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Review essay for urban studies

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ABSTRACT

The last ten years have seen the publication of a whole range of US books dealing with the loss of place in one way or the other. The books under review were, in general, written for broad audiences an are, in may cases also, campaign documents. Their success and substantial number indicates an unease, which many academic texts cannot formulate. They are in this way evidence, just as The Rise and Fall of the Great American City" or "Edge Cities" were.

This European-based review will critically review these recent books trying to highlight their common threads. While the books are very concerned about the poverty of the current urban and suburban environments, the books lack a substantial discussion of the economic mechanisms reproducing the undesired results. They are also unaware of the recent developments in communications and transport technologies, which have a large potential to influence future trends, which will be discussed in the review.

Included in the review are a number of transport oriented books, as they formulate a different aspect of the same concern about the built environment.

1   INTRODUCTION

In the United States the last ten years have seen the publication of a substantial number of books for the general reader, which focus on the state of the urbanised environment: most of them lamenting its state. This essay will explore a number of the themes raised by these books and related professional texts from a perspective twice removed: from the perspective of a non-US-resident and from the perspective of a transport planner. The dangers of the lack of local understanding and the lack of familiarity with all aspects of the academic literature are hopefully balanced by a lack of pre-conceptions and commitments to firm urbanistic points of view.

The focus on popular books for the general reader is deliberate. These books can formulate an unease directly, where academic and professional books have to find neutral descriptions to hide similar moral and/or aesthetic judgements. As such, these books give the outsider a better impression of the developments, or of the perceptions of these developments, then academic and professional texts. Still, these campaigning books give insights into the views of their committed writers and these cannot be taken to be backed by a majority of the population. Nevertheless, the public – sometimes – follows the views articulated by vanguards, if it recognises benefits to be gained from actions based on such views.

The essay will contrast the popular books with the parallel professional literature on urban design and policy. The impact of telecommunications and transport will be discussed and contrasted with the solutions suggested in the urban design literature.

2   SOMEWHERE LOCALLY

The core theme of the books under review is the fallen "Great American City" a generation after Jane Jacobs's (1961) seminal book with the majority of the US population living in the edge cities described by Garreau (1991) at the start of the decade. The destruction and disfunctionality of the core of many metropolitan areas is taken for granted. Detroit is the prime exhibit for all that went wrong (see Figure 1). The sequence of pictures of abandoned Detroit skyscrapers is the most haunting of Vergara's outstanding book (1995) on the change of inner city and inner ring suburban neighbourhoods across, mostly, the eastern US. Showing the development of streets over time, sometimes two decades, the book gives the reader a chance to understand the processes of decay, which are generally aborted and cut short in most European cities through state action. The quasi-suburban replacements sometime built in place of the decay are emblematic of US attitudes to urban life. A topic, which is also critically discussed by Suarez (1999).

The edge city suburban nexus, if such quasi-urban cores are available, is identified as the source of the unease formulated. The full motorisation of the suburban and exurban residents is taken for granted, as are assumptions over rising real incomes as a result of the continuing further global division of labour, from which the USA has benefited most strongly during the last decade. The unevenness of the real income growth and the resulting social conflicts widely discussed elsewhere is not emphasised here (See for example Davis, 1990 or Keil, 1998 on Los Angeles or Gottdiener, Collins and Dickens, 1999 on Las Vegas). The continuing population growth, especially in the fast growing areas of the South-western and Western US, is perceived mostly as a threat to the status quo and not as a chance for new urban forms.

The unease is only partially aesthetic. It is primarily social, but is tied to spatial forms, as a surface element more open to treatment then social structures and expectations. Just as the communitarian and other similar movements, this literature is mostly about the difficulty of maintaining or building place-based social networks strong enough to provide the social cohesion necessary for social reproduction without excessive costs and concerns about the personal security of oneself, family and friends. Transport infrastructure is viewed ambiguously as both the provider of desired accessibility, but also as the production location of massive externalities and as the symbol of the network-based a-local social networks. Interstates are visible, while their glass fibre equivalents hosting the Internet are not.

The furor about the unkept social and aesthetic promises of suburbia is vented most directly in the books by Kunstler (1993 and 1996), Langdon (1994), Holtz-Kay (1997) or Drew (1998). Marten (1997) is similar in spirit, but looks at the German scene. The books work as travelogues describing the scale and vastness of the destruction perceived by the authors. The quality of the writing, the selection of the places visited varies substantially with Kunstler providing the best writing and the most interesting places. They report on local initiatives to limit the damage by mostly local regulatory action, although in some cases subsidies and purchase through trusts or similar institutions is involved. They take the - foreign - readers to many places, they could not possible know, but leave them unsure of how representative they are, or how frequently the resistance to the changes is successful. The destruction is wrought by the general coarsening of the metropolitan fabric, of which the WalMart superstore is only the most visible expression is described, but not placed into a larger context. A fabric, which in turn, is too thin to generate naturally the surprising interactions of the traditional urban fabric: it is also often too thin to provide living space for the growing, the marginal, the specialised business; the mall being the place of successful businesses. The pervasiveness of the scale change is generally not perceived nor discussed in the books reviewed here.

