

US contributions to the construction of the modern city: Five women

Contribuciones de EEUU a la construcción de la ciudad moderna: Cinco mujeres

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Abstract. This research focuses on how five US women, linked to a space and a time, held their contributions to the construction of the city. This collection of case studies begins when the dramatic situation of the urban proletariat triggered a series of initiatives that sought to improve their life conditions, as the social action introduced by Jane Addams (1860-1935) through the social settlement Hull-House in Chicago; and the practice and theoretical knowledge introduced by the Russell Sage Foundation founded by Margaret Olivia Sage (1828-1918) in New York. The point of view introduced by Theodora Kimball Hubbard (1887-1935) at Harvard University was to consolidate the urban knowledge as an act of communication; Edith Elmer Wood (1871-1945) put the housing problem in national perspective as is shown in *Slums and Blighted Areas in the United States*. Finally, Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) introduced the urban choreography from a neighbourhood of New York by *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. With these US pioneers a story is built.

Resumen. Este estudio se centra en cómo cinco mujeres estadounidenses, relacionadas con un lugar y un momento concreto, contribuyeron a la construcción de la ciudad. Esta colección de estudios de casos comienza cuando la situación dramática del proletariado urbano puso en peligro una serie de iniciativas que buscaban la mejora de las condiciones de vida, como la acción social introducida por Jane Addams (1860-1935) a través del centro social Hull-House en Chicago; y los conocimientos prácticos y teóricos introducidos por la Fundación Russell Sage, fundada por Margaret Olivia Sage (1828-1918) en Nueva York. El punto de vista introducido por Theodora Kimball Hubbard (1887-1935) en la Universidad de Harvard fue consolidar el conocimiento urbano como un acto de comunicación; Edith Elmer Wood (1871-1945) dio al problema del alojamiento una perspectiva nacional, como se muestra en el libro *Slums and Blighted Areas in the United States*. Finalmente, Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) introdujo la coreografía urbana desde un barrio de Nueva York en la obra *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. A partir de estas pioneras estadounidenses comienza a construirse una historia.

Keywords. Social settlement; zoning; survey; slum clearance; gentrification; social housing.

Palabras clave. Asentamiento social; zonificación; encuesta; “depuración” de los barrios bajos; gentrificación; viviendas de protección social

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In the second half of the 19th century, the established social standards assigned to women a passive public role about city matters. Some social agents came to address women public participation issue as if it were a mere change of scale, suggesting the public participation of women from the perspective of municipal services through a simple analogy: in the same way that she took responsibility for the economy and management of domestic life, she could as well engage herself in municipal services.¹

But there were some women who were able to find their professional paths outside the established canons. Among these professionals there are some whose contributions to the construction of the city have been consolidated over time, and today, their work is liable to support for the knowledge and understanding of the urban reality in all its complexities and dimensions. In fact, their contributions were directly related to the way in which they dealt with the most significant events they participated in, or in which they saw themselves involved through their diverse life contexts. Based on the previous study of their lives and careers, this article focuses on disclosing the points that became singular ways of apprehending the city.

In North American society —profoundly religious and therefore *a priori* provided of solid moral

¹ Editorial of the magazine *American City* in 1912, collected in Eugenie L. Birch (1994), *From Civic Worker to City Planner: Women and Planning, 1890-1980*. In Donald A. Krueckeberg, *The American Planner* (pp. 474-475). New Brunswick: Centre for Urban Policy Research.

principles, where personal endeavor was extremely valued— women were part of that struggle. This research begins chronologically in the later years of the 19th century, when the dramatic situation of the urban proletariat—as witnessed by Lewis W. Hine’s (1874-1940)² social photography and by his touching portrait of the most vulnerable social groups formed of immigrants, women and children— triggered a series of initiatives that sought to improve their life conditions. The country that was most aware of this situation of social decline, along with its industrial development was the United States, thus preceding countries such as Great Britain, reflected in works such as *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*.³

The criteria for selecting these women are based on the interest of re-thinking how they tried to solve the urban problems that they were worried about. These problems are very familiar nowadays: integration of immigration, role of nonprofit organizations, ethical conflicts about urban space for rich and poor people, need to create an understandable own language for the studies of the urban subjects, role of social space in the life of the people particularly children in hard contexts, slum clearance, gentrification, ghettification and human scale.

Laura Jane Addams (1860-1935), Margaret Olivia Sage (1828-1918), Theodora Kimball Hubbard (1887-1935), Edith Elmer Wood (1871-1945), and Jane Jacobs (1916-2006), revealed as a whole, a special sensitivity towards the vulnerable social group that they belonged to. The support of the family environment, mostly of a patriarchal nature, was essential for that personal struggle, stimulating and encouraging them to make the most of the very few available training resources within the restrictive and elitist educational systems of their time.



Figure 1. Jane Addams, Olivia Russell Sage, Theodora Kimball, Edith Elmer Wood and Jane Jacobs

Their names remain associated to cities of reference: Jane Addams to Chicago, Olivia Sage, Edith Elmer Wood and Jane Jacobs to New York, Theodora Kimball to Cambridge (Massachusetts). However, their contributions were broad and of a plural perspective, none were just local. Each one of them had a curious attitude towards the changes that were taking place in the societies to which they belonged. There was also an effort to spread their acquired knowledge and experiences beyond the geographical boundaries for which they were conceived. Despite their independence, or maybe because of it, they knew how to fully integrate themselves in work teams and institutions, where they developed their entire professional career.

² Collection of Lewis W. Hine, New York Public Library Digital Collection, and *The Pageant of America: A Pictorial History of the United States*, which consists of 15 volumes partially published by Yale University professor Ralph Henry Gabriel (1890-1988) between 1925 and 1929.

³ Mearns, Andrew (1883). *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London: An Inquiry into the Condition of the Abject Poor*. London: James Clarke & Co.

Jane Addams (1860-1935) and the Hull-House

One of the most unique initiatives carried out in North America was the so-called social settlements, which aimed, acting from its base, for the transformation of immigrants into exemplar citizens adherent to the American way of life. Its direct predecessor was Toynbee Hall, founded in London's miserable East End by Samuel and Henrietta Barnett in 1885. As stated by its founder in the article "The Universities and the Poor",⁴ its creation emphasized the need to connect the academia, in this case of Oxford and Cambridge, with the most disadvantaged social reality. The charismatic activist Addams was in her day a symbol of action for North American social reformers.

In 1887, the young American Laura Jane Addams (Cedarville, Illinois, 1860-Chicago, 1935), traveling through Europe with Helen Garret, a fellow student at the Rockford College in Boston, visited Toynbee Hall. This visit aroused the interest of the determined Jane Addams to do something similar in the United States. Her father, a Quaker senator, had instilled in the child, motherless at a very early age, solid moral and religious values.

One of the aspects of the singularity of Hull-House, was the role played by the city of Chicago. At that time, Chicago was reinventing itself after the Great Fire of 1871 launching a complex and fascinating urban transformation process. The approval of the ambitious Plan of Chicago by Burnham and Bennet in 1909, and the publication of the novel *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair⁵ —which caused great scandal due to the dramatic social reality it portrayed— were two significant events in the city's contemporary history. During that period of time, the most brilliant aspects of the city's social, economic, political, and artistic dimension found a place within the urban debate; but as did the most miserable aspects.

About these miserable aspects, some initiatives were taking place in the city, under the leadership of many non-professional city planners and Jane Addams was one of them. "As such women [Jane Addams], such constructive pacifists, enter and lead the incipient civic and town-planning movement."⁶

Addams and Garret founded Hull-House in 1889. The first step had been renting a building in Chicago. The owner of the property, Helen Culver (1832-1925),⁷ granted them the building after acknowledging their activities and social purposes. The wealthy family of Mary Rozet Smith, who joined the house in 1890, and with whom Addams maintained a close relationship until her death in 1930, financed a large part of its activities. The famous Chicagoans architects Pond&Pond, hired by Addams for the remodeling and enlargement of the Hull-House, surname of the first owner of the building, reinterpreted the building as a medieval monastery.

