

Civic Sociology

The Chicago School and City Planning

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While sociology and urban planning might seem respectively to represent the theory and the practice of knowledge about cities, their relation has usually been distant. British sociology and urban planning were closely related before 1914, but largely because sociology was not a bounded specialty: community investigation methods were common throughout the British reform world, finding particular and successful application via city planning's focus on housing and industrial location. In the United States, by contrast, sociology early became a clearly-defined academic discipline, and sociological empirical methods, although widely shared, supported only generalized reform demands, because local planning of housing and industry was politically impossible outside industrial communities. Most prewar city planning aimed at middle-class and aesthetic values rather than socially ameliorative community design. Between the wars, British academic sociology continued to develop slowly, and community sociological investigation fell largely to the rapidly developing profession of city planning, whose success and power culminated in the masterful plans for postwar London. In the United States, by contrast, sociology rapidly evolved towards national survey analysis, distancing itself even further from practical application in city planning. In general, then, the theory and practice of knowledge about cities remained separate in the first half of the twentieth century in Britain and the United States.

The Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago made much of its early reputation on the use of social mapping and other techniques. These "survey" techniques had originally come from the American social survey movement of the period 1890–1920, which had in turn gotten them from Charles Booth in Britain. But the geographical side of American sociology receded quickly under the onslaught of national-level survey methods in the 1930s. In those years, as the United States was becoming an explicitly national society, many argued that location in space no longer mattered. The only things that mattered were attitudes and life courses. Rapid mobility would undercut the effects of place.

But the divorce of sociology and geography in the United States had actually begun well before the 1930s. And it was a divorce not only between sociology and geography but also between sociology and the idea of planning, and in particular of urban planning. In retrospect, it seems very puzzling that the relations between sociology and the planning of cities should be so distant. Early American sociologists were almost always involved in progressive reform, and Chicago sociology in particular was a leader in reformism. And progressive reformism often touched on the very design of cities. Yet it seems clear that sociology and urban planning have been divided in the United States from almost the beginning of the twentieth century.

It is this relation between sociology and urban planning that I explore in the present article. By the end of the Second World War, urban sociology was a mature field, as was urban planning. Yet there was, in fact, almost no relation between the two. If we look at a great planning document like Patrick Abercrombie's *Plan for Greater London 1944* and compare it with Louis Wirth's contemporaneous (1938) article on "Urbanism as a Way of Life," we find that they both concern the dynamics and nature of cities, and it is clear that Abercrombie and Wirth could have had long and

productive conversations. Yet in some ways they seem worlds apart. One document gave definitive shape to one of the largest metropolitan regions in the world, while the other remains at the center of an abstract discourse about large cities.

The question, therefore, is why American sociology—and the Chicago School in particular—came to have such a weak relationship to urban planning. That the divergence is already present by 1945 pushes us back to the first forty years of the twentieth century, and to the evolution of urban studies within the Chicago School and of planning within the broad tradition of urban affairs in the United States. Yet as the Abercrombie/Wirth example suggests, the divergence may also reflect international differences. Indeed, the history of urban planning in the United States is almost inseparable from the evolution of urban planning in Britain. So I shall look at both cases. As we shall see, there are connections and disjunctures on both sides, in both professions.

It makes the most sense to consider the relation of sociology and planning in two basic periods: up through the First World War and then from the First World War to the Second. In both Britain and America, I shall start from a description of the empirical relation of sociology and planning in each period. Immersion in the cases will guide us to a more general theory of why planning and sociology came to be so distant in the United States, while being somewhat closer in the United Kingdom.

I. THE PREWAR PERIOD

A. BRITAIN

I begin with the case of Britain in the period before World War I. In Britain as in America, urban sociology began within the reform tradition.¹ Britain had long had an interest in social statistics, and a renewed statistical movement had

waxed and waned in the early nineteenth century. In the 1850s, Henry Mayhew had published a long series of case studies of poor Londoners in the popular press, and then in the 1880s, industrialist Charles Booth undertook his immensely detailed surveys of the London population, using mapping techniques that were immediately taken up by reformers elsewhere in Britain and abroad. Seebohm Rowntree repeated the Booth approach (somewhat more carefully) in York in the late 1890s. The British reform community—particularly the Fabian Society, which brought together the middle- and upper-middle-class left—trumpeted Booth's findings, and Parliament passed Acts for the Housing of the Working Classes in 1885 and 1890. By 1903 the Sociological Society was founded. It brought together historians, planners, clergymen, biologists, geographers, and others, however, and hence was not really analogous to the American Sociological Society, which was founded shortly thereafter.²

Despite this promising beginning, academic sociology in Britain did not flourish like academic sociology in the United States, nor did it retain its early strong connection with the reform community. L. T. Hobhouse was the first professor of sociology in Britain (at the London School of Economics) and focused mainly on general issues of liberalism and citizenship. By contrast, empirical work on cities began with Victor Branford, who had acted as a sociological researcher in concert with the great urban planner Patrick Geddes. But Branford's work never led to academic consequences, although it started a research tradition in Geddesian planning that persisted for more than half a century. At the same time, Branford was a dominant figure in the Sociological Society.

Because of the accident that Hobhouse became the first British professor of sociology, then, the reformist tradition increasingly separated from “academic” sociology per se in Britain, becoming concentrated instead in the Fabian Society and resting its empirical side more on the general and historical work of Sidney and Beatrice Webb rather than on the detailed urban analysis that had started so effectively with Booth, Rowntree, and Branford. It is possible, too, that detailed urban analysis became less central to both sociology and reform in Britain because of reform's relatively early success in achieving parliamentary regulation of working-class housing.

But the early nonacademic, “sociological” work of Booth, Rowntree, and Branford had an intimate relation to British city planning. City planning in Britain represented a concretization of an interest in working-class improvement that went back to the midcentury social novels of writers like Dickens, Disraeli, and Gaskell and that had itself driven the sociological work of Booth and other early urban reformers. There were two great strands of British city planning. The first of these stemmed from the visionary bi-

ologist-turned-planner Patrick Geddes. Geddes had drawn many of his ideas from the French geographical tradition and from the early French sociologist Frédéric LePlay. Following the French geographers, he viewed the city mainly as part of a larger region and indeed saw larger geographic forces as crucial. But following LePlay, he also saw society in terms of the general relation of “place, work, and folk” and committed himself to close, micro analysis. Geddes himself was a polymath and a prophet, a maker of abstractions. But his collaborator Branford provided much detailed sociological work. The result for planning was the derivation of local and midlevel structures and plans from a large-scale vision reaching well beyond the city itself, but combined with quite intense local investigation in particular places.³

The other major tradition in British city planning was, of course, the Garden City movement, launched by Ebenezer Howard in the book *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902). This, too, was a work of social utopianism, for Howard envisioned a self-funded community mixing the virtues of town and country, sustaining differentiated employment, possessing safe and dispersed housing, and governed by a self-funded administration that would plow its modest rents back into social services and continuous improvements. Unlike most such visions, Howard's dreams became realities. Although Letchworth (1903), Hampstead Garden Suburb (1907), and Welwyn (1920) were not full realizations of the Howard vision, they were carefully designed multiuse communities with many thousands of housing units, generally aimed at a mixture of social classes. Howard's success reflected the fact that many of the early planners were themselves politically radical. For example, Howard's apostle Raymond Unwin was a socialist anarchist early in life, having heard the lectures of Kropotkin during his years in training.⁴

Thus in Britain the city planning movement's practical early successes involved creation of communities of residences in carefully sculpted “garden” landscapes (every house with its own garden, in fact), in two cases completed by full-scale industrial and commercial layouts. The focus was on housing, however, which by 1895 not only had achieved recognition as a parliamentary priority but also had become the object of a considerable amount of local administrative authority. It is true that shortly after the First World War, there would be an era of relatively unplanned, railroad-based suburbanization that would be caricatured by cartoonist Osbert Lancaster as “by-pass variegated.” But still, by the First World War, British city planning had some major successes, entailing quite substantial new towns. Planners had established a collaboration with local authorities that defined planning as “the art of the possible,” and they had drifted free of any original impetus they had gotten from early reformist sociology, whose methods they had in any case ingested via the Geddesian tradition. They retained ideas and passions from Booth and

1 This paper began as a lecture to the planning department of the Università IUAV de Venezia on November 23, 2015, arranged by Brigida Proto. It has appeared in Italian translation as one of the chapters of my book *Lezioni italiane*, translated by Vincenzo Romania, for whose work with the paper I am very grateful. The present slightly revised version is its first appearance in English.