The professional literature, as exemplified by Pope (1996), Rowe (1991), Feldtkeller (1995) or Sieverts, (1997) does not spend much time on it either. The authors are interested in typological questions and

they try to trace the building of the Middle Landscape (Rowe), the In-between City (Sieverts) created to match the visions of Mid-century. Sieverts and Pope, in particular, try to understand the spatial forms found today and their inherent logic. They accept the environments as given, but lack the enthusiasm and optimism of a Wright (1945 or 1958), Le Corbusier (1929) or Howard (1898), who each in different ways had wanted to provide for ordered and content lives through the built environment (Fishman, 1982). It is interesting to note that a more commercially, technologically driven utopia has been better at predicting the developments as they have occurred: Norman Bel Geddes' *Futurama*, built as a huge (about 3600 m^2) and very expensive General Motors exhibit for the 1939/40 World Fair in New York. A 1940 book by Geddes concentrates on the road transport aspects of the exhibit, but the film documentary "To New Horizons" (still available from the General Motors archives) shows a metropolitan environment rebuilt to match the motorways in scale, both in its residential, as well as in its core areas. The motorway – suburban complex is clearer here then in Wright's thinking, which is traditional in its conception of the higher level roads as bigger arterials for his Broadacre City. The qualitative jump to the grade separated motorways is missing. Nevertheless, Wright's usonian free-standing houses match the American preferences for housing better then proposals of Le Corbusier or Howard. He generalized before the fact the ideal of the small villa for everyone (see for example Stilgoe, 1988 or Jackson, 1985) as the place for the freestanding family, independent and stable in spite of the social changes surrounding it. Harris' fascinating study (1997) of semi-squatting working class suburban housing in Toronto before 1930 gives an idea, that this form of housing was sought by many in spite of the costs and the low quality achieved by the buildings. Wright was also happy to do away with the picturesque platting traditions of the Garden suburb tradition of Olmstead or Unwin (1909), although here he did not win out, as the winding PUD's and suburban plots of today show.

Pope's study of how the open grid of the traditional city first turned inward in the attempt to cope with the car (e.g. Rayburn or Stein's Neighborhood Unit) and then removed itself through suburban developments placed in isolation into the *ladders* of the higher level grid networks of the transport planners; developments which refuse to have a face to speak to the rest of the world and leaving physically and socially empty place in-between. The order of cause and effect cannot be established anymore, but the empty space, *ellepsis* in Pope's terminology, is a space of fear inviting the further fortressing of the developments, which in turn increases the vacuum. The on-going coarsening of the grain of the urban fabric is producing similar effects in urban cores: the Postdamer Platz in Berlin is a prime example of the loss of the small-scale urban streetscape and its replacement with interior retail and entertainment spaces (For a view of the site see www.cityscope.de), which leave the public street space empty.

3 SOMEWHERE SOCIALLY

The travelogues report not only about the social emptiness of the ellepsis: the commercial strips, the random accumulation of malls, big-box retailers and corporate complexes, but they also stipulate a loss of community, while being unable to offer an analysis of the lost community. The reader is often sceptical, if this community ever existed and under what conditions. Still, the wish for strong place-based networks of social contact and help is articulated. The nostalgia is not systematically confronted with either the memories of past or current residents or with the contemporaneous sociological studies, such as Lynds' *Middletown* (1929) or Whyte's *Organization Man* (1956). The stability of the then young inner suburbs, both within or just without the city lines, is at the core of both Ehrenhalt (1995) and Suarez (1999), but also at the heart of memoirs such as Waldie's (1996).

The conditions of the stability of the place-based networks are nicely illustrated here: the overlap of the space of work, of school, of recreation and shopping: the impossibility not to see and meet the same people every day, while working, while going to the store, which attending church, while hanging out at the bar. The inescapability of the setting generates the contacts needed to develop the familiarity and the confidence in the others, which in retrospect looses its oppressiveness for many. Ehrenhalt uses three Chicago neighbourhoods to make the point that this inescapibility might have been a value, not a curse. He argues this most strongly for Bronzeville, the black South-side Ghetto, as having both the best and the worst of times then. Suarez' travelogue looks at those types of area, which today have lost their cohesion. His is the only book in the genre, which makes race and racism the central theme. The ownership of one's accommodation, the fear for its resale value and the highly differentiated housing products drive the turnover, as the housing markets seem mostly unable to tolerate mixed-race and, or mixed-income environments. It does not matter, if the flight is caused by racism, by the fear or fact of redlining or concerns for school quality caused by more intensively stressed school budgets, as both the tax revenues fall and the demands on the schools grow. Suarez, as Vergara, notes the wastefulness of redeveloping highly accessible areas inside the cities at suburban densities, but does not probe the mystery, why such pseudo-villas are supposed to generate more attachment to resist urban decay then other housing forms.

