category consists of problems that contain two variables and applies to the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All of the physical sciences made advances during this time. Jacobs makes an analogy between the parts of a city and the variables in physical science. They react in the same way. Some parts function well; others do not. Jacobs uses the example of a street. It may perform adequately in neighborhood eyes as they watch the children, but it fails in other respects. It doesn't become a part of the larger community.

Cities problems have not been approached is this manner. They are viewed as "problems of simplicity and of disorganized complexity" (p. 435) and their problems have been approached as such. Planners considered mostly two variables: housing and the number of jobs. All of the other things, like parks and schools, were peripheral to housing. This analysis applied to small towns and suburbs. Planners shouldn't try this approach with city neighborhoods, although this is what they do. Planners then tried to use probability and statistics to plan neighborhoods with stores. Statistics makes it easier to analyze data and to ascertain things like turnover rates in housing. This also led them nowhere in terms of planning.

Jacobs says that three factors are important in understanding cities: "(1) to think about processes; (2) to work inductively, reasoning from particulars to the general, rather than the reverse; (3) to seek for "unaverage" clues involving very small quantities, which reveal the way larger and more 'average' quantities are operating" (p. 440). Processes refer to the effects of the objects in the city, like parks, buildings, sidewalks, etc. They are not abstract entities; they are always involved in some process, like diversity or unslumming. Inductive reasoning involves looking at the cause and effect relationship. The neighborhood people know what causes what, even though they don't know the technical names for things. The small, or unaverage, pieces are what contribute to problems, and to the solutions to the problems as well.

Jacobs applies the scientific analysis of Weaver to the problems of cities. Cities should be treated as areas of organized complexities like the physical sciences are. Approaching city problems in terms of two variables, housing and number of jobs, is not the proper approach, according to Jacobs. Cities need to be approached in terms of the complex situation that they are comprised of. Parks, streets, and sidewalks are not objects; they are processes and must be viewed as such in terms of their functions in order for city problems to be solved.

# Characters

**William Kirk**

**Ebenezer Howard**

**Sir Patrick Geddes**

**Le Corbusier**

**Daniel Burnham**

**Raymond Vernon**

**P. Sargant Florence**

**Charles Abrams**

**Rexford G. Tugwell**

**Robert Moses**

**Dr. Warren Weaver**

# Objects/Places

## North End of Boston

The North End area of Boston is used by Jacobs as an example of what's wrong with the theory in public planning. The North End area is a slum, but its businesses and housing owners plow their revenues back into the community to redevelop the area. Jacobs visits the area and finds a rehabilitated, redeveloped and thriving community, yet the area does not qualify for large amounts of bank loans because it is classified as a slum. Jacobs claims this area is evident of what is wrong with the theory of city planning.

## City Sidewalks and Streets

Sidewalks and streets function as a place of movement for vehicles and people, but additionally, the safety element must be taken into consideration. A city is considered unsafe when its citizens don't feel safe on its streets and sidewalks. What makes the streets safe are the surveillance, presence, and actions of the residents of those streets. Diversity is needed in a neighborhood and sidewalks and streets contribute to that diversity by the variety of people with different uses that use them.

## New York City

New York City is the home of the author, so it is the scene of many examples in the book. Many examples come from the Greenwich Village area, because the author lives in this area.

## Los Angeles, California

Los Angeles is another city whose neighborhoods are used as examples by the author.

## Chatham Village, Pittsburgh

This Pittsburgh development is representative of the Garden City planning, proposed by Howard and Geddes.

## Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Philadelphia was originally designed by William Penn, and was based on four squares, each with a park. Jacobs examines each of these parks to see which are successful

and which are not, then determines the factors that contribute to success of parks from the successful Rittenhouse Square.

## Chicago, Illinois

The various areas of Chicago are also referred to in various examples cited in the book. The Back-of-the-Yards area is used as an example of a successful neighborhood. It has all of the characteristics of success. It was credit blacklisted for years, but still managed to solve its problems and reverse the slumming process.

## City Parks

City parks should also be a vital part of neighborhoods. Some are successful, like Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. Others are not successful. Jacobs examines parks to determine what the characteristics of success are.

## City Neighborhoods

Jacobs studies city neighborhoods because they also contribute to the success of a city. She ascertains the characteristics that make neighborhoods successful and says that city planning should be directed at promoting these characteristics. Jacobs looks at both successful and unsuccessful neighborhoods.

## City Districts

City districts are areas, larger than neighborhoods, which have some political power in that they can accomplish various tasks and goals within the neighborhood. Somebody within the district has to have some political clout or know someone who does.