2 Basic sources on the history of British sociology are Abrams (1968); Kent (1981); Halsey (2004); and J. Scott and Bromley (2013). The American Sociological Association, founded in 1905, also had many nonacademic members in its first two decades, but it had a core of academics that the Sociological Society did not.

3 My major sources on the history of British city planning have been Hall (1996) and J. Scott and Bromley (2013). Because of the close relations of city planning and sociology in Britain, sources on British sociology tend also to cover the Geddes-Branford line of city planning as well.

4 Unwin is usually considered the most important figure in British city planning after Patrick Geddes and Ebenezer Howard. A biographical study is Miller (1992).

Rowntree, but there was no direct connection to those men's heirs in sociology.⁵

Thus the relation between city planning and sociology in Britain was relatively close at the start, but more distant by the First World War. As noted earlier, some planners came from politically radical backgrounds, but planning's main links were with the Arts and Crafts movement, the Fabian Society, and related zones of mainstream intellectual ferment. Nonetheless, the planners made free use of social science data produced by the various inheritors of Booth; so they were "sociological" in a nondisciplinary sense.

As I have noted, this happened in part because sociology itself did not really emerge as a cohesive and independent institutional structure in Britain. Social inquiry in Britain was institutionally scattered. The Fabian Society was a group of relatively well-heeled socialists who turned to social investigation to support their political positions. The Sociological Society gathered the followers of Geddes and his theories. The sociology professors in London (Westmarck and Hobhouse) were generalists rather than urban investigators. The more general reform community, like that in the United States, contained a wide variety of people, including a strong clergy contingent, but was not moving toward intellectual coherence. Thus, sociology itself had no real center in Britain.

To some extent, the easy exchanges between city planning and sociology in Britain before 1914 therefore probably reflect the undifferentiated state of social inquiry more than they do a conscious collaboration of two separate groups. That said, however, there was, as noted earlier, one central result of these easy exchanges: various forces had guaranteed that the housing of the lower classes was at the center of the planning process in Britain, both before and after 1914. This provided a marked contrast with the American case.

B. AMERICA

In contrast to British sociology, American academic sociology was relatively institutionalized by 1920. Both the University of Chicago and Columbia University had multiprofessor departments of sociology with numerous PhD students. The *American Journal of Sociology (AJS)* had been in existence since 1895, and the American Sociological Association since 1905. There were numerous professorships in sociology scattered across the country. To be sure, the relation of sociology to the reform movement remained very close. But American sociology was big enough to contain generalist followers of Spencer like William Graham Sumner without losing its large contingent of locally based reformist social investigators. The reformist contingent was particularly strong at the University of Chicago, which ran its own settlement house in addition to collaborating extensively with the older and more famous Hull House.⁶

In the years before 1914, the Chicago sociology depart-

ment had three dominant faculty: Albion Small, Charles Henderson, and W. I. Thomas. Of these, Small was in today's terms a historical sociologist and theorist. Thomas focused on what would now be seen as anthropology—the enormous variety of human populations and cultures—and would give that interest empirical form in the late 1910s in his five-volume work *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. However, Thomas's interest in Polish immigrants was mainly in the social-psychological experience of moving from the Polish countryside to the Polish city, and then from the Polish city to the American metropolis. That is, Thomas focused on personal and corporate identity, and, since the immigrants were highly mobile once they came to the United States, he was less interested in neighborhoods or city structure than in social institutions like churches and associations that tied the migrants into American society more generally. Charles Henderson, by contrast, did concern himself more closely with the reform agenda, but as it happened, neighborhoods, housing, and planning were not his major issues. He focused on infant care and other forms of welfare provision, on prisons, on labor legislation, and more broadly on the organization and rationalization of charities. That is, his interests were mainly in organizations rather than in the built environment or the city as a physical structure.

All of these men, however, were closely involved with Hull House and other institutions of the Protestant reform community in Chicago. And Hull House *did* interest itself in housing issues. Jane Addams had published an article on housing in 1901, and Hull House activists Edith Abbott and Sophonisba Breckinridge—who taught at the University of Chicago and who would later found its school of social work—supervised (and helped conduct) a ten-part analysis of Chicago's housing problems that was published in 1910–15. These housing reports are astounding in their granular detail. For example, we find out the exact number of residents of the "Back of the Yards" neighborhood who do not have the four hundred cubic feet of air in their sleeping rooms that is required by the Chicago tenement house law.⁷

But the Breckinridge/Abbott reports are focused mainly on family disorganization and sanitation issues, as those were seen from the point of view of middle-class reformers. The investigators were, at best, only vaguely aware that many of the hundreds of immigrants whom they interviewed had lived in even smaller quarters as peasants in Ireland, Italy, or Eastern Europe, quarters that were typically shared not only by many people but also by cattle, pigs, and other farm animals. And the reformers became uneasily aware during their investigation that the seemingly gouging landlords who were the normal villains of the tenement house story were, in fact, usually coethnics who themselves had arrived only a few years before but who, after deliberately enduring great pains and hardships, had saved small amounts to buy or rent derelict houses, squeezing them-

5 The Lancaster story is told in several places. See Hall (1996, 77–85).

6 There is no general history of American sociology as a discipline. My *Department and Discipline* (1999) gives summaries by period as part of its history of the *AJS*, but these are short. Turner and Turner (1990) covers many issues but is more theoretically driven. See also Banister (1987) and Platt (1996). The following paragraph draws on my own research and particularly on A. Abbott and Egloff (2008) and A. Abbott (2010).

7 The original Abbott/Breckinridge studies appeared in the *AJS*, as noted. Edith Abbott later published a general volume on housing in Chicago (E. Abbott 1936).

selves and their entire families into tiny attics or basement rooms in order to maximize the rent potential of the rest of the house. That is, unlike the housing problem in Britain, housing issues in America were magnified by the massive cultural and social differences between the immigrants and the natives, and by the unforeseen adaptations that led immigrants deliberately to choose living in seemingly horrifying housing conditions as a strategy in the American game of getting ahead.