The oppressiveness of the place-based networks, the increased participation in higher education, the greater fluidity of many labour markets, the car and the subsidised housing ownership motivated and enabled the search for less place dependent social networks and living arrangements. Social distances could be increased and networks of exchange loosened with little or no risk, as long as professional services are either provided by the state or are affordable privately. The parallel post-World War growth of the welfare state and of real incomes for most allowed both. This replacement of social co-ordination and exchange with capital continues with every additional mobile phone, tv set, walkman, room or car

bought by a household. It is no surprise that the remaining constraints, nearly exclusively time constraints, are perceived as so stressful.

New Urbanism as a product and ideology tries to address these stresses by selling environments, which claim to be able to increase the local share of the networking reducing the conflicts between the wish for local trust and the realities of social networks of trust thinly spread over space and held together through technological means and infrequent personal contact. It is ironic, that the iconic example of New Urbanism, Seaside, is a resort, which by definition is a place of chance encounters *(*Mohney and Easterling, 1995). This reviewer cannot judge the architectural quality of the pattern books, such as those for example reproduced nearly illegibly in Duany and Plater-Zyberk (1991), but it is obvious that with respect to the spatial structure they are not able to overcome the standard inward-looking patterns of suburbia. They are not gated, but nearly so (see for example the plans in Calthorpe, 1993 or Duany and Plater-Zyberg, 1991). Seaside is different, but the nearest substantial city is many miles away. To a cynic the increased architectural quality and the higher ground-floor to lot area ratios associated with New Urbanism are the expected reactions of the housing market to higher lot prices, as in the prominent New Urbanism market California. Similar trends can be observed in many European suburban areas.

Sexton's (1995) book comparing the quasi-urban Seaside in the non-urban Florida Panhandle with the pseudo-rural Sea Ranch in the ex-urban Sonoma County north of San Francisco makes the point that this quest for order, stability and connections can be satisfied in more than one way. While Seaside and similar New Urbanism developments cannot assure that the social networks overlap to an extent again, which is meaningful in social terms, Sea Ranch does not even try. This Broadacre City – like settlement tries to minimise its environmental and aesthetic impact by hiding in the landscape. The bigger picture of the flows from the outside to maintain it is not drawn or evaluated in this book.

4   SOMEWHERE CLOSED

While the rhetoric of the New Urbanism is inclusive, especially also of environmental concerns in the guise of transit oriented developments, safety concerns are not primary, although the benefits of more "eyes on the street" (Jacobs, 1961) are mentioned. The gated community is exclusive to the extent of seceding or trying to secede from the surrounding municipality. Here the fear of change and of the other is taken to extreme through restrictive covenants, which try to make changes by later owners essentially impossible. While the formerly common covenants against Jews or racial minorities are illegal today, the spirit of exclusion lingers on, now using other mechanisms. Certain rules, such as restricting ownership to persons of a certain age, have been upheld in the courts so far. The powers granted to the bodies

enforcing them include taxation, up to forced sale, if the rules are continuously broken. The legal development of those rules since the turn of the century is traced by McMencie (1994). The rules tend to enforce uniformity with a view to maintain property values. In a world of differentiated housing products personal change requires moving. Individuality or adaptation in place is perceived to threaten property values. The residents and promoters assume that instant community can be built on the two or three categories used to define the gated community, in particular price and age. That this might be too thin a foundation for trust is evident in the focus groups and interviews of residents of various gated communities reported by Blakely and Snyder (1997), which indicate a high level of anonymity in the tonier areas. Some types of gated communities seem to work socially for their residents, as the continuing success of places such as Sun City, the original gated retirement community shows (see Findley, 1992 for the early development of Sun City). Here, the developers morph into resort owners and organize or support the various social activities, by for example providing land for churches and social facilities.

In metropolitan areas, such as Las Vegas or other fast growing Southern and South-western ones, gated communities have become the norm, to a certain extent crowding out other choices by monopolising resources, such as schools or shopping areas (Gottdiener et al., 1999). It is, as if social coordination in residential areas is today only possible, if threat of expropriation by the neighbours is available. The home becomes a place of stasis not one of development in such a supposed community.