The 19th ward neighborhood, in which Hull-House stood, was a clear exponent of the social reality described by Jane Addams. Up to three quarters of Chicago's population were immigrants who had arrived in masses to the city. They did not know the language nor the traditions of the new city, thus becoming easy prey for the local mafias that controlled the labor and housing markets. They formed a social amalgam that found in alcoholism an escape from the frustrating reality they suffered daily. Taverns were the only spaces for social relations. "The city utilizes the labor of these people during the day and

⁴ Barnett, Samuel (1884). *The Universities and the Poor*. *Nineteenth Century Magazine*, 15, 255-261.

⁵ Sinclair, Upton (1966, first ed. 1906). *The Jungle*, New York: The New American Library.

⁶ Geddes, Patrick (1968, first ed. 1915). *Cities in Evolution*. (p. 88). London: Ernst Benn.

⁷ Helen Culver, heiress of businessman Charles J. Hull, founded the Helen Culver Fund for Race Psychology, for the study of the diverse manners of assimilation of American emigration. A scholarship of this foundation permitted sociologist W. I. Thomas, visiting professor of the University of Chicago in 1864, to study for ten years the evolution of an urban community, published as *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*.

wrings from them their meager earnings when night comes”, Jane Addams wrote to this regard. As Peter Hall (Hall, 1997) righteously pointed out, the Manichaeic principle that contrasts goodness and vice was present in her from an extremely religious perspective when addressing social conflicts.

The neighborhood was content with a small housing estate that hosted Italians, Russians, Greeks, Poles and Bohemians, who constituted the dominant communities, as well as premises for warehouses and factories. At Hull-House the mapping Wage Map No. 1-4 to Polk St. Twelfth Chicago was generated as a study on the socio-economic reality of a part of the neighborhood in which it stood. It was prepared by the resident Florence Kelley (1859-1932), based on *Descriptive Map of London Poverty* (1889) by Charles, elaborated with the collaboration of London’s Toynbee Hall. Florence Kelley, daughter of a congressman and student at Cornell University, very close to socialist activism and therefore controversial, was designated by the Special Investigation of the Slums of Great Cities Commission created in 1893 by the United States Department of Labor Investigations by order of US Congress, for the study of poverty in the neighborhoods of Chicago.⁸

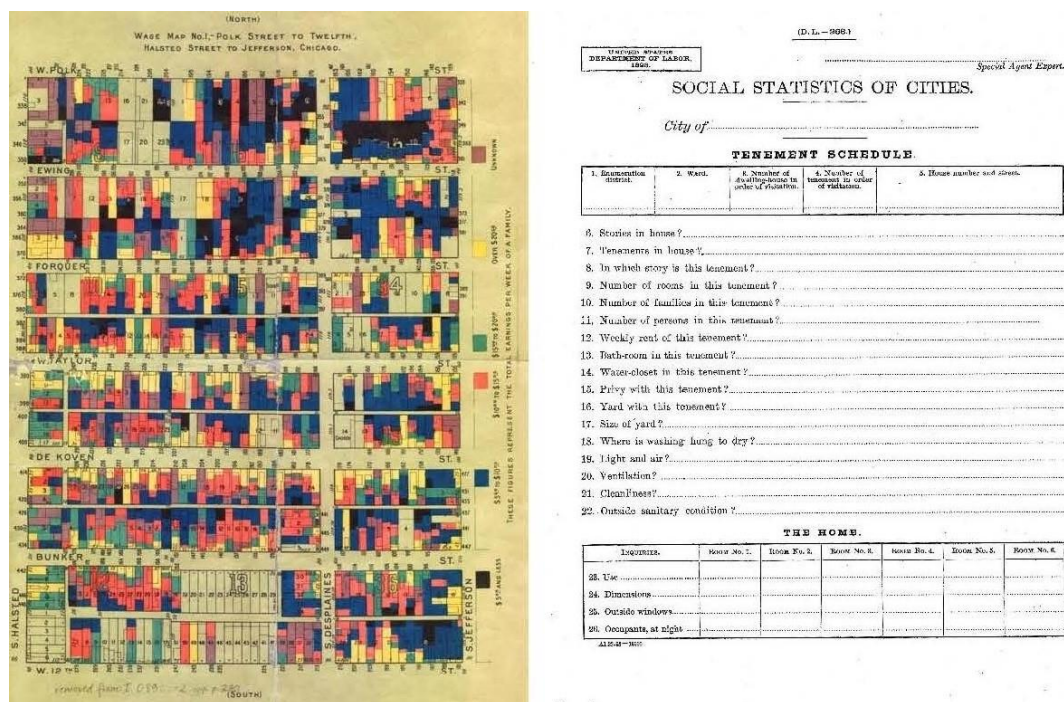


Figure 2. Wage map: black and blue plots (the poorest) within the alleys; and civic survey sheet: tenement Schedule, the home and the family Schedule

During the spring and summer of 1893, Florence Kelley and some volunteers, noted each room, house and property in the mapping area. The basis of the information was a survey structured into three sections—the property, home and family—with a total of 43 very specific questions. The aim was to describe the physical aspect and hygienic state of the property as well as the home conditions and the social and working conditions of its occupants. The idea was to do a comprehensive study of the neighborhood.

⁸ Shiels, Patricia M., and Rangarajan, Nandhini (2011). *Public Service Professionals: The Legacy of Florence Nightingale, Mary Livermore and Jane Addams* (pp. 36-53), in Donald C. Menzel, C. and Harvey L. White, *The State of Public Administration: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities*. London and New York: M.E. Sharpe.

The results of the survey were transferred to graph a descriptive mapping in which the plots were represented. The number of inhabitants in the tenements were identified by colouring or leaving blank those lots occupied by warehouses and factories. The income levels per household and nationality of the occupants were represented in two map sheets divided into four parts each.

Maps were coloured according to the economic situation of the inhabitants on the weekly household income—less than 5 dollars, between 5 and 10 dollars, between 10 and 15 dollars, between 15 and 20 dollars and unknown income—; and by source of individuals larger communities classified as English-speaking inhabitants (except Irish), Irish, Greeks, Syrians, Dutch, Polish, Swiss, French, Italian, Francophile Canadians, Chinese, Arabs, Turks, Bohemians, Scandinavians and people of color. These studies had to be adequately channeled in order to promote innovative legislative initiatives and, at the same time, to serve as a reference to other similar cases. So with Edith Abbott and Sophonisba Breckinridge, Florence established the Department of Social Research at the University of Chicago.

Thus, Hull-House was conceived as one of the first initiatives destined to create, among the many professionals involved in social reform projects, a dense labor network predominantly formed, but not exclusively, by women. Dolores Hayden has, from a feminist point of view, significantly valued the role of Hull-House for facilitating a physical and social support for the development of women’s professional careers in the United States. From the same feminist point of view, there were also specialized activities in the homecare as classes’ housewife and cooking and childcare and dining.



Figure 3. Italian immigrant at Hull-House, by Lewis W. Hine, and publicity of the playground as a way of social integration

The university extension courses and the program of conferences were an invaluable contribution for the improvement of urban life in an intellectual environment. Amongst its frequent visitors were the educational reformer John Dewey (1859-1952) and the philosopher and sociologist George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), whose conviction on the values provided by the integration of knowledge and the experiences of everyday life was a landmark of the philosophy behind Hull-House.

For Jane Addams, “only in the modern city have men concluded that it is no longer necessary for the municipality to provide for the insatiable desire for play. [...] and this at the very moment when the city has become distinctly industrial, and daily labor is continually more monotonous and subdivided.” On the contrary, Hull-House provided the recreation facilities. It was equipped with public baths, a playground, a kindergarten, a swimming pool, a fitness room, a dining room, a theater, a room for art exhibitions, courses for the elderly, a coffeehouse, a boarding club, sports, cooking classes, music classes, etc., where aspects of the local culture were valued. Jane Addams proposed the enhancement of those aspects of indigenous culture acceptable to the American bourgeoisie as the best resource for integration. From this approach, the city became a system of activity flows that demanded socialization spaces in order to achieve good urban development.