But although Breckinridge and Abbott portrayed this housing problem with considerable clarity, nowhere in their very careful studies was there any sense that the government of the city, the state, or the nation might have any role in actually designing or providing housing. There was only the belief that these governments could and should regulate such housing as was created. Nor was it thought that the industrial firms whose agents were scouring Europe for workers should bear any costs of housing those who came in the millions to work in America, even though company towns were, in fact, the most common planned US communities and even though Chicago had—in the Pullman community—what was arguably the most famous planned community in the nation.⁸

All of this Chicago work on housing reform, of course, drew on Booth's studies of London and on Rowntree's study of York in the late 1890s. It was sociological in that sense. And urban planning and more particularly housing were thus issues of concern for the leaders of Chicago sociology. But the Chicago School in the Albion Small era was interested in urban planning mainly because they were reformers, not because they focused on planning intellectually. Even for the reformer-professor Charles Henderson, housing was not a central intellectual matter.

There was thus relatively little interest in planning from the sociologists' side, at least if we understand planning to mean the attention to housing and industrial location that dominated the English planning scene. Moreover, as for the planners themselves, they were only partly worried about the social problems that so much concerned the American sociologists. Rather, American city planning of this period aimed to create a "City Beautiful." Such planning did not stem from the heritage of LePlay and the French geographers but rather from the ideals of Frederick Law Olmsted—traveler, social commentator, landscape architect, and planner. Olmsted is known chiefly for his parks (Prospect and Central Parks in New York, the South Parks in Chicago, the "Emerald Necklace" of parks in Boston) but was also responsible for one of the earliest planned railroad suburbs, Riverside, Illinois (1869). As others read Olmsted, they began to think that his underlying concept was that a city of beauty would create a culture of harmony. The ideals of that

culture were generally middle class, and the City Beautiful movement turned increasingly toward the grandiose.⁹

The City Beautiful movement proper is often said to have begun in Daniel Burnham's conception (aided by Olmsted) for the Great White City that housed the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago. Burnham's World's Fair plan was despised by many of his brother Chicago architects both because of its revivalist pretensions and because Burnham allowed East Coast architects to dominate the fair's design committee. As a result, the White City ignored the commercial multiuse architecture with which Chicagoans—even in Burnham's own firm—were then astounding the world: on the one hand, buildings of steel-frame construction with glass walls and spectacular new decoration like the Reliance, Gage, and Second Leiter Buildings; on the other hand, multipurpose fantasies in masonry like the Auditorium, Rookery, and Marquette Buildings.

Moreover, if the White City was thus a rejection of the actual practice of Burnham's contemporaries in Chicago, even more was it the reverse of both the Geddes city, embedded in its region, and Howard's Garden City, with its multiuse communities.¹⁰ The White City was monumental, retrospective, European, and self-consciously distinct from its social setting and social uses. But it was exquisitely beautiful—for a nostalgic and grandiose kind of taste—and it ignited an enthusiasm for grand gestures in which a beautiful city would somehow redeem the social woes of America. In planning itself, the best exemplar of this grand gesture was Burnham's own Chicago Plan, published in 1909. Parts of the Burnham Plan were realized: chiefly the reclaiming of the lakeshore as parkland (rather than railroad yard), the creation of a multilevel road system in which major transportation could be kept on roads below grade, and a few streets that were widened and straightened as major thoroughfares. And certainly the concept of the city as the physical (if not functional) focus of its region was achieved as well.¹¹

The City Beautiful movement thus had its prophet in Burnham. And while the housing issue had not provided any single individual who linked American sociology and planning, the City Beautiful movement did, by contrast, provide such an individual, and he was an unknown Chicago sociologist—Charles Zueblin. Since he taught mainly in the extension school and never wrote much formal sociology, Zueblin is seldom mentioned in histories of the Chicago School. But, in fact, he was the Chicago faculty member who wrote the most about cities before the First World War. And he became a major force in planning.¹²

Zueblin had studied at the University of Pennsylvania, Northwestern, Yale, and Leipzig, returning to Chicago to found the Northwestern University Settlement (1891) and

8 A crucial historical source on the many planned communities in the United States is the first section of the National Resources Committee's Urbanism Committee Report of 1939, an extensive review by Arthur C. Comey and Max S. Wehrly.

9 On the City Beautiful, see Hall (1996, 174–82); Peterson (1983); M. Scott (1969, 47–110).

10 The story of the White City and Chicago architecture has been told many times, usually in the context of architectural polemics. The polemic was ignited by the Chicago architect Louis Sullivan in the closing pages of his autobiography, Sullivan ([1924] 1956, 316–30). See M. Scott (1969, 31–37) for a short version of this debate, which concerns the "organic" nature of architecture and its rootedness in the "reality" of society. Andrews (1964, 220–23) presents the so-called "traditional" (Sullivanian) version of the polemic, hostile to the City Beautiful and its monumental style. Burchard and Bush-Brown (1961, 183–204) present the revisionist view.

11 For discussion of the Burnham Plan, see M. Scott (1969, 100–109, 138–42). (The latter pages discuss implementation.)

12 On Zueblin, see Wright (1906, 186). Egloff (2008) discusses the relation of Zueblin to the White City and Chicago planning more generally.

becoming one of the main sociology instructors in the University of Chicago's extension program from 1894. He lived a considerable time at Hull House and wrote a chapter on "The Ghetto" in *Hull House Maps and Papers*, a justly celebrated collection of sociological surveys. Zueblin was an indefatigable lecturer. (He claimed to have fulfilled 2,500 engagements by 1906.) Indeed, he left the university in 1908 to become a freelance lecturer, based in Boston. By that time, too, he had become a major figure in the City Beautiful movement.

Zueblin wrote the books *American Municipal Progress* (1902, rev. ed. 1916) and *A Decade of Civic Development* (1905), but his lecture series—given hundreds of times—no doubt had bigger impact. Those series included "Contemporary Society," "Art and Life," "Work and Wealth," "The Common Life," and "The Art and Science of City Making," as well as single lectures that show a clear debt to the Arts and Crafts tradition (lectures on various arts topics as well as on William Morris himself). As this list makes clear, Zueblin was intellectually located in what seems to be the set of concerns that had loosely joined planning and sociology in Britain in the prewar period. But there was one exception: he paid no attention to housing whatsoever. This disattention is clear in his remark about the Great White City itself: "For the first time in American history a complete city, equipped with all the public utilities for a temporary population of thousands (on one day over three-quarters of a million) was built as a unit on a single architectural scale" (Zueblin 1905, 60). But of course, the Great White City was not a complete city. It was a complete place to visit for one day, as a suburbanite would visit the downtown of a central metropolis. But in it there were no places to spend the night.

This disattention to housing continues throughout Zueblin's work. Housing makes only one appearance in *American Municipal Development* (1902), a book Zueblin wrote at the time he was president of the brand-new American Civic Improvement Association. Housing appears there in the chapter on sanitation, meriting a scant page (1902, 101) with references to model tenements and lodging houses for the homeless. Three years later, in *A Decade of Civic Development* (a set of lectures given on the Chautauqua Circuit), there are two mentions of housing.¹³ One concerns physical beauty (presumably of middle-class houses, 1905, 46) and the other concerns the New York tenement house problem, which is, quite literally, seen purely as a sanitation problem: "a new standard of health has been established, and those will fare ill who threaten it" (1905, 114). The overwhelming majority of Zueblin's pages concern transportation, water/

sewage, public schools, public libraries, and parks. And as is well known, the City Beautiful movement mainly aimed at a city that was edifying and pleasant but resolutely middle-class: orderly, beautiful, even monumental. But it was not a city of differences and complexities. Only this middle-class city concerns Zueblin and the movement, and Zueblin notes almost without comment the astounding fact that two-thirds of the population of New York lives in tenements (1905, 114).¹⁴

We see then that in the British case, sociology and planning began together in a kind of undifferentiated group of people interested in reform, geography, politics, sociology, Arts and Crafts, and other things. This group had developed a common interest in housing and a set of "sociological" methods for thinking about housing problems. And this link remained in place even though planning matured rapidly and sociology itself never really coalesced. By contrast, although American sociology and city planning came together to some extent in prewar reformism, their common concerns did not include housing. Scholars like W. I. Thomas were focused on the social psychology of immigration and ignored the built environment. While Zueblin cared about the built environment, he did not see housing generally—much less housing for the poor—as a central issue. Even the Hull House investigators saw housing mainly in terms of its departure from middle-class values and despaired of what seemed to be immigrants' participation in their own housing degradation, through exploitation of co-ethnics, expenditure on "nonessentials," and so on.