The gate is only to most visible element in the fight against crime, which is the second strong motivation for these developments. Where lakes, streams and landscape features cannot be made to serve as walls, fences are built, physical ones or electronic ones. The larger or more expensive developments provide their own security forces paid for by taxing the residents. The success of these measures is not reported. It is ironic, that the residents grant gated developments extensive taxation rights, wielded by boards and executives of dubious democratic legitimacy, often elected by property-value weighted franchises, while regularly refusing to do the same for properly constituted government. This privatisation of government undermines democratic government by making it one of many and by expressing the assessment that proper government seems both unable to deliver the goods (to the right people) and to be unable to enforce the median value judgements. Again capital replaces social co-ordination.

The fight for growth management, impact fees and similar tools is feed by sentiments similar to the gated community. Here the impression of openness is maintained, while clearly many proponents must be hoping that they can price their area (village, town, city etc.) out of the market. Fodor (1999) is a good example for this aggressive attitude. Full costing of resource use and pricing of externalities is correct public policy, but it should be adopted uniformly within a region to avoid both rent-seeking and

discrimination. Still, impact fees can only be partial solutions as long as competitive incorporation (gating by a different name) is possible, roads are provided free at the point of use and regional resource sharing is not implemented. Orfield's (1997) rich case study of the Twin Cities area makes this point eloquently. He also highlights how race, poverty and danger go together in the perceptions of the majority providing data to support Suarez' impressions.. He also shows that progress towards regional resource sharing can be made and that Portland Metro might not stay a rather lone exception for longer (see Lewis, 1996 for a detailed discussion of Portland). He does not discuss the incentive structures required to keep all levels of government interested in good policy making, as he is caught up in creating a new layer of government by strengthening existing weak institutions.

Gated communities are products carefully packaged to appeal to a selected audience. This perspective is new to most existing communities, villages, towns and cities. The selfawareness of being a product in the locational choice sweepstakes has been a feature of leisure resorts for a century (Ward, 1998), but is new to humbler areas. The locals are busy enough to be sale-persons of themselves in the service economy to take on the roles of extras for their area, although they are aware of the demands. The perceived expectation to be an extra normally leads to resentment in the population affected, as can be seen in many tourism areas or areas, where the traditional descriptions of work change under outside pressure. A prime example is the resistance of farmers against their redefinition as landscape gardeners of ecologically defined landscapes Against this background fully themed environments from Disneyland to Planet Hollywood do not feel so strange. They are part of the continuum of experience and the visitors enjoy them as such admiring the management and the actors for their skill, even when tricks of the trade are known (the scale reductions of Disney's Main Street, the bread smells at the back of the supermarket, the enforced pauses in front of the impulse goods, the clockless gambling parlors etc.) The contributions in Sorkin (1992), Findley (1992) or Huxtable (1996) discuss these in detail. Hannigan's (1998) history of urban entertainment and themed environments takes some of the breath out of the sometimes rather breathless and judgemental discussions in the literature. The antedecents of the theme park are as old as the grottos of the Renaissance and the follies of the Baroque. The issue today is the vanishing boundary between the real and the themed in both the urban environment and personal life. The former place-based networks did provide neither space nor time for theming, with the exception of carnival, as a time out of time with changed or reversed roles.

The careful control and variability of the themed environments appeals in contrast to the rigid codes of suburbia or of a gated community, while at the same time making it available in a form which does not threaten the enforced uniformity of the rest of the environment. Still, they are inward-looking areas and contribute to the emptiness of the left-over space by monopolising the attention of the users.

5   SOMEWHERE PARTIAL

The travelogue writers are eloquent about the ugliness and emptiness they encountered, the wickedness of those perpetuating and extending the "Nowhere" through new construction, but they are short on analysis of the why and on prescriptions for change. Most of the recent authors endorse the "New Urbanism", but ignore for how long how small its contribution will be given the mass of existing houses, offices, factories and facilities. They also ignore the relatively minor change New Urbanism brings in relation to most European style urban or suburban developments (Downs, 1994). The change is valuable, but does not address the underlying lack of a sufficient overlap between the networks of the residents. Neither does it address, that the overlap can be avoided today, if the resident wants to avoid it, even when living in a place-oriented area.