Mel Scott (1996) has highlighted the establishment of Chicago’s first playground parks⁹, which were formed around sand box and a *gymnasium*, as well as the presence of an instructor who organized games in an appropriately enclosed area. Moreover, it was conceived as a place for parents to meet, and hence, as a place of integration for the different immigrant communities within the neighborhood, where they exhibited their music and popular games. The idea was to remove children from the dangers of garbage alleys.

Addams and Starr exercised their authority from a strong Anglophile perspective. Both of them saw the Arts and Crafts movement of William Morris and John Ruskin as inspiration for the art gallery that they wanted to house. Handicraft thus had a role as a social activity to improve living conditions in poor neighborhoods. The precedent for this thought again would be found in London's Toynbee Hall, where the resident architect Charles Ashbee, had founded the Guild of Handicraft School in 1888.



Figure 4. Hull-House buildings: Halsted Street view, looking north Apartment House in foreground, Men’s Club, Butler Building, Hull-House entrance and Children’s House; Polk Street view, looking east, Boy’s Club in foreground, façade of Woman’s Club, building for shop and Gymnasium, building for Theatre and Coffee House and of Children’s House, view of the court called Quadrangle; and an entrance to Hull House. Images in the *Hull-House Year Book, 1906-1907*

In this sense, the Chicago Arts and Craft Society was founded in Hull-House in 1897, the birthplace of the Prairie School, led by the group of architects of Steinway Hall, with Dwight H. Perkins (1867-1941),

⁹ Rainwater, Clarence Elmer (1921). *The play movement in the United States*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

the Pond brothers and Frank Lloyd Wright, who, on the other hand, did not avoid being strongly critical against the overly conservative attitude of Hull-House. Wright was interested in studying the machine as a tool to work with new materials; and intended to propose artists to explore the possibilities of sheet metal, terracotta and worked marble. In order to present results on these investigations in 1901 to the Chicago Arts and Craft Society, he wrote and read at the Hull-House his text *The Art and Craft of the Machine*. For Wright, the Chicago Arts and Craft Society could become the point of contact between the artist and industrial production, coupled with a common purpose, based on the quality of the design and production of handicrafts. The machine was the means to simplify the life of man. The text is the first critical letter of Frank Lloyd Wright. Leonardo Benevolo includes this reference among the critical texts advancing Modernity.

Jane Addams later widened her scope and introduced herself to the international scene, arousing the enthusiasm of the pacifist and feminist sectors with her determination for peace during the complicated pre-war years of the two world wars. Moreover, she actively participated in official counseling institutions linked to sociology and feminism. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 due to her great international recognition.

Margaret Olivia Sage (1828-1918) and the Russell Sage Foundation

Industrial development contributed —whilst misery grew— to the creation of great fortunes, mainly in New York. Thus, the mansions of Andrew Carnegie, owner of the powerful Carnegie Steel Corporation in Pittsburgh, J. W. Vanderbilt, John D Rockefeller, Jan Gould, and Russell Sage, all along Fifth Avenue, harshly contrasted with the image given by Jacob Riis in his book *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York*.¹⁰

Following Russell Sage's death in 1906, his fortune fell upon his widow Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage (Syracuse, New York, 1828-New York, 1918). "My husband enjoyed saving money, I enjoy spending it", said Olivia at the age of seventy-eight.¹¹ Coming from a family impoverished by her father's shady businesses, her elitist education at the Troy Female Seminary¹² was possibly thanks to the help of family members. This allowed her to work as a governess in the homes of relevant New York families until her late marriage at the age of forty-one with the widower Russell Sage.

In 1907 she created the Russell Sage Foundation¹³ with the support and advice of the prestigious lawyer and philanthropist Robert Weeks de Forest, (1848-1931). Its purpose was to improve the social and living conditions of the most disadvantaged.

¹⁰ Riis, Jacobo (1890). *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York*. New York: C. Scribner's Sons.

¹¹ Correspondencia de España (1913). Lo que él ahorró, ella lo regala. *Correspondencia de España*, September 15.

¹² Later named the Emma Willard School.

¹³ Olivia Sage inherited 70 million dollars and the Russell Sage Foundation was providing with 10 million dollars. Later on, in 1900 Carnegie sold Carnegie Steel Corporation, with headquarters in Pittsburgh, to John Pierpont Morgan for over 400 million dollars. He spent 50 million dollars in creating 2,509 libraries and destined the rest of the money to be used by institutions such as Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Carnegie Hero Fund, Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching, Carnegie Institute and Carnegie Dunfermline Trust, in his native Scotland. The Carnegie Dunfermline Trust included, among other activities, Patrick Geddes' commission in 1904 of *City Development: A Study of Parks, Gardens and Culture Institutes. A Report to the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust*, and the works of British landscape architect Thomas Hayton Mawson for the Bolton neighborhood in Lancashire. A few years later, in 1913, John D. Rockefeller, impressed by Andrew Carnegie's attitude, founded the Rockefeller Foundation providing it with 50 million dollars.

The first systematic and scientific effort to analyze, with a reformist purpose, the living conditions of the working class in an American city was the *Pittsburgh Survey* (1906-1907),¹⁴ published in 1912 by Paul Kellogg (1879-1958) with the support of The Russell Sage Department of Surveys and Exhibits, created in 1912, under the direction of Shellby Millard Harrison (1881-1970).



Figure 5. Panoramic View of Rivers and Bridges, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1908 Photographed by Lycurgus S. Glover; published by Detroit Publishing Co., Detroit, Michigan. The Henry Ford Archive

The Pittsburgh Survey included thorough urban, economic, and social information on the city of Pittsburgh, along with a study of the origin and racial composition of its population, its physical settlements and social institutions, labor situation of workers in the metal industry, child labor, professional training, role of women, cost of living and work-related accidents in the industry. The numeric data was integrated into the city's mapping with not only analytical but also propositional purposes. The photographic report was carried out by the above mentioned Lewis W. Hine. This was the first urban survey, but not the only one. All throughout the country other reports were being made, supported financially by the Russell Sage Foundation.

The Division of Recreation was created to study ways of optimizing the use of schools and playground spaces. Clarence Arthur Perry (1872-1944) joined the foundation in 1909, and was the responsible. This work served him as a basis for proposing the *neighborhood unit* concept¹⁵ conceived as a residential organization revolving around educational equipment, an idea that constitutes one of the main North American contributions towards the concept of the English garden-city.

The conviction of the need to intervene in the physical aspects of the cities in order to improve the miserable living conditions of a significant part of the population was what encouraged Mr. Forest to launch, in 1911, the first North American garden-city, Forest Hill Gardens, situated near New York City, in Queens. With its construction, he aimed to demonstrate that adequate planning and an economic, functional management would enable the working class —although it was assumed by Forest that this was a planned middleclass residential community—, by means of profitable financial operations, to have access to decent housing within a respectable environment, where the citizens would have the possibility to live communally and in full contact with nature, these being the key principles of the philosophy of the garden-city movement and of Olivia Sage herself.

The project involved the collaboration of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., as landscape architect and urban planner, who drafted a road network that broke the New York grid system. The architect was the New York housing reform activist Grosvenor Atterbury (1869-1956), responsible for the foundation's headquarters, who brought forth an innovative construction system of prefabricated concrete for the

¹⁴ Kellogg, Paul (1909). *The Pittsburgh Survey. Charities and the Commons*, 2, January.

¹⁵ The *neighborhood unit* concept was first presented in one of the volumes of *The Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs*: Perry, Clarence (1929). *The Neighborhood Unit: A Scheme of Arrangement for the Family-Life Community*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

proposed housing compounds. There were no individual houses but groups of houses in order to rationalize the economic efforts.