In comparing the two cases before the First World War, then, one is driven to believe that the difference in linkage between planning and sociology lay in the different natures of the problem of housing. The housing problem in Britain was a class problem. Except in the northwestern manufacturing cities like Manchester and Liverpool, with their legions of Irish immigrants, the working class that needed housing was British. It spoke the same language as the reformers and the architects (as indeed did the Irish, an important difference from most immigration to the United States). And it also shared their traditions and, in many cases, their origin in a British countryside of hedgerows and villages. If the early British empirical sociologists were often industrialists like Booth and Rowntree, the planners were often Arts and Crafts veterans, some of them former anarchists and communards. Their hero Ebenezer Howard put the idea of green space at the heart of his socialist utopia, as his follower Raymond Unwin would do when he created the "superblock" in order to return 20 percent of urban land area from roads to garden and play space. The gar-

13 Chautauqua was the name for both a place (a lakeside in western New York State) and a system of adult education associated with that place. Nineteenth-century America had sustained an extensive "lyceum" system. This was a system of itinerant lecturers, who were scheduled by agencies in major cities and who spoke in the towns and villages of those cities' hinterlands. In the late nineteenth century, there emerged a similar adult education program, but based on summer residence in the towns near Lake Chautauqua in western New York. "Chautauqua" (meaning the summer vacation residential education program) eventually spawned its own itinerant system, called the Chautauqua Circuit, which was a Chautauqua-style lyceum system scheduled at sites around the country. Circuit Chautauqua was an immense system, eventually involving over 1 percent of the American population. Like many middle-class institutions, the University of Chicago had distinct ties to Chautauqua. Not only were Henderson and Small active there, the University's president was active as well. Moreover, G. E. Vincent (W. I. Thomas's peer as junior faculty member in the sociology department) was the son of Chautauqua's founder and a former director of its educational summer program. He eventually became president of the University of Minnesota and of the Rockefeller Foundation. On Chautauqua, see Rieser (2003). On Circuit Chautauqua, see Tapia (1997) and Canning (2005).

14 Perhaps it is not surprising that the problem of immigration and housing was invisible, to be sure. As the Census reveals, approximately three-quarters of the adult population of the major American metropolises was "of foreign stock" in 1900, either having migrated themselves or being the children of migrants. It is not at all surprising that a transformation of this staggering scale overloaded the middle-class imagination.

den concept was part of British common culture: not simply the culture of the middle class but also that of the formerly rural working class.

By contrast, the great immigrant cities of America were peopled by Germans, Poles, Italians, Russians, Jews, Greeks, Bulgarians, Swedes, and so on. The Irish were the only English-speaking migrants in the post-1880 period, and they were ultimately outnumbered by the rest.¹⁵ The vast majority of the adult population of the great immigrant cities was culturally foreign to the society that had just fought a bitter and bloody Civil War. The immigrants came from lands whose peasant agriculture bore no resemblance to American yeoman farming. They could and did live in housing that middle-class Americans would not consider fit for animals. “Reform” in this context meant making the tenement houses a little less horrible; it did not mean complete transformation of urban housing. The dumbbell tenement, which allowed 85 percent of a given city block to be covered by buildings, was actually considered a *reform* in the United States (M. Scott 1969, 6–7). Deconcentration of the cities—the core thrust of Abercrombie’s London plan—was never more than a daydream for American city reformers.

A second crucial difference between the two cases is governmental. One way the immigrants raised themselves socially in America was by using their mass of votes to seize control of city government and to turn its rapidly increasing resources to a very direct kind of immigrant betterment through patronage jobs, sweetheart contracts, and the other forms of urban graft so well known in American politics. In Britain, by contrast, the country’s most problematic city from a housing point of view was also the seat of its powerful national government, which had begun in the 1850s and 1860s a massive housecleaning of national political structures and the civil service. And not only was there relatively little corruption, there was also in Britain no upstate/downstate conflict as there was between Albany and New York, Harrisburg and Philadelphia, Springfield and Chicago. Because of this, in Britain, planning new towns for lower-middle-class residents was both feasible and possible. Moreover, there were early connections between industrialists, sociologists, and planners, which meant that money, ideas, and designs could, in fact, be assembled relatively easily. In the United States, by contrast, city planning had to content itself with tenement house reform and with zoning, which became America’s substitute for effective planning around the time of the First World War.

In summary, in the United Kingdom, the place where planning and sociology came effectively together was the area of housing. And the nature of the housing problem in Britain favored the creation of a strong link between planning and sociology even though the drift of sociology toward national-level topics weakened this collaboration after its strong beginnings. In the United States, by contrast, housing was not really on the agenda of the sociologists, except as a reform topic, and the reformers—bowing to the re-

alities of American cities—did not, in this period, try to take housing reform beyond the realm of model tenement laws and zoning ordinances.

II. THE INTERWAR PERIOD AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A. CITY PLANNING

The relation of the two professions unfolded differently between the wars. In the interwar period, transatlantic continuities in urban planning became more important; city planners in Britain and in America had regular exchanges. Ebenezer Howard had spent substantial time in the United States and had probably seen Riverside, Illinois—the great planning success of the Vaux and Olmsted landscape architecture firm. British planners had been well aware of the “City Beautiful” movement, although they generally disapproved of its disattention to health and commercial development. In the other direction, later American planners like Clarence Stein had carefully studied the work of Howard’s follower Raymond Unwin, whose views of *Town Planning in Practice* (1911) dominated much of local planning even in the United States in the interwar period, and whose concepts of metropolitan development dominated the planning environment in which Patrick Abercrombie designed post-war London. In particular, the Americans studied the garden cities themselves, by this time quite mature in England. The 1920s saw a string of such “garden suburbs” in the United States, especially around New York: the British Garden City tradition thus led to America’s Greenbelt movement. But at the same time, Unwin had studied American developments carefully. And Clarence Stein’s own Radburn design, which was itself an adaptation in part of early designs of Unwin at Letchworth and Hampstead Garden suburb, was widely studied by British planners in the 1930s.¹⁶

Like American urban planning, American regional planning also grew directly out of British models. Lewis Mumford, the great advocate of regional planning in America, had read Geddes voraciously since 1915 and called for a more general, regional analysis to sustain city planning itself.¹⁷ In the mid-1920s, Mumford, Clarence Stein, and others had founded the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) to support such Geddesian ideas and indeed hosted Geddes in New York in 1923 (Hall 1996, 148). Geddes’s regional approach related directly to the middle-class suburbanization movement. It became an age of streetcar suburbs, then railroad suburbs. Collar counties around major cities developed rapidly. But at the same time, the British studied the American regionalists as well. Unwin eventually read the works of Mumford with care and indeed finished his career in the United States (Hall 1996, 167).