# Themes

## The Errors of City Planning

The whole purpose of this book has been to point out the errors of city planning. These errors are not new errors, for the most part. They are repeats of errors that have been made for hundreds of years. They are not the fault of the city planners; they are the fault of the theorists. Jacobs is not so much attacking the people who do the planning as she is attacking the educators who teach the planners. Jacobs totally disagrees with their policy of tearing down and slum shifting.

In Jacobs' eyes, the planners don't look at the right things. They don't look at successful neighborhoods and ask what makes them successful, then try to create the conditions for success. They don't look at what causes slums years before they become slums and try to ascertain the factors so that they can be prevented. Twentieth century planning theory has been based on rebuilding. Instead of saving neighborhoods, planners' solutions have been to tear down neighborhoods and relocate the people to projects, or what Jacobs calls lum-shifting.

City planners have always looked at the wrong factors because that is what they have been trained to do. Jacobs looks at different areas in different cities in the country for her analysis of what success and lack of success are. How did neighborhoods that should have been failures, like Boston's North End and Chicago's Back-of-the-Yards, become successes in spite of city planning? The effects of credit blacklisting in both these areas should have meant the end for both neighborhoods, but they both survived and became successful neighborhoods.

City planning is based on the wrong principles and these go back several hundred years. Since planners are focusing on the wrong factors, they can't solve the problems of the cities or help prevent them. They need to reorganize their own agency structure so that units are smaller and in touch with neighborhood problems.

## Diversity

The element running through this book is diversity. People use things like sidewalks, streets, parks, etc. for different reasons. These different uses or reasons contribute to the diversity of a neighborhood. These uses and reasons are what make streets and sidewalks safe. These uses and reasons are what make neighborhood alive, vital and successful. The same is true for the buildings. They cannot all look alike. They must be variations in the age and architecture and there must be different uses.

The most successful neighborhoods are the ones with the different commercial establishments and small businesses. They breed public characters. These are usually the proprietors of these business establishments. These are the public characters in the neighborhood, the ones that the neighborhood people know and trust, the ones they will

leave their keys with in case of emergencies. These public characters are a part of the neighborhood eyes that contribute to the safety of the streets and sidewalks.

Diversity requires a mixture of uses in a neighborhood. Successful neighborhoods have stores, bars, art galleries, restaurants, and other establishments that generate a stream of people with different uses to the area. This means there are always people on the streets and in the parks. This contributes to the safety and vitality of the neighborhood. It is safe for people to walk the streets because there are always people on the streets. City areas require this kind of diversity that comes with mixed uses.

## The Need for Change

The final theme that runs through the book is the need for change. Planners need to look at the right factors in order to provide good city planning. The administrative structure of planning agencies means that they don't know enough about the problems in a community to provide the adequate solutions to the problems. The planning apparatus does not span the bureaucratic structure - it is a part of the bureaucratic structure.

Planning agencies should concentrate on ascertaining the factors that contribute to successful neighborhoods and then promote those factors in other neighborhoods. Their strategy of tearing down slums and building low-income housing projects did not successfully solve the problems of the slums in the twentieth century. It just shifted the slum to the newly built low-income housing project. The first step in unslumming is to create an environment in which the neighborhood people want to stay. Those people will then care about the neighborhood and take steps to improve it. In housing projects, when they reach a certain level of income, they are required to move.

Jacobs looks at other cities and finds the same problems exist when their planners followed the same strategy of slum-shifting. The problem is not an easy one to solve, and Jacobs admits this fact. Throughout the book, she makes suggestions for improvements on the traditional planning methodology. She wants planners to study successful neighborhoods, determine what makes them successful, and then promote these qualities in other communities.

# Style

## Perspective

The book is written in the third person with most of the points of view being the author's. There is some exposure to the theory behind the practice of city planning and there are quotes throughout the book. The author uses these to explain where the concepts of city planning came from and how they haven't changed too much. This is why the author blames those who develop the theories of city planning more than the planners themselves. Most of the opinions expressed in the book are those of the author. She is the one that is analyzing the different areas in the different cities and determining what factors are required for success and what factors contribute to failure.

There are cited quotes throughout the book with documentation. A great deal of the book is based on the author's experiences in visiting the different locales and with experiences in her own home area of Greenwich Village. There are neighborhood experiences that she discusses from her own experience of growing up in the area and her own analysis of what makes the area safe and what contributes to the neighborhood's success.