The Sage Foundation, as Olivia wanted, also addressed the natural environment protection issue with the acquisition of 30,000 hectares in the Marshall Islands, located off the coast of the State of Louisiana, in order to convert the vast expanse of land into a bird sanctuary.

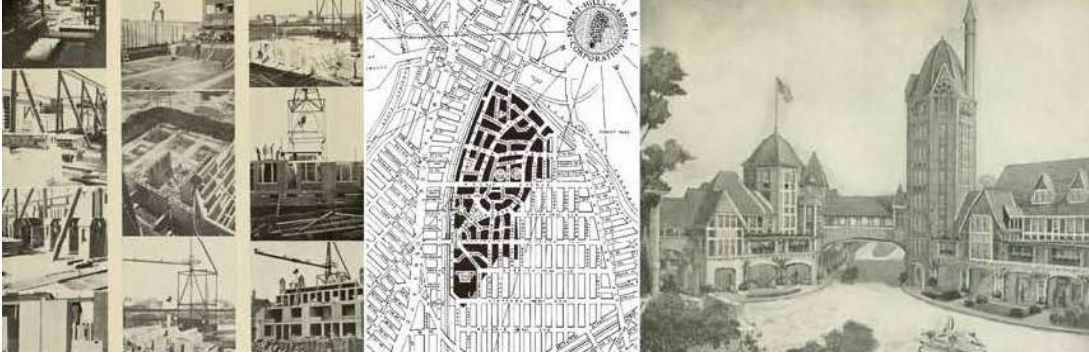


Figure 6. Forest Hill Gardens: precast hollow concrete floor, walls and roof units, by de Grosvenor Attenbury; organic scheme interrupting the Queens rigid grill, by Frederick Olmsted, and group of buildings in the main entrance. In *Regional survey of New York and its environs*, vol. VI (1931) *Buildings: their uses and the spaces about them*, 342-343

Following Olivia Sage's posthumous will of investing in New York City, Robert de Forest asked Charles Dyer Norton¹⁶ to join the Russell Sage Foundation of Trustees. Norton, one of the leaders of the *Plan of Chicago* (1909), immediately proposed to invest in drafting a plan for New York, with an area of more than 129,500,000 hectares and a population of around nine million people, figures that had never before been considered. The goal was transforming New York into a physically integrated metropolis of 20 million people by 1965. Thomas Adams was hired for that purpose, and the previous surveys on the economic, legal and social matters were published.¹⁷ The regional survey advanced the development of population projection methods. Shelby M. Harrison introduced Perry in the New York plan works and published *The neighborhood unit*.

The plan searched more for efficiency and functionality than for equity. The main gain of the plan was infrastructure. For Mel Scott, the plan offered the first systems approach to urban transportation planning. There were few proposals provided for the needs of the urban people as housing, as Edith Elmer Wood criticized: "Our best known [regional plan] and in many way standard-setting regional plan of New York, published in 1929, was finance by the Russell Sage Foundation. Though without official status, it has exerted a great deal influence. Unfortunately, it was prepared during the period before city planners realized that housing vitally concerned them."¹⁸

To conclude, we can affirm that the role of Olivia Sage in North American urbanism is reflected upon the work carried out by the foundation that she created on behalf of her husband.

¹⁶ About the Regional Plan of New York (1929) and the role of Charles Dyer Norton see Johnson, David A. (1996), *Planning the Great Metropolis. The 1929 Regional Plan for New York and its Environments*, London: E & F Spon, and Kanto, H. (1976). Charles Dyer Norton and the Origins of the Regional Plan of New York. *Journal of American Planning Association*, 39(1), 35-42. doi: 10.1080/01944367308977652

¹⁷ Under the supervision of Frederick Law Olmsted, Thomas Adams, John Nolen, Harlam Bartolomew, George B. Ford, and Edward H. Bennet.

¹⁸ Wood, Edith Elmer (1940). *Introduction to Housing. Facts and Principles*. Washington, D. C.: United States Housing Authority, 135.

Theodora Kimball Hubbard (1887-1935) and the Harvard Landscape Architecture School Library.

The year 1909 could be considered the starting point of urbanism as a modern science. The first North American congress entirely dedicated to the city was held that year, the *Plan of Chicago* by Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett was published, and the English Town and Country Planning Act was passed, which led to the publication of the *Town Planning in Practice* manual, by Raymond Unwin, and to the celebration in 1910 of the London international congress, hosted by the Royal Institute of British Architects, with the purpose of establishing the operating foundations of town planning. Furthermore, the first university courses on the city were held in 1909 both in the Department of Civic Design at the University of Liverpool, and in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Harvard University. Most of the initiatives were anglophiles, following the advances produced in the German countries.

Within this context, Theodora Kimball Hubbard (Milton, Massachusetts, 1887 — Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1935) joined, hand in hand with her brother Fiske Kimball,¹⁹ the Landscape Architecture School of Harvard University in 1911, with the commission of creating the library of the department and of providing it with bibliographic resources. Theodora then moved to live independently in the quiet university town of Cambridge, Massachusetts. With her father's support, she had previously studied at the Girl's Latin School in Boston, graduated in 1908 from the Simmons College School of Library and Science, and later received a Masters degree in Science in 1917; both of which were educational institutions exclusively for women. One of the few professional roles that women took on was that of librarian. The librarian of the Harvard Architecture School Library was also under female leadership, Elizabeth D. Clarke, which was succeeded by Ruth V. Cook in 1919.

Theodora had an unconventional job position at the university because she was not strictly a librarian. She was not only focused on the responsibility of incorporation and classification of library materials stockpiled. Despite the lack of a specific technical and vocational training, management of information sources made up for that deficiency and she was able to stimulate the work of everyone with her interest and commitment. It was found surrounded by university professors and students who viewed its work with sympathy.

As early as 1921, the Cuban magazine *Revista Municipal y de Intereses Económicos*,²⁰ published the first article—in Spanish—on the outstanding role executed by the librarian of the Landscape Architecture School of Harvard. Kimball's contribution lay not only in the collection and diffusion of bibliographic references on municipal reports about urban development in the major North American cities, but also, and above all, her contribution to the establishment of criteria that would allow classification and thus, the consolidation of new concepts in the fields of landscape architecture and city planning, later on regional planning.

Theodora Kimball was a publisher, a critic and a researcher. Her collaborations were published in magazines such as *Landscape Architecture*. For John Nolen, “the annual information reports by Mrs. Theodora Kimball Hubbard are one of the most valuable contributions of Landscape Architecture to city planning in the United States.”²¹

¹⁹ About Fiske Kimball, see the Fiske Kimball Papers 1874-1955, Philadelphia Museum of Art Archive. http://www.philamuseum.org/pma_archives.

²⁰ Carrera Jústiz, Francisco (1921). El urbanismo en los Estados Unidos: Theodora Kimball, *Revista Municipal y de Intereses Económicos*, XVI(9), 115. Francisco Carrera Jústiz (1857-1947) was the owner and director of the magazine *Revista Municipal y de Intereses Económicos*, professor of Local Government and Urbanism, and dean of the School of Social Science at the University of Havana, he was also a well-known diplomat and legislator.

²¹ Nolen, John (1930). Some Random impressions in looking over twenty volumes of *Landscape Architecture*. *Landscape Architecture*, vol. XX, July, 4, 296.

Theodora Kimball studied the first American landscape architects. Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852), Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), and Horace William Shaler Cleveland (1814-2900) were considered the trio of American landscaping par excellence. Cleveland was present at the time of the transition of professional planning to romantic landscape and his figure was inevitably overshadowed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. His plan to Minneapolis (1883), a comprehensive urban planning draft was collected in "H.W. S. Cleveland. An American pioneer in Landscape Architecture and City Planning"²² based on an integrated system of green areas in anticipation of the construction of 32 kilometers of parkways.