Despite these connections and similarities, however, a number of differences did separate British and American

15 The total number of external migrants to the United States in the period 1870–1925 was slightly over 29 million. A little over 7 percent were Irish. (*Historical Statistics of the United States*, Bicentennial edition, p. 105–6.) Up to a third of these migrants may have eventually returned home, and not all were urban people. But still the populations of migrants in cities were enormous: the 29 million figure should be seen in the context of a total US population of 40 million in 1870 and 106 million in 1920. To be sure, the source of urban crowding would change slightly after the 1920s. From the First World War onward to the 1970s, African American migration from the South would bring about six million newcomers to the northern and western cities of the United States. But while this was a “great migration,” as it is usually called, it was not on the scale of the preceding migration from Europe.

16 The interrelations of American and British planning in this period are discussed by Hall (1996, 164ff).

17 The Mumford-Geddes connection is discussed in many places. For a particularly interesting analysis, see Macdonald (1994).

city planning in the interwar period. Three were particularly important, and all three were qualities not of planning itself but of the practical situation around it.

The first was the peculiar nature of America's multilevel government and state powers. A surprising number of the great American cities—most importantly, the two largest—were multistate cities. New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Kansas City, and Memphis were all metropolises that crossed state lines. This made systematic regional planning almost impossible. Moreover, most major American cities were not the capitals of their respective states and hence suffered from a further complex of political irrelevancies that prevented any clear focus on planning. Indeed, it was probably this complexity of government, more than any other factor, that meant that the great majority of consciously planned communities in the United States were industrial towns. The industrial “satellite city” or “industrial suburb” was already well conceptualized in the United States by 1915 (by reformer Graham Taylor [1970], among others).

The second unique factor in America was, of course, the automobile. Americans produced about 85 percent of the world's automobiles in the late 1920s (Hall 1996, 275), about one for every two families in the country. The 1920s therefore also saw the rise of New York's Robert Moses, who had a vision of city planning uninformed by either the Garden City movement or Geddesian regional analysis. Moses's goals were clear and straightforward: to use the automobile to allow urban middle-class residents to reach rural and beachfront recreational resources in a minimum time by car. From a ramshackle power base built on a combination of bureaucratic positions, Moses was able to build giant parks and put roads through them. His immense bridges leapt the many waterways that divide the five boroughs of the city. His approach to planning implied complete domination of the region by the central city, domination he celebrated by running his expressways across the estates of the super-rich on the North Shore of Long Island.

The Moses tradition of the automobile city would be reignited thirty years later by the unholy alliance of slum clearance, transportation authority, and urban renewal in the urban deployment of the Interstate Highway System in the late 1950s. But in the short run, although undertaken largely for recreational reasons, this massive program of bridges and parkways had the immediate effect of extending the effective range of automobile commuting (Hall 1996, 277) to about thirty miles from the city center, a fact that rapidly filled the green spaces left by the earlier separated railway lines that had already generated the far suburbs.

The third unique factor in interwar American planning was the general strength of *laissez-faire* attitudes in the 1920s, partly a reaction to the intensity of central social control during wartime, partly a reaction to the “threat” of Progressivism, and partly the continuing ideology of a capitalism that had ruled America unchecked from 1870 to 1914. It was *laissez-faire* attitudes that led to the American approach to “planning” via zoning.

Oddly enough, zoning began in New York City itself, as a response of rich householders and retailers to the erection of huge buildings that blocked their sun. Zoning was only partly successful in the fight for sunlight, and the rich

householders sold out in any case to Louis Tiffany and other luxury retailers who desired their space on Fifth Avenue. But these retailers themselves turned to zoning to prevent the march of the garment industry up from Lower Manhattan, which was finally stopped—in part by zoning-based height restrictions on the loft buildings necessary to the garment trade, but also by a boycott of garment industry goods and by the sweetener of financial help relocating the industry elsewhere. Zoning passed a crucial Supreme Court test in the 1920s and quickly spread over the United States, widely regarded as a planning panacea. In the main, however, it accomplished little, and the immediate rise of the lucrative trade of zoning variances—paying off city officials to make exceptions—created an immense new arena for graft and corruption.

Because of these three unique factors—multistate governance, automobiles, and *laissez-faire* theory—American cities were by the 1930s again in crisis. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created the National Planning Board to produce an answer, calling together political scientists, planners, economists, and sociologists. Their answer urged an immediate return to the more systematic and scientific approach implicit in Geddes's original dedication to regional analysis. But it had almost no political effect.¹⁸

In summary, the American and British city planning traditions evolved together during the interwar period. Although garden cities and regionalism had appeared first in Britain, they were quickly taken up in the United States. If the United States saw no such spectacular successes as Letchworth or Welwyn, the Radburn design and Mumford's culturalist elaboration of Geddesian planning were strong contributions in return. Both Britain and the United States saw suburbanization. But the unique qualities of America led planning in different directions there. The complexities of government inhibited regionalism and favored the company towns of the industrialists. The automobile favored the automobile suburb, leading away from Britain's combination of rail (for major commuting), and horsecars, trams, and busses (for local commuting). Finally, the zoning concept seemed to marry control to *laissez-faire* but in fact produced a city that was “planned” only in the most haphazard of ways.

B. BRITISH SOCIOLOGY AND PLANNING IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Planning was at least inspired by common ideals in both countries, however much it might be modified by local achievements and failures. But sociology developed in distinctly different ways in Britain and America.

In Britain, it is fair to say, sociology before the Second World War never really coalesced into a discipline—even in the sense of a group of scholars sharing a common discourse, much less a set of classical works and a body of research practices. There were isolated figures of greatness: Geddes, Robert MacIver, the Webbs, T. H. Marshall, and A. M. Carr-Saunders, for example. But they did not add up to a community of discourse, and many of them were preoccupied more with politics than with inquiry. There was also not in Britain the vast body of amateur sociology that one found in the social survey movement in the United States,

18 A general source on the National Planning Board is Clawson (1981). The organization had several different names in its history—National Resources Board, National Resources Committee, and National Resources Planning Board, in addition to the original name of National Planning Board. I shall use National Planning Board (NPB). This board will be discussed more extensively below.

and with the exception of the chairs at the London School of Economics and the University of London, there were no professorships of sociology anywhere. The journal *Sociological Review* was controlled by the Sociological Society, which, as noted earlier, was a broad discussion group rather than a focused scholarly community. Rowntree repeated his earlier survey in the 1930s, and Booth's communities were revisited as well. But most American visitors felt that British sociology was moribund by the 1930s.¹⁹

Since sociology was so weak in Britain, there is little reason to seek a relation between sociology and urban planning. The great triumphs of British planning—Forshaw and Abercrombie's *County of London Plan* in 1943 and Abercrombie's magisterial *Greater London Plan* of 1944—are quite evidently beyond the ken of British sociology in the interwar period. Even the casual reader can see that they are the product of a mature discipline, with depths of talent and experience; that they are the beneficiaries of extensive and unstinting support from national, county, and municipal governments; that they rest on a breadth and depth of preparatory research (its methods and style derived from Geddes) comparable in every way to the most detailed community studies of the American sociological tradition of the time, but addressing not small cities or neighborhoods but rather a metropolis of six millions of people. Indeed, the Abercrombie plans are the kinds of plans desired and envied by Americans as different as Charles Merriam and Rexford Tugwell.²⁰