The scope of action is reduced further in the books of Moe and Wilkie (1997) and Brandes-Gratz and Mintz (1998) to historical preservation or down-town regeneration. Both books are campaign documents, their tone is mostly upbeat and the examples successful: no reason to dishearten the readers. Both books are about the construction of place-based networks to protect, restore and enhance small areas written off by the flight away from the old, the centre. The motivation might be commercial, in the case of many of the examples of Brandes-Gratz and Mintz, or aesthetic (both) or social (Moe and Wilkie) or a mixture of all, but important is that these networks must be constructed, sometimes on the remnants of existing ones, sometimes *ab initio* from the outside. The reported successful examples make it clear that the initial momentum arises randomly based on emotion or misjudged wagers not abandoned later. Both books motivate similarly inclined optimists, but they would be more helpful, if they would also clarify the size of the odds and the opportunity costs involved. By focussing on individual or small groups of actors they describe heroes, but forget to ask about the required changes in the incentive structures, which would then not require heroes, just managers.

6   POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The journalistic books describing, what the authors perceive as misery, find their equivalent in professional books trying to describe solutions (Garvin, 1996; Barnett, 1996; Fowler, 1992; Downs, 1994; Rudlin and Falk, 1999; Orfield, 1997; Hoffmann-Axthelm, 1993 and 1996). Both sets are of one mind to what the problems are: the functional division of space by category, which has invited the creation of oversized monotonous developments, which leave much of the space socially empty and despite the original promise of modern planning unco-ordinated. This spatial structure is associated with

large externalities stemming both from the traffic produced, but also from the social isolation of individuals within the developments and worse from the isolation of whole social groups within the region.

Unfortunately, all the books considered are stronger on description and analysis then solutions. The balance shifts between the various books, but is always tilted towards the descriptive part. What is in particular missing is an analysis of why and how fast the solutions might work and what opposition might have to be overcome. Downs goes by far the furthest in this direction, but he addresses only the administrative level of the possible solutions.

Garvin's book is a cookbook in the best sense. It looks at the whole range of issues from parks, via subsidised housing to pedestrian malls. Setting out examples and conditions of success he helps the reader to understand the possibilities, but he stays within the limits of the current constraints. He does not set out to challenge them and does not.

The solutions emerging from the texts, both American and German, target two levels: the region and the urban block, for lack of a better term for the small local scale then the now discredited ones: neighbourhood or community. Unfortunately, it is not clear, how those can be made to work together.

The regional solution is regional government to address the externalities created by competitive small scale incorporation, single purpose agencies and the mismatch between the assumed national purpose but regional function of the interstate system. Only a multi-purpose agency/government, democratically elected, is able to start addressing how those externalities should be taxed and how the resources and demands have to distributed to create equitable and efficient outcomes (in particular Downs, 1994 or Orfield, 1997). Such a level of government is precondition, but no assurance of success and Downs discusses that some midway-houses, such as intergovernmental co-operation, might be able to deliver some of the goods, but slower and a higher co-ordination expense. The regional level of government or the expanding core city (See Rusk, 1993) makes the running away of those, who want to participate in the success of a region, but not its costs more difficult.

The difficulties in setting up such a level of government are legion, as are the difficulties of managing it and its relationship with the counties, towns, cities or villages subsumed into it, as made clear by Orfield's tale of his efforts in the Twin Cities or Lewis' description of Portland and Denver. Taxing externalities, independent of its type: road tolling, water surcharges during draught, equalisation payments between schools, sharing of low-income housing, is never an easy vote-winner.

The small scale solution is the return to the small urban grain, the pedestrian and the rejection of all big solutions: large-scale master plans describing the future, large single wager renewal schemes, be they stadiums, festival market places, conference centres, slum clearance, super blocks (Hoffmann-Axthelm, Barnett, Fowler or Rudlin and Falk). Here is the attempt to overlay the social networks again and to maximise the number of local personal encounters.. The spatial form suggested is the urban block with a more or less closed frontage constructed from many individual buildings at different times and for different purposes, ideally incorporating everything known about energy and resource efficiency in the construction and operation of them. The ethos is one of muddling through and of continuous, but incremental change. The American proposals try to regain the suburban densities of the streetcar suburbs, while the European proposals aim to preserve the urban densities of the 1990's in the built forms of the 1890's, i.e. after a substantial amount of suburban development, which the American critics would probably find as soulless as their American counterparts, if slightly denser.

The conflict between the two visions is evident: how can a regional government implement, supervise and enforce localised small scale incremental change ? Is it possible to have that amount of management time and level of skill respectively ? Can local government be committed to this programme through regulation, when it can be assumed that local government will be antipathetic to a program of continuous change ?

The management time and skill will be required as the producers of housing and the financial institutions backing them are geared towards large, essentially uniform projects. Can they be convinced or forced to adopt individualised mass production of housing and commercial buildings on individual small lots, as their predecessors did naturally a 100 years ago ? Can it be shown that building at smaller scales is a better use of capital and management time then the big units ? What externalities have to be internalised to make that true ?