In 1920 Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. decided to publish the writings of the career of his father to mark the centenary of his birth and Theodora Kimball was the co-author. The influence of Central Park in City Parks projects of American cities, justified for the separate editors work on a second volume, whose publication was delayed until 1928. A. J. Downing, real ideologist and promoter of a New York park, friend and stimulus for Olmsted Sr., was his introducer to park in New York and Calvert Vaux, co-author of their proposal Greensward, winner of the contest for the implementation of the Central Park in 1857. Olmsted and Downing had different ideas about landscape architecture: "It is very striking to note the contrast between the method of discussing landscape problems, and Downing priori, doctrinaire, and the usual method of Mr. Olmsted's habitual method, which was frankly to envisage the peculiar facts of each situation as an individual problem to be solved on its own merits in its own individual way, and then to test and perhaps correct his conclusions by reasoning back to find principles consistent alike with the facts and artistic intuitions present in this particular case and with other principles and theories accepted by him as sound and true."²³

The monograph *Central Park as a work of art and as a great local enterprise, 1853-1895*, was published with the financial support of the Russell Sage Foundation, which granted a special scholarship to the editors of papers to produce Olmsted "a monograph on Central Park not only dedicated to the design, but the complex story of its conception, design, construction, completely artificial as a great natural area, and the development of its management until the eighties [nineteenth century]. Then the volume will not be dedicated only to the contribution of Olmsted as a designer, but to show it as a collaborative effort for a democratic community."²⁴

Along with Vincent Henry Hubbard, Kimball coauthored the book *An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design*,²⁵ which was for many years a bibliographical reference at the Harvard Landscape School. They left the definition of landscape architecture as the art of land suitability for use and human enjoyment. Landscape architect designs and directs the development of private open spaces and gardens, institutions, public parks, playgrounds and plazas, cemeteries, roads and parkways, communities residential, and the problems of urban and regional planning. This professional field involves different land scales, from the garden of the house to the large nature reserves and land management, leading to consider not only the world of the senses, but also the emotions. Philosophical and aesthetic foundation that supported the work from the fine arts, as can be read in phrases like the following is addressed: "Beauty is pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing," according to the summary of the authors, also contributing positive

²² Kimball, Theodora (1930). H.W. S. Cleveland. An American pioneer in Landscape Architecture and City Panning. *Landscape Architecture*, XX January, 1930, 92-111.

²³ Olmsted, Frederick L., & Kimball, Theodora (1922). *Frederick Law Olmsted, landscape architect, 1822-1903*, vol. 1, New York: G. T. Putnam's Sons, p. 2.

²⁴ Olmsted, Frederick L., & Kimball, Theodora (1928). *Central Park as a work of art and as a great municipal enterprise, 1853-1895*. (p. V.). New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

²⁵ Kimball, Theodora & Hubbard, Henry V. (1917). *An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design*. New York: Macmillan Company.

ethical value that have parks, as its mere existence was capable of promoting moral behavior in the community and this was one of the main arguments to justify its existence. This vision of the landscape however suffered an almost total absence of social context.

Kimball was one of the key figures in the diffusion of the field of knowledge of landscape architecture and of city planning, which started, in the American case, in relation to landscape; demonstrated by her collaboration with Professor James Sturgis Pray (1871-1929) in the program of the first university course on city planning in the United States.

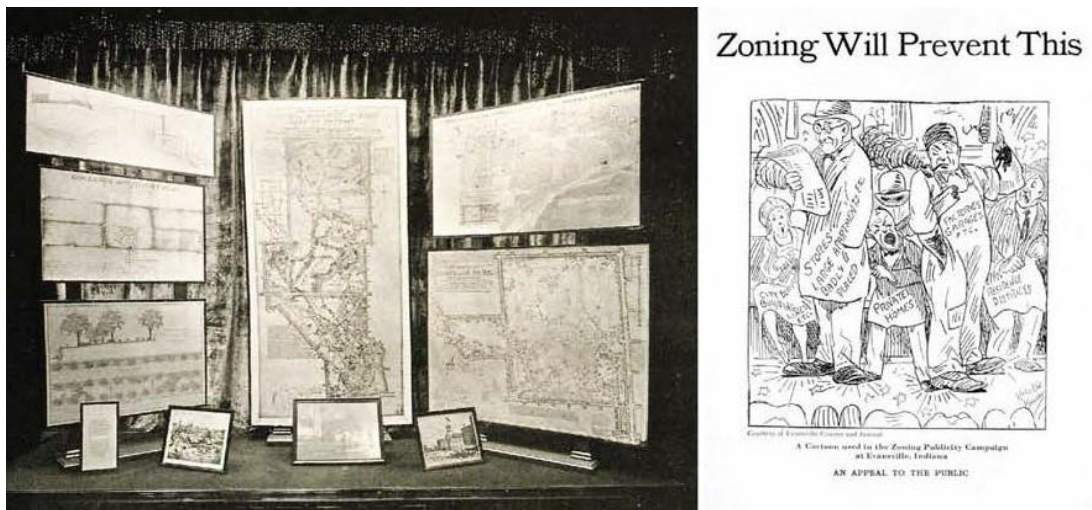


Figure 7. Publicity of city planning proposals and cartoon defending zoning. In Kimball Hubbard, Theodora, and Vincent Hubbard, Henry (1929). *Our cities, to-day and to-morrow; a survey of planning and zoning progress in the United States*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press

In the article "Personality and Human Beings in Town-Planning Work"²⁶, Theodora Kimball expressed her conception of urbanism as an act of communication, in which society and planner interacted. Planner's main task was to interpret what society demands, and to be able to convey, in a spoken or written language, an idea that satisfies what society requires. Facing the debate on the technique in Scientific City, led by George B. Ford, and architectural Civic Art led by the example of the City Beautiful, Kimball moved to the level of social interaction. Society has to be considering an active agent capable of promoting a necessary support initiative and proposal generated by professionals. The objective was to know how to sell the plan —borrowing the business language—, recognizing that "attention is necessary to understand, understand to interest and interest to support, these cities [Pittsburgh and Cleveland] have distributed leaflets and fliers well-calculated to attract, hold and enlist their voters."²⁷ Widespread public interest is the point. The "report" was a document such as a pamphlet or a book, which disseminates information concerning the proposals on urban development of the city. The proposal success depends on the report presentation, its kind of language, the accessibility of their content and appropriateness to the public to which it was intended. The planner was understood in its human dimension and therefore their limitations in their attitudes and aptitudes, but endowed with a necessary creative potential. "What we need is more red blood", Theodora Kimball wrote collecting the expression used in a session of the National Conference on City Planning.

²⁶ Kimball, Theodora (1920). Personality and human beings in town-planning work. *American City*, June (22), 609.

City planning was a communication act, as an exchange of information, and this was for Theodora Kimball the basis for the consolidation of scientific knowledge. She demonstrated this with her efforts to systematize and rationalize the appropriate use of the vocabulary employed in the scientific world and, within it, in urbanism, for both have always been connected throughout their own development as disciplines. In fact, the use of neologisms has allowed naming the urban reality of the modern city, which differs from the historic city, as Professor Ignasi de Solà-Morales in his time pointed out.²⁸

Theodora collaborated with journals such as *Town Planning Review*, *Journal of Town Planning Institute of Canada*, *National Municipal Review*, and *City Planning*. Her bibliographic compilations were a major reference in European forums on the North American approach to municipal matters.

In 1924, several significant events occurred in Theodora Kimball's professional and personal life. After an intense professional and personal relationship, Theodora married her colleague Vincent H. Hubbard, whose personality was described by one of his pupils as "a precise thinker, a clear and forceful writer and speaker, and a skillful delineator. He never produced careless, slovenly, superficial, or dishonest work and had little patience with anyone who did,"²⁹ which brings us close to the personality of Theodora herself. That same year her father passed away, and partly due to her fragile health she resigned from her job as a librarian at the Harvard Landscape Architecture School, leaving it open for her protégé Katherine McNamara.