They were, to be sure, partly based on ideas from Mumford and the RPAA (Hall 1996, 164–73). But American planners not only faced a more hostile political and social environment, they also lacked the depth of training and experience that could be produced by Britain's more welcoming environment. Patrick Abercrombie had created plans for parts of Dublin and Doncaster, as well as a large new area in Kent. He was the editor of *Town Planning Review* and professor of planning first at Liverpool and later at University College, London. He had taught hundreds of students, who were working throughout Britain. British planning thus had a confidence and power lacking in American planning. Moreover, even had it needed help, British sociology had none to offer it. And, in any case, the surveying methods available to planners already were as good as anything the British sociologists could produce.²¹

As noted in the discussion of the earlier period, the focus of British planning—and the core problem of American planning—was housing. And Abercrombie's plan was focused above all on the simple problem of who would live

where. Writing about a city larger than Chicago today, Abercrombie unflinchingly announced a plan to move slightly more than one million people, one-sixth of the people then resident in the London plan region. He also decided where to put the major airports and the major highways and how to classify roads for expansion. He suggested limits and rules for industrial location, located and expanded greenbelts, and recommended expansion, moving, and even demolition of parts of the railroads and the underground.²²

To the American reader, such a document is astounding, unthinkable, in a very real sense “un-American.” In American eyes, such a document would interfere with the rights of hundreds of municipalities, speculative builders, manufacturing firms, and retail organizations to do whatever they want, wherever they want, whenever they want. Americans could conceive of zoning regulations as a slight restraint on that speculative process (although, of course, zoning variances were often for sale to the highest bidder). But they had no idea of creating and building a complete physical world that would deliver genuine, reflective support to everyday lives.²³ Abercrombie did so and gave, above all, an unequivocal answer to the question of who should live where. That answer was based on an immense amount of what we would now call sociological research. But that research had almost nothing to do with British sociology as it then existed.

C. THE AMERICAN CASE—PLANNING AND THE CHICAGO SCHOOL

The planning tradition common to Britain and America faced a very different situation in the United States in the interwar period. There, the discipline of sociology was active and flourishing. We have already seen how Chicago sociology developed up through the First World War. We can now consider Chicago sociology and sociology more generally in the 1920s—the era of the First Chicago School—in order to understand its relation to planning.

The Chicago sociology department of the Albion Small era was reshaped during the First World War, with the death of Henderson in 1915, the arrivals of Robert Park in 1914 and of Ernest Burgess in 1916, and the departure of W. I. Thomas in 1918. The combination of Park and Burgess was a fortunate one, for Park had a charismatic intellectual and emotional style of leadership, while the much younger Burgess brought a new level of empirical skills and methodological rigor. The loss of Thomas was redeemed by the

19 An American commentator is Palmer (1927). One might also point out that the word “sociology” also covered, in Britain, what in America was called “anthropology.” Bronislaw Malinowski, for example, called himself a sociologist as well as an anthropologist. Thus, while one might regard British sociology (in the American sense) as moribund by the 1930s, British sociology in the British sense—including anthropology—was approaching one of its greatest heights. It is notable that late in his career, Patrick Geddes became Professor of Sociology at Bombay, where he trained G. S. Ghurye, a future leader of sociology in India (Celarent 2017, 81).

20 The Abercrombie plans are Forshaw and Abercrombie (1943) and Abercrombie (1945).

21 On Abercrombie himself, see Miller (2004).

22 Of course, Abercrombie had much help. He headed a substantial planning bureaucracy, derived dozens of ideas from Forshaw, Unwin, and others, and owed hundreds of specific details to particular analysts of particular problems. Nonetheless, it is as meaningful to credit him with the successes of the London plans as it is to credit Robert Moses with the more mixed results that Moses produced in New York.

23 One reader points out that one could argue that Robert Moses achieved a similar transformation. But Moses did not move residences and plan communities on a grand scale. He built highways and bridges on a grand scale, allowing middle-class people to move on a daily basis to recreation areas. But he had not the power to reconstruct whole areas of the city, nor, it should be admitted, did he have the help of mass bombings to initiate urban renewal for him. There were, to be sure, serious planners in the United States. But the degree of planning that was characteristic of Britain was alien to American culture, as the resistance to the Tennessee Valley Authority would show.

hiring of Ellsworth Faris, who had studied under George Herbert Mead and continued the teaching of Mead's and Thomas's social psychology. This was the department that has been known since the 1950s as the (First) Chicago School.

The Chicago School of the 1920s rested on three conceptual pillars: social organization, social ecology, and social psychology, each one conceived as driven by social processes and as always occurring in a particular social topology. But this conceptual clarity concealed an important moral shift away from the earlier Chicago School of the Albion Small era. Unlike its predecessors, the First Chicago School was not seriously involved in social reform. For one thing, the project of social reform had foundered in the United States, partly through controversies over pacifism, partly through the exhaustion of its founding generation, partly through the society-wide triumph of a new consumer capitalism. For another, professorial firings throughout American universities had made it clear even before the First World War that capitalist donors to universities would not countenance serious critique of either themselves or their dominance of American life. Economics was purged first, in the 1890s, and the rest of the social sciences got the same message by the 1920s.²⁴

Finally, Robert Park himself had, by this time in his life, a real suspicion of reformism. The reasons are probably related to his long career in the reform community, first as publicist for the Congo Reform Association and later as a speechwriter for Booker T. Washington. But for whatever reasons, when he came to Chicago, he set his course firmly in favor of a detached sociology in the manner of the modern journalist, not a reformist sociology in the engaged voice of the muckraker.²⁵

This choice was evident in Park's choice of theories. As is well known, Park chose the biological metaphor of ecology as a model for urban affairs. But it was plant rather than animal ecology that he chose, and while the model proved a striking descriptive success, it had little room for conscious activity, which plants lack. Or perhaps it is better to say that its concepts of action were microscopic: action consisted of tiny individuals responding to the grand social forces of housing and land prices, distance to work, and urban structure. Both the Chicagoans and Abercrombie had concentric zone models of urban development. The difference was that Abercrombie believed that the zones were in part performative, made by the actors themselves. Rather than being purely empirical, they were the creations of guided human activity. Park saw little possibility for guidance. This detached quality of Parkian thinking was partly a theoretical choice, but it had major consequences for the relation of American sociology and urban planning.²⁶

It should also be noted that outside of Zueblin's work, the Chicago School approach to the city was extremely micro. The Abbott and Breckinridge studies of tenements had been detailed studies of the experience of tenement residences, not studies of the economics of housing for the poor. This micro focus continued in the celebrated dissertations of the First Chicago School in the 1920s, most of which were about groups, group behavior, and the social psychology of cities, rather than about the development of the physical pattern of the city. Neighborhoods—which for the Chicagoans were largely a social psychological reality—were a more important focus than physical realities like housing, transportation lines, and industrial location. Ecology was important, of course, but mainly because it set the stage for the microprocesses of interest: crime, vice, suicide, family disorganization, and so on. Although Burgess articulately argued for the concentric zone model, few people have even heard of the most important single book of the First Chicago School on how the concentric zone structure actually unfolded in practice, a book that unwittingly but fatally shaped postwar American cities: Homer Hoyt's (1933) *One Hundred Years of Land Values in Chicago*. Hoyt was a Chicago economics student, whose dissertation Park helped advise. But this profound analysis of city property values—which were the mechanism at the heart of the concentric zones—is never on lists of First Chicago School classics. And yet it is a book any city planner in Britain or America would have read with profound interest. But Hoyt's book was ignored because Robert Park was in the last analysis not interested in the physical structure of the city or indeed of the zones. His interest was in the social psychology of city life, not in the pattern of material causality that set up the physical spaces that produced that social psychology.²⁷