Equally, can the resident property-owners be convinced that change, including increasing densities or different uses, is in their long term interest ? On both sides of the Atlantic zoning and land use regulations give those resident powerful weapons to impose statis: either to protect property values or to protect those social networks which have grown over time. One should not forget that renting was the rule in the 19th century, so that the residents did not have to worry about property values and could show more equanimity in face of the reconstruction of their environment.

Equally, it is unclear whether the social networks can be brought to overlap again at all, even if the environment offers more activity opportunities within pedestrian range and its extensions through public transport. The car and telecommunications networks are essentially universally available. Licence ownership is as good as universal among the current cohorts under 40 years of age. Among those cohorts

car ownership is at nearly 100% of the licence owners within a decade of their licence acquisition. Western European countries with Finland in the lead are rapidly approaching a 100% of population mobile phone market penetration. (One should note that the availability of pre-paid phone cards has improved the access to the telephone system for those too young or with too low or irregular incomes to be creditworthy dramatically; in Europe the telephone numbers associated with these pre-paid cards remain active even after the prepaid amount has been used, as the caller pays all charges. This means that everybody can acquire/be given passive access at the cost of the cheapest available handset and an initial set-up fee). Ignoring for the moment those, who cannot acquire a licence due to physical handicap, or those, who cannot afford a car or a mobile phone, and concentrating on those, who can or could, one has to note, that the urban block solution faces the problem, that the social promise of neighbourhood life cannot be necessarily delivered by the urban form, as the mobile and connected residents might use those tools to find their social network outside the local area. They are actually likely to do so.

7 TELECOMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVE

The literature on the effects of telecommunications on the urban form and the urban society is too vast to be properly reviewed here (for examples see Cairncross, 1995; Mitchell, 1995 and 1999; Castells, or the mid-decade review of Graham and Marvin, 1996). Still, it is clear that the speed of the technological innovation, the on-going price reductions for telecommunication hardware and services and the decreasing gap between the quality at bottom of the range and the top of the range has left the analysts confused about the implications of Internet-mediated services (e-commerce, e-information provision and e-knowledge generation and distribution) for urban society. It is clear, that telecommunications and physical movements have been complements so far: volumes of both are growing in parallel The statistics available on the transport side are currently unable to trace any substitution effects at the level of movement purpose (leisure trips enabled by home delivery services, visits to friends possible by the free time available from filling an electronic form, which formerly required presence at an office), as they are only starting to capture electronic interactions or services delivered to or in the home (e.g. an on-going Swedish national joint survey of telecommunication use and transport or smaller academic efforts elsewhere). The transport element of the joint volume growth observed until today is measured in passenger miles travelled, which reflects continuing increases in travel speeds (air and high speed train travel, but also gains in regional travel through shifts towards the car in mode choice and dispersed suburban destinations in space). Equally, some of the recent growth in telecommunication usage is driven by commercial and automated data exchange, which makes the personal amount of interaction difficult to measure. In principle, travel and telecommunication compete for the same time budget as the other activities limiting their growth to a certain share. While the mobile phone has allowed the overlay of travel time and communication time for the car user and rail traveller, they will have to be traded off

at some point in terms of time with a particular person or group of persons. The total number of contacts (of a certain social quality) in either person (travel) or through telecommunications is limited by the minimum duration requirement of such a contact. A certain amount of trade-off is possible between the quality of the contact and their number, e.g. Christmas serial letters versus family visits or a neighbourhood email list versus sidewalk chats, but an individual optimum is likely to exist given the joint preferences of the members of the social networks involved.

The increased quality of access through higher speeds/bandwidths at lower costs has removed the local constraints, which in the past enforced the overlay of the social networks. It seems unlikely the new or regained urban forms can motivate a voluntary renounciation of the social and spatial reach gained by the car or the Internet. The increased worldwide social division of labour enabled by these networks is matched by tighter fitting social networks at a personal level, which are maintained over long physical distances. The suggested urban and regional forms require increased co-ordination efforts in their construction, their maintenance and their operation/living in comparison to the package consisting of a single-family-house in suburbia and the car/tv/phone for every licenced household member. The social and environmental externalities of the suburban nexus will probably have to spiral out-of-control before a new urban form paradigm can be established, including the reconstruction or abandonment of the existing suburban developments. At this time, it is unclear, if they will. Even if, it is unclear, that enough people will perceive this loss of control and in turn might be willing to act jointly, instead of retreating into gated environments of all types: SUV's, electronically secured houses, gated developments, office parks and club resorts

It is very interesting to note that this issue of reconstruction and abandonment is not raised in either the popular or professional literature under review here. Only Downs (1994) touches upon it by showing that even a complete shift to New Urbanism as the paradigm for new construction has no substantial impact for a very long time due to the enormous amount of the already built environment.