Mel Scott mentions her role as coauthor with her husband of the work *Our Cities, To-day and To-morrow: A Survey Planning and Zoning Progress in the United States*, about the establishment of zoning—the term substituted "districting", used initially—, in North American cities, and the *Manual of City-Planning*. "Zoning has taken the country by storm"³⁰, wrote Theodora. The origin of twenties American zoning was German. The city regulation divided the land in different areas relating the height of buildings, land use and population densities.

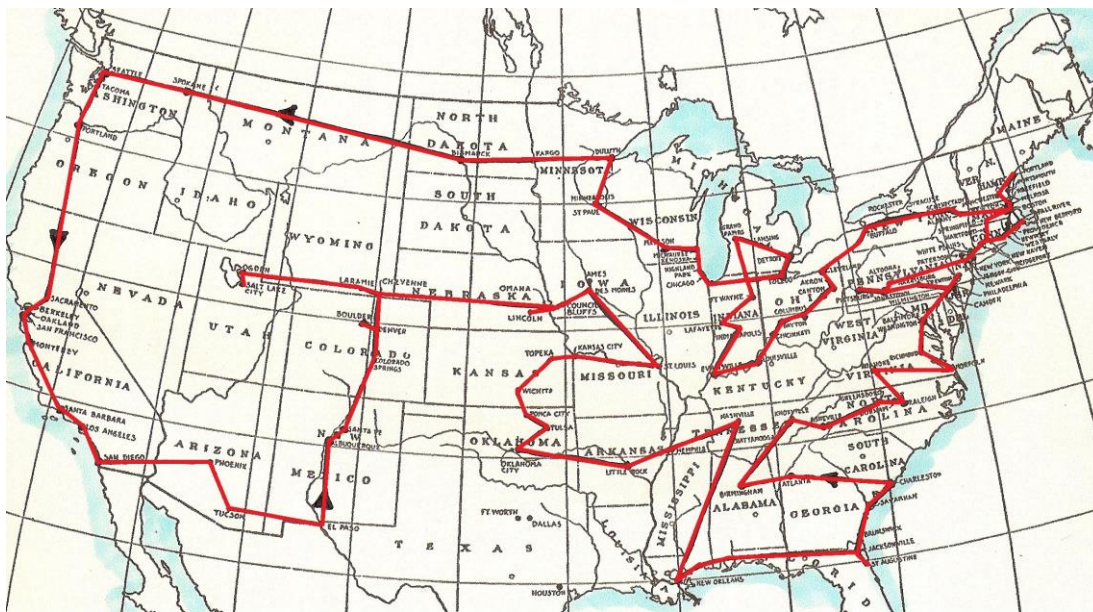


Figure 8. Survey on city planning and zoning: survey routes all over US in order to get information about the cities. In Kimball Hubbard, Theodora and Vincent Hubbard, Henry (1929). *Our cities, to-day and to-morrow; a survey of planning and zoning progress in the United States*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

²⁷ Kimball, Theodora (1922) A review of city planning in the United States, 1920-1921. *Town Planning Review*, 9(4) May, 198.

²⁸ Solà-Morales, Ignasi (2002). *Territorios*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, p. 24.

²⁹ Menhinick, Howard K. (1948). Editor and School Head, *Landscape Architecture*, 2, 53.

The United States surrendered to the zoning, although it was an imposition, a small renunciation of democratic way of life for the common good, making it prevail over private interests. Although the real aim was the maintenance of the real state level, so the promoters of the New York Zoning Resolution (1916) was the powerful Fifth Avenue Association. The relationship between city planning & zoning was not as clearly defined as it might have seemed a priori. Unlike planning, which had a consultative, zoning was endowed with a tax basis based on the "police power", assigned to the States.

For Eugenie L. Birch, the contributions of Theodora Kimball, along with Jane Jacobs, are the most representative intellectual critiques since the non-professional tradition of urbanism.

Edith Elmer Wood (1871-1945) and Slum clearance

Military daughter married to a military man, Edith Elmer Wood was a tireless traveler who lived on a military installation to another, but always called home Cape May Court House, New Jersey. The death of one of her children for contagious disease apparently was triggered interest in improving living conditions in housing and environment. She graduated from the New York School of Social Work in 1917, she was awarded the M.A. degree in Columbia University and earned a doctorate in Political Economics from Columbia University in 1919, where she collaborated with Columbia University teaching lessons on social housing from 1926 to 1937.

From 1917, she decided to become a professional in the field of housing (Scott, 1969). Edith Elmer Wood along with Catherine Bauer³¹ had a significant impact on the formulation of the New Deal housing policy. She put the housing problem in national perspective, and was advisor of the numerous commissions created to US authorities to solve the problem of social housing. She helped define the housing policy, which would have its greatest exponent in the Housing Act of 1949.

In 1937, with the approval of the Wagner-Steagall Act, the US government assumes as its own responsibility in public housing: assuming the construction of quality housing at low cost and the elimination of slums. In the Housing Act 1949, the State declared its intention to provide "a decent and pleasant environmental conditions for each American family home." The new housing policy was dedicated to eradicate slums and promote new community developments that encouraged the establishment of sets of large-scale housing in depressed areas of American cities. The clearest example was the intervention of Robert Moses in New York.

One of the first public interest in housing came to the dismay caused by the work of social photographer Jacob Riis in *How the other half lives*, which led to the creation of the Tenement House Commission, led by Lawrence Veiller, to study the housing situation in New York and later on to the Tenement House Law in 1901. Time after, Wood developed her studies by surveying slums in main American cities, and her first book *The housing of the Unskilled Wage Earner* was published in 1919.

As Birch pointed (Birch, 1978), Wood provided the slums vision not as just a problem of moral order and local, but as an economic problem at governmental level; it was not just a problem of abuse of the promoters, but the system of the industry. The effect of developing National Housings policies a clear consequence: "That large effort to demolish slums and replace them with good low-rental housing just at this time would have the additional effect of providing greatly needed work in the buildings trades, thus meeting another even more urgent national emergency."³²

³⁰ Kimball, Theodora (1922) A review of city planning in the United States, 1920-1921. *Town Planning Review*, 9 (4) May, 203.

³¹ Ongoing research: Catherine Bauer (1905-1964): US and Europe round-trip.

³² Wood, Edith Elmer (1935). *Slums and Blighted Areas in the United States*. Washington: Public Works Administration, 121.



Figure 9. Slum survey: Comparing housing interventions and deteriorated environments all over US. On the left, Jane Addams Housing, showing children playing with stone elephants and water. On the right, a New York slum, by Jacobo Riis. Images from Wood, Edith Elmer (1935). *Slums and Blighted Areas in the United States*, Washington: Public Works Administration

It is well catered to the demands, since 1914, had been formulating the strong and heterogeneous movement of social housing reformers that brought together social workers, philanthropists, economists, lawyers, etc. University was the research point. She convinced the American Association of University Women in Washington to form a committee to study the problem of housing. The first was to develop a nation-wide network of city based supported, and in 1921 there were fifty-two local groups of university women (Birch, 1978). Because of this work, she was invited to join to the Regional Planning Association of America, founded in 1923, invited were in where she met Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, Lewis Mumford and Clarence Perry, among others, and collaborated on experiments as the garden-city Radburn, New Jersey, the prototype of neighborhood unit proposal, in 1929.

Besides the survey, the statistic and projection methods, were the tools used by Edith Elmer Wood to understand the dimension of the problem of housing. The survey of the *Regional Plan of New York and its environs*, advanced the population projection methods as a necessary tool for planners, although in that case was not applied about the social housing (Johnson, 1996).

Wood introduced clear ideas about how to achieve the problem: She established three variables for social housing based on the density in the housing occupancy, proposing an individual room, the proportion of expenditure on housing, estimated at 20 percent of income, and accessibility provisions. The overall vision of the situation of social housing generated a proposal based on thirds, according to which the construction of social housing by the authorities should be a third of the total, aid to finance the purchase of housing should be one-third, leaving the remaining third as free housing. There is a relation between housing and planning, and the scales of housing intervention must be: neighborhood, considering services, city and region —“Cities are not immortal”—, State and Nation.