D. INTERWAR PLANNING AND THE CHICAGO SCHOOL

As these various aspects of the Chicago School suggest, there is little reason to expect a strong connection between the Chicago School and city planning in the United States. Although the Chicagoans had a clear concept of urban ecology, their main focus was more on the psychological and behavioral results of that ecology than on its motive forces. They did many studies of the same types as did the followers of Geddes, but residential location and housing were not among their major topics. Those topics had passed to the economists (as Hoyt's text leads us to expect), who had been purged of reformers and were more or less captive to the American laissez-faire approach to real estate and housing development. Even the progressives had dealt with housing questions mainly via model tenement laws or by zoning—that is, by forms of regulation—rather than by deliber-

24 On the political restraints placed on economics, see Furner (1975). More broadly, see Veysey (1965, chap. 7).

25 Sources on Park are many. The standard biography is Matthews (1977). See also Deegan (1988), Lal (1990), and Lannoy (2004).

26 Lack of a theory of action has been a long-standing critique of Chicago's ecological theory (see, e.g., Alihan 1938). For the choice of plant ecology over animal ecology, my source is Daniel Cefai (personal communication). On Park's ecologism more generally, see Gaziano (1996).

27 Hoyt's book (1933) is one of the unknown classics of American social science. (Hoyt's principal advisor was H. A. Millis, an institutional economist.) The "fatal" results occurred when Hoyt's analysis of the aggregate relation between ethnicities and land values (pp. 312-317) was taken out of its purely descriptive context and applied as a justification for redlining (refusal of mortgage) by American mortgage lenders after the Second World War. The ensuing self-fulfilling prophecy played a major role in creating American hypersegregation in major cities. Note that sociology *beyond* the Chicago School seemed better informed about planning. *Social Forces* published an extensive bibliography on planning in 1934 (Brooks and Brooks 1934).

ate co-planning of industrial and residential location. As we have seen, the main exception to this piecemeal approach to housing issues was through planned industrial communities, and it is quite striking that these were never studied by the First Chicago School, although writers elsewhere—like Yale’s Liston Pope—undertook careful studies of them.²⁸

One can follow the disjuncture between sociology and planning by tracing the topic of planning through the pages of Chicago’s journal, the *AJS*. A first important fact is that in its first forty years, the *AJS* published twice as many articles about the rural community as about the urban community. This was appropriate in one sense; rural life was still dominant in the United States up through the 1930s, even if it was rapidly declining. But this rural dominance also reflected the importance of the progressive generation in the *AJS*—Albion Small edited the journal for thirty years, well into the time of the First Chicago School. The Progressives had had an image of rural America, or at least of an America of rural hinterlands and small cities, and this image fit well with the City Beautiful Movement. A surprising number of the “urban communities” articles in *AJS* in the early years concern not Chicago and cities like it but smaller cities of the size of Dubuque, Iowa, and Muncie, Indiana.²⁹

But there are only about twenty-five articles in the first forty years of the *AJS* that even contain the phrases “city planning” or “urban planning.” The index heading for “city planning” simply refers us to the “urban communities” heading. City planning was thus not a major topic in the view of the indexer or of the journal. If we scan the articles containing the phrases “city planning” or “urban planning,” we find that there is only one article—in 1912—that evinces a true familiarity with the planning tradition and that focuses on physical planning. It is also almost explicitly socialist and is written by a commissioner of immigration for New York City, rather than by an academic sociologist. Most of the seven other articles containing these phrases and published before 1918 are general reformist pieces. They think city planning important. They locate it within a suite of necessary reforms, including related things like cleaning up corruption (and other governmental irrationalities). Such articles take a via media between laissez-faire capitalism and immigrant-based socialism, and are clearly the voice of upper middle-class Protestant reform. They say less about housing than one would expect, discussing housing only as one among a vast number of problems. First Chicago School leader Ernest Burgess himself wrote one of these pieces, giving a very instructive list of core social problems that needed to be addressed: city planning, municipal housekeeping, public health, housing, delinquency, dependency, recreation, education, and social religion. This is not a list that any city planner would have given, for a city planner would have been committed to the idea that correct planning itself would affect all the items that follow it

on this list, resolving the problems and supporting the improvements.

After 1918 *AJS* “city planning” articles move in a different direction. Thus, Roderick McKenzie published in *AJS* a small monograph of one hundred pages on Columbus, Ohio. But while it contains extraordinarily fine-grained analysis of mobility and political attitudes, it treats mobility, housing, and residence as products of “larger forces,” which are not investigated. More generally, when city planning appears in most of these later articles, it is a very minor topic. After 1928 the *AJS* published a “Recent Social Trends” issue every year, which always contains a couple of pages on city planning. But these are quite small and routine, reporting a triumph of zoning or a change in tenement house law or the emergence of a “Civic Committee” or a “Community Chest.” Most concern legal changes or rises in community self-consciousness. Occasionally, larger visionary documents are noted—the Regional Survey of New York by the RPAA is reported (Bowman 1930), for example. But in the main, one is impressed by the complete absence of major figures: Robert Moses, Clarence Stein, and Lewis Mumford do not appear in the *AJS* in its first forty years. And, in effect, city planning is almost completely absent from the *AJS* after 1918.³⁰

If one seeks an actual explanation for this absence, it seems to have been based on the turn toward “science.” Vivien Palmer was the First Chicago School’s major methodological trainer, author of the department’s manual of fieldwork. Writing about British sociology, she wrote: “In the first issue of the *Sociological Review*, Professor Geddes’s article appeared under the heading of ‘Applied Sociology.’ And it is significant that the emphasis of the Edinburgh School has remained in this field; it has concerned itself with the application of a theory already formulated rather than directed itself to the scientific revision of that theory or the formulation of new ones” (Palmer 1927, 760). It would therefore seem that the Chicago School remained caught up in the project of Park to separate Chicago sociology from the applied sociology of the surveyors and the reform tradition.

One can see what had happened by turning to the planning that emerged as part of the New Deal. As noted earlier, Franklin Delano Roosevelt created a National Planning Board (NPB). That NPB had an urbanism committee, in which Chicago figures played an important role. Charles Merriam, longtime Progressive and member of the political science department at Chicago, was a member of the board’s advisory committee, and Louis Wirth of the First and Second Chicago Schools was the lone sociologist on the urbanism committee. The report of the committee—published in several stages from 1937 to 1939—makes clear where the Chicago sociologists (and the American social sciences more generally) now stood on the issue of planning.³¹

28 Pope’s (1942) study of strikes in a planned southern textile town is an important work. It is also a late tie of sociology to reformist religion. Pope was a Protestant minister and finished his career as dean of Yale’s Divinity School.

29 Indeed, Muncie was *Middletown*, the single most famous studied community in American history, at a time (1929) when its population was only thirty-five thousand. The suffix “town” in the book’s title says much about the essentially rural conceptions of its authors.

30 Interestingly, this is not because there were no connections between city planning and sociology more generally. Clarence Stein, the architect who designed America’s most celebrated Garden City (Radburn, New Jersey), addressed the American Sociological Association in 1923 (Hall 1996, 124).