8   TRANSPORT PERSPECTIVES

From a transport perspective the overlapping issues are the social externalities of unpriced access to the road infrastructure, the inefficient pricing and regulation of traffic-generated pollution and noise, the principles of investment planning and the total costs of a given network structure. The urban visions of the first half of century isolated traffic as a separate function, which in the hands of the emerging transport planning and traffic engineering professions developed its own logic, which in turn has often overpowered the urban logic. These urban visions all celebrated the car as clean, fast, liberating and all

around wonderful, as the death knell of the hated 19th century city. They reflected the consensus of the time in both Europe and the USA,, at a time when the car was not generally available, certainly not in Europe. For a good history of the adoption of the car see McShane, 1994.

The network logic of the transport planners was driven by concerns for the efficiency of operations, speed – that mantra of modernism – and safety. The result are functionally differentiated networks, which concentrate fast flows onto the links with the highest capacity, minimise interactions between flows of traffic through grade separation, time separation (signals) or reduced number of conflict points (t-junctions or round-abouts) and improve safety further through sufficient sight distances and road widths.

The measures achieved their aims: the road systems of the industrialised countries move an unprecedented numbers of vehicles at a continuously decreasing level of risk per mile travelled. Until today the logic has not really been challenged, as it matches and enables an urban vision of the good life still able to muster majorities, if in doubt. Dunn, in an otherwise very informative book marred by an unnecessary polemic against the "enemies of the car", traces the history of the US road building coalition, in particular its fight for its monetary resources. He does not focus upon it, but he shows how the administration of a club good (the road system, especially the interurban and rural road system) funded by the club members (motorist paying gasoline tax) invaded the general administration, while trying to maintain its own income stream (the fight for the various trust funds). The nature of the road system varies between a club good (joint provision of a good suffering from rivalry in use: e.g. congestion) and a public good (no rivalry) depending on location and time of day and time of year. Its most prominent parts, the metropolitan motorway systems, are now clearly club goods and should be managed as such. This shift implies a clear mandate to avoid the externalities through pricing or rationing, something, which is politically not jet acceptable.

In the metropolitan context the network logic is laid out beautifully in the UK Buchanan Report (1963) and the early US AASHO guidelines (e.g. AASHO, 1973 for the series existing since the 1950's). The professional institutions in all western industrialised countries have been extending and adapting them over time. Southworth and Ben-Joseph describe in detail, how this logic of movement replaced the logic of place, even in residential areas, and started to dominate the design: better funding and easily available guidelines gave dominance to the traffic engineers, which most other players in the development industry did not want to challenge anyway. One of the main fights of New Urbanism in the USA is to reduce this dominance exploiting moistly European experiences of achieving safety with less road space. In Europe these approaches have now been made available through official guidelines, such as the new generation of road design guidelines in Germany published since the early 1990's.

Jacobs (1993) in his splendid book on great streets ties the urban and the street space together by trying to untangle the elements of great streets. His aim is so high and his examples so outstanding that he finds it difficult to develop general rules. The grand examples, which he discusses and presents among less prominent ones, are pedestrian oriented, even when providing generous space for vehicular traffic. They provide the theatre and visual interest, which make them satisfying for the pedestrians.

The management of the externalities of road traffic and by implication of public transport has been extensively discussed in technical and academic books and papers, but not yet in a form addressed to the general public in English. German examples are more frequent Monheim and Monheim-Dandorfer (1990), Haefner und Marte (1994) or Kanzler and Knie (1998). Downs (1992) *Stuck in Traffic* comes closest. He highlights, that from a transport perspective, accepting urban form as given, congestion is a massive social cost, which should be addressed by the pricing road space according to its scarcity. The costs remain massive, even if you discount the waiting times of the club members, the car drivers themselves, as not all vehicular trips have the same economic value. Compare a full bus with a single driver or a fully loaded truck with a recreational pick-up. All, nearly all, transport academics agree that direct charging for road use, both the direct costs of use as well as the externalities, is both desirable and feasible today using satellite-based tracing of vehicles or stationary electronic tolling stations. They also point out, that such charging will be very problematic in a built environment riddled with other price distortions, such as tax-subsidised owner-occupied housing, markets made inflexible through zoning, subsidy structures favouring capital investment etc. Given the challenge of rectifying these distortions at the same time most recommend incremental strategies, which in the USA involve new construction, for example the high-occupancy toll lanes at SR91 and I15 in California. Here tolling becomes acceptable as it maintains the quality of the system performance through *value pricing*, the useful euphemism coined by the operators concerned.