Slums and Blighted Areas in the United States finishes defending the “transplantation of families”: “And, finally, evidence is adduced that the nations which have had experience in slum clearance have found that families transplanted from slums to modern housing, have shown satisfactory improvement in around 90 percent of cases.” If the base was considering social housing as an economic or industrial process, the sensibility dimension was a little bit hidden, because there were another problem to solve: Either democracy will destroy the slums or the slums will destroy the democracy, Wood wrote.

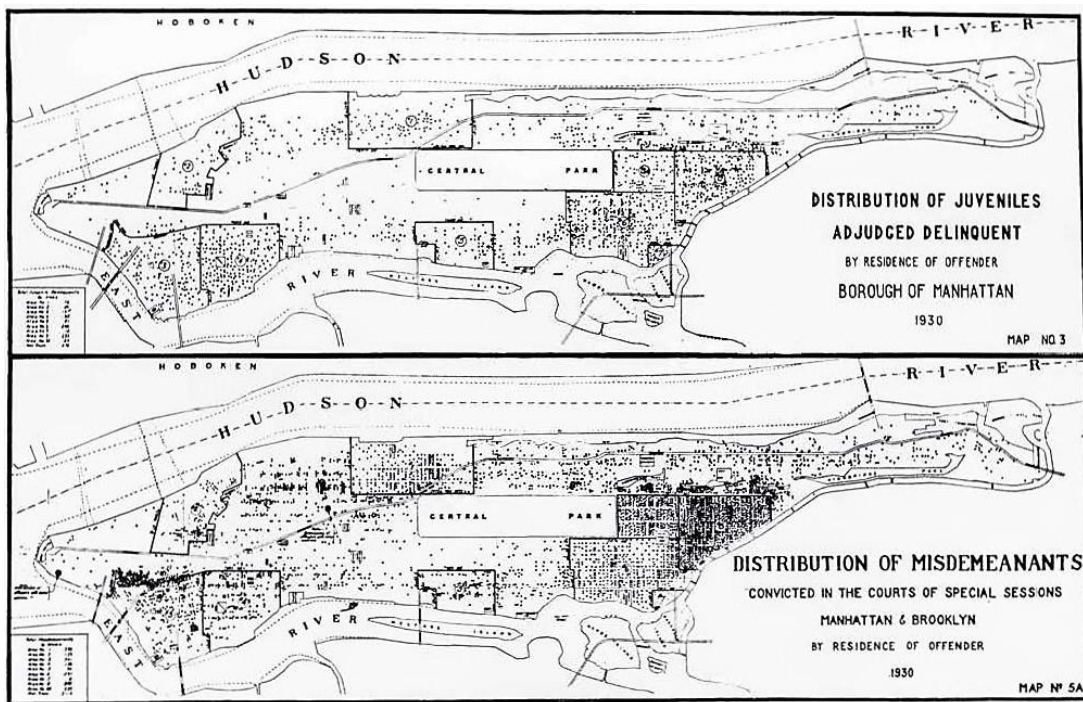


Figure 10. Slum survey: Relation between urban space and delinquents, in this case Manhattan, New York. In Wood, Edith Elmer (1935). *Slums and Blighted Areas in the United States*. Washington: Public Works Administration

Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) and *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

In New York, the powerful figure of Robert Moses (1881-1981) knew how to take advantage of the opportunities that the development of transport technology offered towards the functioning of large cities. Moses was responsible for the construction of large communication infrastructures, large housing projects and public recreational facilities, such as parks and swimming pools, and pursued an aggressive urban renewal policy with the construction of new large-scale housing compounds in the depressed areas of the city.

With the Housing Act 1949, the State declared its intention to provide "a decent home and a pleasant environment for every American family". The aims of the new housing policy was to eradicate slums and substandard housing, and promote community development and new development programs, encouraging the introduction of new sets of large-scale housing in rundown areas of New York but also in recoverable and consolidated neighborhoods.

From one of the New York City neighborhoods, Greenwich Village, emerged what Mel Scott defined as "popular howl"; that managed to recollect and convey the feelings of many people who disapproved of the brutal new development processes within the consolidated urban neighborhoods. The clearest manifestation was the publication of the book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961. Peter Hall has remarked that this book is one of the most influential in the history of 20th-century urbanism (Hall, 1997). Written by Jane Butzer Jacobs (Scranton, Pennsylvania, 1916-Toronto, 2006) in a brisk language more proper of journalism, in which she had initiated herself in writing, it gives the point of view of someone who has based her story upon her own personal experience.

Jacobs inherited her vital attitude from her father, whom she described as “intellectually very curious, bright and independent. In some ways he was like a detective.” Thanks to him, she and her siblings perceived their surrounding reality as a “mosaic of stories.”³³ A romance with the architect Robert Jacobs gave her the family stability necessary for New York and later for Toronto, where they fled on account of the Vietnam War.

She attended the first Urban Design Conference held at Harvard University in 1956 and her communication was *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Josep Lluís Sert, dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Design since 1953, claimed that urban design becomes a new field of knowledge, based on the responsibilities of architects, landscape architects and city planners. Urban design should be a synthesis of these three professional fields. Lewis Mumford, Edmund Bacon and a representing of Team 10 were attendees of the conference, among others. This was a professional environment where professionals used very similar language, so the presence of Jacobs, in the words of Mumford “was like a breath of fresh air”.

Jacobs focused her vision of the street as a meeting place for the construction of the city upon a social basis conceived as the sum of different individual experiences, supported by personal interaction and bound to a specific location, which would give it its own identity. In the words of Eugene Birch, “it defined the essence of life in the city as a human interaction in the random, haphazard physically but socially viable small-scale heterogeneous neighborhood.” The expulsion of the population settled in neighborhoods went from being considered a mere consequence derived from the solution of the larger problem, i.e., that of housing, to a social drama that turned into a Gordian knot of the problems suffered by the city.



Figure 11. Jane Jacobs biking by Greenwich Village (1963); and Riverton Houses, 1,200 apartment units in the Harlem neighborhood built in 1948, from Abraham Lincoln Park (1949)

Mumford was amazed by the Jacobs' observation ability, which was not limited to the perceptual appearance but to reaching to the emotional aspect, he agreed with his way of approaching the urban reality. Jacobs explained in simple language how many planners and management were indifferent to the fact that "a neighborhood is not just a set of buildings, but a social network of relationships and a haven

³³ Wachtel, Eleanor (2003). *Conversations with CBC's Eleanor Wachtel*. Toronto: Harper Collins.

of warm personal feelings associated with familiar faces such as a doctor, a priest or a butcher. No less than the idea of home they were holding in common the fact that Mumford was one of the most persistent critics of the work of Robert Moses in New York:

“Ever since 1949, when the national Housing Act was passed, the cities of this country have been assaulted by a series of vast federally aided building operations. These large-scale operations have brought only small-scale benefits to our city. The people who gain by the government’s handouts are not the displaced slum dwellers but the new investors and occupants.”³⁴

The editor of *Fortune* magazine since the mid-forties, the *urbanologist*, Hollyngsworth William Whyte (1917-1999), had in mind publishing a collection of essays written by people who enjoy and live in the city from the point of view of the citizen, not from professional planners, politicians or businessmen who were in town for the purpose of its scope profession. Whyte, was a bestselling author whose prestige had been given for his work *The Organisation Man*, published in 1956. This book was a fierce critique of American conformist attitude.

In 1958, *Fortune* featured an essay to participate in a publication on urban centers, object of interest since the birth of urban renewal which peaked after World War II. Whyte had read the Jane Jacobs communication at Harvard and offered to include it in the collection. Jacobs published the article titled "Downtown Is for the People"³⁵, where she wrote: “If tomorrow’s downtown is similar to most of the redevelopment projects foreseen for today, it will end up being a monumental hole. But the downtown could be habitable and exciting, and it is not too difficult to figure out how.”³⁶

In 1958 an Urban Design Rockefeller grant allowed Jacobs to develop research work based on her article. Random House published the research as *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, title of the Harvard conference in 1961. The success of her book was due to a large extent to the precise time in which her message was delivered, when urban renewal experiences were failing, as was its catalyzing-value, along with other social tendencies of the civic movement, that were demanding an active role in the issues of the city, confronting the obsolete official mechanisms of production and management.