31 The main report is National Resources Committee 1937. The detailed reports by Albert Comey and Louis Wirth, to be discussed below, appear in the supplementary volume (National Resources Committee 1939). The discussion in the following paragraphs is based on close reading of these documents. Note 19 explains the different names of this committee.

Their position is clear, first, in the academic disciplines that generated the report's subordinate studies. The authors of these studies are scattered across the academic waterfront. There are two economists, who write on industrial location and transport economics. There are three political scientists, who write on urban governance, county and state relations, and municipal associations. There are two landscape architects, who cover planning generally and planned communities in particular. There is one engineer, who covers transport terminal design, and there is one elderly representative of the old reformist tradition. There are only two sociologists: demographer Warren Thompson, who covers population trends, and Wirth himself, who covers a long list of residual topics, essentially representing the scientized versions of the old reform tradition: employment and standards of living, social welfare and education, public health and recreation, religious life and voluntary associations, urban housing, and regionalism. Note that once again housing is merely one of a long list of topics, even though housing and its location had been the nexus of connection between reform and sociology in Britain before the First World War, and even though the initial developments that ultimately led to the Abercrombie plans were already underway in Britain.

Wirth clearly subcontracted many of these topics to particular students (National Resources Committee, Urbanism Committee 1937, 89). His own main contribution to the report, coauthored with his research assistant Edward Shils, was, however, a detailed investigation of matters of housing: the relation between housing and social class, the physical character of housing, the notion of slums, and the relation of housing and conduct.³²

In his text, Wirth seems disengaged from the whole project of planning. This disengagement is made particularly evident by the entirely different approach of the preceding piece, by Albert C. Comey. Comey's immense report covers a total of 144 planned communities in America and includes a detailed survey analysis of 29 particular communities. The Comey report is essentially a brief for planning: scrupulous and fair, to be sure, but all the same designed to show that planning is vastly preferable to unplanned development. Significantly, social class is almost invisible in Comey's report, although data (Table 30, P. 141) show that the typical planned community is an industrial community founded by a corporation and that such communities generally have

only a tiny range of socioeconomic status. By contrast, the Wirth/Shils piece looks at all people in all urban places in the country and analyzes the relation between variable properties of cities (size, recency, region, population growth, industrial base, quality of labor force) and variable properties of housing (owner occupancy, age, state of repair, conveniences, and hygiene). It also studies how that relationship is mediated by social class. But there is no hint of any human agency in the Wirth/Shils piece other than the agency of individuals choosing to live in certain places in certain types of housing: no planning, no city government, no zoning, no control. Rather, there is an analysis of 71 statistical tables drawing on a wide variety of published and unpublished sources, mostly detailed studies of housing. It is a vaguely Chicago School version of a mainstream analysis of a population characterized in terms of aggregate variables.

A more complete dissociation between planning and sociology could not be found. In Wirth's report, we are looking mainly at the statistical associations between the aggregate properties of individual cities and the patterns of housing that are presumed to result from them. This was the new sociology of the moment: aggregate properties predicting aggregate properties.³³ The Wirth approach came out of market research and opinion polling, and employed the new national-level, statistical analysis that those survey methods had produced. It ignored local mechanisms of causality almost entirely, whether the economic mechanisms of a Homer Hoyt or the social psychological mechanisms of Wirth's mentor Park. And indeed this whole approach would take form in Wirth's celebrated 1938 article on "Urbanism as a Way of Life," still one of the most heavily cited articles ever published in the *AJS*.³⁴

Thus, by the late 1930s, American sociologists had moved away from the particular cities and particular projects of the planners. Even the Chicago School was studying the general qualities of cities in a highly abstract way. The social psychological studies of the First Chicago School had been at least cognate with the housing studies through which the Geddes tradition had guided early planning. But the urbanism of Wirth in his NPB report was an abstract quality of cities, given by aggregated properties unobservable in any particular case. The sociologists were no longer interested in detailed local description of a particular setting as a foundation for planning.³⁵

32 Edward Shils (1910–1995) was in the Chicago sociology department in two periods, 1937–1947 and 1957–1982. In the decade 1947–1957, Shils withdrew from the department but remained on the faculty of the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought.

33 This model of aggregation derived ultimately from two sources. The first was the sample survey tradition, in which individuals were surveyed, and relations were sought between aggregate levels of various variables measured on those individuals. The second was the "population approach" in statistics, which was being evolved in the 1930s by Yule, Neyman, and others, and which provided the probability theory to estimate and test such population-level relationships. On such "variables-based sociology," see A. Abbott (1999, chap. 7).

34 Curiously, Wirth lauded planning in a later article (1942, 838), although his praise shows little real command of the sophistication of city planning (even in the United States, much less in Britain). It is a reasonable guess that most people who cite the famous Wirth (1938) article in *AJS* have never read it. It is not an American version of Simmel's famous essay on the metropolis and mental life but rather an abstract, definitional exercise in variables. It is in important ways alien to the First Chicago School approach, despite its seemingly Chicago School title and Wirth's pedigree as a Chicago scholar. Judging by its content and methods, the article came out of Wirth's work preparing for the NPB document.

35 This divorce was noted at the time. Kligman (1945, 95) argues that the human ecology school (by which she meant the First Chicago School) did not really recognize human activity. "Where they failed was in regarding these [ecological] processes as inevitable. They failed to see the scientific approach of the planners; that which regards the city as a dynamic organism whose growth can be channeled and stabilized." As noted in note 27, this lack of a theory of action has been a common critique of the Chicago School, although it is less a critique about scientific theory than an assertion that social science inevitably involves social action. It is striking, too, that Kligman used work of Homer Hoyt—a student of Robert Park's—to attack the ecological point of view. A similar attack on the irrelevance of many Chicago School concepts for current planning efforts is Dewey (1950). Dewey's critique focuses on the issue that ecology does not take

In summary, the relation between planning and sociology seems to have been closest when both fields were inchoate and flexible—in Britain before the First World War. In interwar Britain, a mature planning could put what it had earlier learned from sociology into triumphant practice, even though sociology itself fell apart. In both cases, the transfers had been facilitated by a single-minded focus on one principal issue—that of housing. In the United States, by contrast, the initial issue joining planning and sociology had been middle-class beauty and recreation, but the housing problem had refused to disappear, and the legal and zoning approach adopted by both planning and reformers meant there was little basis for collaboration. Thus while planning and sociology matured together, they grew further and further apart with time. By 1940 they were almost completely disconnected.

The history of the relation between planning and sociology in Britain and America in the first half of the twentieth century leaves us, then, with a crucial agenda of problems. A first is whether housing and the broader planning of residential life is indeed the causal factor that drives the so-

cial psychology of the city. Wirth and Shils clearly assumed that it did not do so, but the entire British planning tradition assumed the reverse. A second question concerns the relation of theory and practice. What is the proper relation of sociology and social practice, whether it be city planning or possible social welfare policies or possible police regimes? A third and final question concerns the relation of studies of sociology and social geography. The Wirth/Shils NPB study shows a sociology that has begun to assume that place doesn't matter, that attitudes and demographic characteristics will predict most behavior absent any information on location. But neighborhood studies would be one of the great growth industries of sociology in the years after 1945. Given this paradox, what then is the real relation of the placed and unplaced aspects of society?

The second half of the twentieth century would present its own views of these questions. And history is waiting for ours.

enough account of politics or of the fact that “free growth” is no longer the pattern of cities; rather, the pattern is “redevelopment” or arrested development. Dewey sees major shortcomings on the planning side also, in particular an unwarranted allegiance to the neighborhood concept.

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