## Tone

Jacobs writes in an academic style. The book consists mostly of facts and of the author's opinions. The book is written in terms of jargon, some of which may be the author's jargon, which is not always clearly and distinctly defined. The ambiguity sometimes requires the reader to reread certain parts to ascertain exactly what the author is talking about.

There are cited references and quotes used in the book. Jacobs does quote some books on planning, journal articles, and other sources. However, most of the book is based on the author's experiences, observations, analysis, and opinions.

## Structure

The structure of the book is straightforward and well thought out. The book consists of four parts and twenty-two chapters. The four parts are logical divisions for approaching the problem. The first deals with the behaviors and problems that cities face. The second part of the book is concerned with the economic and other interrelationships that exist in neighborhoods. Jacobs analyzes the causes of the problems of decay and regeneration of city neighborhoods. The last part is concerned with changes that are required in the hopes that they can solve the problems of the cities.

With the structure of the book divided into these sections, the timeframe is irrelevant. The division of the topics is what is relevant and important and Jacobs does a good job

in this respect. Each chapter sticks to the topic of that chapter, even though it may refer to information in another chapter. The reader does not feel confused even though there is a great deal of information to digest.

# Quotes

"The pseudoscience of city planning and its companion, the art of city design, have not yet broken with the spacious comfort of wishes, familiar superstitions, oversimplifications, and symbols, and have not yet embarked upon the adventure of probing the real world." Chapter 1, p. 13

"The tolerance, the room for great differences among neighbors - the differences that often go far deeper than differences in color - which are possible and normal in intensely urban life, but which are so foreign to suburbs and pseudo suburbs, are possible and normal only when streets of great cities have built-in equipment allowing strangers to dwell in peace together on civilized but essentially dignified and reserved terms." Chapter 3, p. 72

"it has been my purpose to show, by means of the most easily understood problem, how nonsensical is the fantasy that playgrounds and parks are automatically O.K. places for children, and streets are automatically not O.K. places for children." Chapter 4 p. 80

"Neighborhood parks fail to substitute in any way for plentiful city diversity. Those that are successful never serve as barriers or as interruptions to the intricate functioning of the city around them. Rather, they help to knit together diverse surrounding functions by giving them a pleasant joint facility; in the process they add another appreciated element to the diversity and give something back to their surroundings, as Rittenhouse Square or any other good park gives back." Chapter 5, p. 101

"But although cities may fairly be called natural economic generators of diversity and natural economic incubators of new enterprises, this does not mean that cities *automatically* generate diversity just by existing.... the most striking fact to note is the extraordinary unevenness with which cities generate diversity." Chapter 7, p. 148

"when a primary use is combined, effectively, with another that puts people on the street at different times, then the effect can be economically stimulating: a fertile environment for secondary diversity." Chapter 8, p. 162

"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody." Chapter 12, p. 238

"Slums and their populations are victims (and the perpetuators) of seemingly endless troubles that reinforce each other. Slums operate as vicious circles. In time, these vicious circles enmesh the whole operation of cities." Chapter 15, p. 270

"The restoration of a static society, ruled in everything that mattered - by a new aristocracy of altruistic planning experts, may seem a vision remote from modern American slum clearing, slum shifting and slum immuring. But the planning derived from these semifeudal objectives has never been reassessed. It has been employed to deal with real, twentieth-century cities. And this is one reason why, when American city slums

do unslum, they do so in spite of planning and counter to the ideals of city planning." Chapter 15, pp. 289-290

"City people finance the building of suburbs. To be sure, one of the historic missions of cities, those marvelously productive and efficient places, is to finance colonization." Chapter 16, p. 309

"In real life, which is quite different from the life of dream cities, attrition of automobiles by cities is probably the only means by which absolute numbers of vehicles can be cut down. It is probably the only realistic means by which better public transportation can be stimulated, and greater intensity and vitality of city use be simultaneously fostered and accommodated." Chapter 18, p. 363

"Their [cities]intricate order - a manifestation of the freedom of countless numbers of people to make and carry out countless plans - is in many ways a great wonder. We ought not to be reluctant to make this living collection of interdependent uses, this freedom, this life, more understandable for what it is, nor so unaware that we do not know what it is." Chapter 19, p. 391

# Topics for Discussion

How does city planning contribute to the decay of cities?

How is sharing and togetherness a function of city streets and sidewalks? Why do these factors contribute to the success of a neighborhood?

What are the four necessary attributes for diversity?

Explain how diversity destroys itself.

In what ways do cities finance colonization?

What is the sequence of events in the development of slums?

What are some of the suggestions that Jacobs makes for more relevant city planning?