The Death and Life of Great American Cities is a plea for hope in a resurrectional sense: Life after Death. The book was dedicated to the city of New York and her family. New York was definitely a unique city and the family was a social structure, an order within chaos. This is the tone in which the work is based on. Another significant aspect is the absence of illustrations in the text. This absence is justified on the grounds of interaction, because the reader will be able to insert the perceptual images that evoke the text choosing among those forming the visual archive of personal experience.

"Mother's Jacobs home remedies"³⁷, Lewis Mumford article from the "Sky Line" column he wrote for the magazine *The New Yorker*, is one of the most interesting critics to the book. It is curious how Mumford resorted to female stereotypes, the housewife and mother. The mother Jacobs, is an allusion to the lack of professional training of Jacobs and the mistake about the scale of the city problem. Sarcastic is a caricature showing the article in which a lady opens the door to a woman, Jacobs, wrapped in fur above a gentleman with a pipe and hat, her husband, and says, "So this is the woman behind the man!"

³⁴ Mumford, Lewis (1962). Mother Jacobs’ Home Remedies. *The New Yorker*, 1, 148.

³⁵ The collection of texts is called *The Exploding Metropolis* (Doubleday, 1958) and featured William H. Whyte, Jane Jacobs, Francis Bello, Seymour Freedgood, and Daniel Seligman.

³⁶ Jacobs, Jane (1958). Downtown is for People. *Fortune Classic*, April.

³⁷ Mumford, Lewis, Mother’s Jacobs home remedies (1962). *The New Yorker*, December, 148.

THE SKY LINE

Mother Jacobs' Home Remedies

EVER since 1949, when the national Housing Act was passed, the cities of this country have been assaulted by a series of vast federally aided building operations. These large-scale operations have brought only small-scale benefits to our city. The people who gain by the government's handouts are not the displaced slum dwellers but the new investors and occupants. In the name of slum clearance, many quarters of Greater New York that would still have been decently habitable with modest expenditures of capital have been razed, and their inhabitants, along with the shopkeepers and tavern keepers who served them, have been booted out, to resettle in even squalid quarters. Even in municipal projects designed to relieve the displaced slum dwellers or people of equivalent low income, the physical improvements have been only partial and the social conditions of the inhabitants have been worsened through further social stratification—segregation, actual-

ly—of people by their income levels. The standard form of housing favored by the federal government and big-city administrators is high-rise slabs—bleak structures of ten to twenty stories. Superficially, these new buildings are an immense improvement over both the foul Old Law tenements of New York and the New Law (1901) tenements that covered the nover sections of the Bronx and the upper West Side up to 1930. The latest model buildings are only two rooms deep; all the flats have outside exposure; the structures are widely spaced around small play areas and patches of fenced grass spotted with benches. Not merely are the buildings open to the sun and air on all sides but they are as bug-proof and vermin-proof as concrete floors and brick walls can make them; they have steam heat, hot and cold water, standard bathroom equipment, and practically everything a well-to-do family could demand except large rooms and doors for their closets; the absence of

the latter is an idiotic economy achieved at the expense of the tenants, who must provide curtains.

These buildings, with all their palpable hygienic virtues, are the response to a whole century of investigation of the conditions of housing among the lower-income groups in the big cities, particularly New York. Shortly after 1835, when the first slum treatment deliberately designed for congestion was built, on Cherry Street, the Health Commissioners of New York noted the appallingly high incidence of infant mortality and infectious diseases among the poor, and he correlated this with overcrowding of rooms, overcrowding of building plots, poor ventilation, lack of running water and indoor toilet facilities. For a large part of the nineteenth century, in all big cities, housing conditions worsened, even for the upper classes, despite the common boast that this was "the Century of Progress." It was only because of a tremendous effort by physicians, sanitarians, housing reformers, and architects that legislation established minimum standards for light, air, construction soundness, and human decency.

Unfortunately, it turned out that better housing was more expensive housing, and at the rents the lower-income groups could afford no landlord could be tempted to invest. The most profitable rentals came from congested slum housing. So pressing were the economic and sanitary problems in urban housing that when finally government aid on a large scale was secured, the dominant concept of good lower-income housing was naturally centered on physical improvements. Our current high-rise housing projects find their sanction in the need to wipe out more than a century of vile housing and provide space for people who have been living in slums holding three hundred to seven hundred people an acre. On sound hygienic terms, the one way of meeting this demand within the limited areas possible is the erection of tall buildings, whose grim walls all overcrowding everlastingly sections of Manhattan. There is nothing wrong with the buildings except that, humanly speaking, they stink. What is worse, after a few years



"So this is the woman behind the man?"

Figure 12. Jacobs caricature in Mumford article Mother's Jacobs home remedies, *The New Yorker* (1962)

The horrified attitude that Jacobs illustrated with bulldozers razing neighborhoods in the city, for Mumford is the same as she applied when she demolished all urban renewal efforts that had been developing in the professional planning. There was not a hint of critical content in Jacobs exposure to all these works, with errors in their results, but also successes that were worth being considered. Having agreed that the scale of interventions should begin in the neighborhood, they had to reach the region. He criticizes the overly simplistic attitude Jacobs has to understand that the only purpose of urbanism is to provide security to the streets, which would greatly reduce urban problems.

For Françoise Choay, the figure of Jane Jacobs remains concisely defined in her brilliant and emotional praise of the street of the big city, and more specifically, of the sidewalk. Her critique was valid and effective, but few were the Americans that could afford to live in neighborhoods such as hers.

Considering social activism to be a vital necessity, Jane Jacobs led the civil protests against Moses' Lower Manhattan Expressway, LOMEX, project, which included the layout of a highway running through Greenwich Village. The media transmitted it as a battle of David against Goliath. The project by Moses, presented in 1962, was born wrapped in controversy, but was not a new one. In the 20s, Nelson P. Lewis proposed an elevated cross-way connection on Canal Street between Holland Tunnel and the Manhattan Bridge, providing a direct link between New Jersey and Brooklyn. The LOMEX project was finally removed in 1968. David had won.

In either case, the legend of Jane Jacobs in the urban studies on gentrification keeps gaining strength. Texts such as this, result of a child murder, reaffirm the figure:

"Forty five hundred people live in the nine brick towers that make up the Grant Houses. The Manhattanville Houses, with six buildings are the home of three thousand people. (...) The projects are more than fifty years

old and in severe disrepair. (...) Most of the city's three hundred and twenty-eight housing projects are in poor condition. (...) For decades, the Grant and Manhattanville Houses had been embroiled in a feud. As in other projects, some young people joined "crews." The Grant crew called itself 3 Staccs; Manhattanville's was the Make It Happen Boys. The crews were not affiliated with established gangs, like the Bloods or the Crips, and their disputes were not about drugs or money. Rather, they fought over turf and status. Often, the conflicts seemed to be fuelled by little more than boredom."³⁸

Conclusion: Site-Time Life Question

Nowadays, when the new urban dynamics are being questioned down to their most essential concepts, to reinterpret the questions, attitudes and responses introduced in these five stories of the past may give us guidelines to comprehend and focus on different aspects of the complex urban reality. These aspects are closer to us than it seems. They are stories woven by women who were more or less outside the official history of the city in the 20th century. All of them worked unconstrained stimulated towards the wellbeing of the society in which they lived, and of which, in some sense, they felt responsible for. Also confirms that behind each great woman, or great man, there is a competent urban network.

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³⁸ Gonnerman, J. (2005). A daughter's death. *New Yorker*, October, 52-63.

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