In the US literature on urban form reviewed above, public transport plays either no or only a strictly limited role. In the sea of cars, two-car garages and parking lots, it gets lost out of sight of most observers. Academic studies suggest (Winston and Shirley, 1998) that the USA might be economically better off to reduce what service is left by half and operate it privately. Calthorpe's transit oriented developments are focused on the public transport stop, but it is unclear where the light rail vehicle or bus is supposed to go in an unfocused metropolitan environment. The European situation is not as dire, but here the increasing decentralisation of housing and business is creating similar strains. Car sharing, a form of car leasing involving the sharing of the capital costs of the vehicles and unbureaucratic access to the vehicles, and flexible public transport using small vehicles is given increased prominence to close the gap between the private and expensive car ownership and traditional fixed route big-vehicle public transport.

The transport discussion matches the solutions proposed by the literature reviewed: at the regional scale: road pricing and commercial operation of the road system in an environment with reduced price distortions. At the local scale: reductions of the primacy of the vehicular traffic in the definition of the design standards and more flexible mobility services through car sharing and less rigid public transport. Still, transport could go ahead with its solutions without parallel changes in urban design, as the original road building coalition seems to be under bigger stress, at least in Europe, then construction-.housing-banking coalition.

9   CONCLUDING

The popular and the professional books on urban design reviewed here reflect the disenchantment with the promise of Broadacre city, the mid-century vision of content middle class life in an unstructured metropolitan area cruised through with the car. Even if the realisation is admittedly closer to the 1940 Futurama, the impetus was the same: to liberate the individual family from the constraints of the overlapping social networks of the industrial city and suburb by providing them with a house, a garden, a TV and a car. This arcadian patriarchal vision does not match up today to the reality of households headed by two working adults, who find that the co-ordination of the joint life becomes rather onerous in far flung suburbia, especially when neither the house nor children can be handed over anymore to the supervision of the eyes on the street. The effort is greatest for those households, which in the past benefited strongly from the place-based networks: the poorer households. The place-based networks tied the persons in, but kept them afloat. The elites are as able today, as they were in past, to substitute the services of the network by bought equivalents, although worrying about the trust they have to place into these services, be they nannies, pre-school teachers, cleaners, boy scout leaders etc (See for example Seligman, 1997). The elite have also the time and resources to maintain their spatially far-flung social networks in working order.

The request to scale back the grain, to rebuild those overlays of social relations enabling trust, formulated in this literature is understandable against this background, but it is unclear, if there are enough takers for this vision. With the genie out of the bottle, it is unclear, if many of the fully motorised and fully connected residents share the perception of Frank (1999) that consumption has reached excessive proportions, which should be taxed (in analogy to road pricing) to maintain rank order at lower expenditure levels. Alternatively, the majority, consciously rejecting such societal solutions, might flee deeper into individualised consumerism and its promises (see Twitchell, 1999 for a popular version of this theme) leaving the rest behind unable to implement the alternatives. The majorities could be of votes, capital, skill, energy or mixtures of these.

It is ironic, that the proponents of the smaller grain, of the more intense local co-ordination are proposing pricing as the tool to achieve it; that they point out, that pricing externalities might even makes us better off by either encouraging saving (Frank) or by suitable transfers between the relative time-sensitive money-rich and the relative time-rich money poor. (road pricing with suitable re-distribution of the income stream). It is also ironic to consider, if such measures can help to reintegrate the split consciousness of the citizen, who consumes/travels knowing about the external costs of these actions. The critics are looking for the gracefulness of the non-ironic consciousness in building and living: those coherent vernacular landscapes and those natural social nets. Still, can this grace lost through self-awareness be regained by the solutions proposed ?

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PS: CHARTER OF THE NEW URBANISM (2000)

Those proponents of New Urbanism, which are organized in the *Congress for the New Urbanism,* try to address the criticism raised against their ideas since their first publications in a charter, echoing the more famous Charter of Athens. Where the Charter of Athens was detailed and specific, the new charter has adopted a discursive style, by supplementing an one page charter of principles with about two dozens short essays addressing individual issues (Congress for the New Urbanism, 2000). The authors make the connection between the regional and the local scale explicit and stipulate that socially mixed environments are needed for socially and environmentally successful area. Still, the issues of race and social fears are only touched upon clearly in Calthorpe's Afterword to the main body of the essays. The issue of how to shift current practise decisively and how to accelerate the rebuilding of the existing suburbs according to the new prescription, is not raised and remains unanswered, although the book's indirect sponsor, the US government mortgage insurance company Fannie Mae,

might have an answer. The authors also do not address the issue of how their proposed physical solutions match the social structures of a post-industrial fully motorized and fully connected society.

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Figure 1   Ground area covered by buildings in central Detroit (1916 – 1950 – 1960 - 1994)

Detroit 1916

Detroit 1950

Detroit 1960

Detroit 1994

Source: Plunz, 1995, 2012-2013