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Chapter Three

Principles: Urbanism vs. Anti-Urbanism

This book is about formulating a more complex definition of American urbanism based on ideas embedded in different planning or urbanist 'cultures' that have been proposed for over a century. But this assumes that there is some working definition of urbanism to begin with. It rests on an initial conceptualization of urbanism from which to judge whether ideas about human settlement contribute to urbanism or not.

Thus the analysis of urbanist cultures presented in this book relies on a particular, underlying set of normative ideas about the nature and meaning of urbanism. This is not meant to be formulaic. What I outline in this chapter are simply the broad outlines, the flavour of what urbanism, in the most general of terms, means in America. Urbanism cannot be divorced from social conditions, but the focus here is on the physical settings that sustain these conditions.

In a nutshell, urbanism is defined here as human settlement that is guided by principles of diversity, connectivity, mix, equity, and the importance of public space. Diversity is the linchpin. As one urbanist put it, 'the simple truth is that the combinations of mixtures of activities, not separate uses, are the key to successful urban places' (Montgomery, 1998, p. 98). For Jane Jacobs, diversity was 'by far' the most important condition of a healthy urban place. She also recognized that diversity is not only a social condition, but translates to physical forms and patterns that maintain human interactions – relationships and patterns of relationships. In the context of sustaining diversity, urbanistic ideals are likely to consider place, form and the materiality and substance of settlement on a human scale. These considerations will vary by level of intensity and size of place.

The antithesis of urbanism can also be defined. The tendency toward separation, segregation, planning by monolithic elements like express highways, and the

neglect of equity, place, the public realm, historical structure and the human scale of urban form are all symptomatic of the opposite trend, which could be called 'anti-urbanism'. All of these principles, both urbanist and anti-urbanist, are a matter of degrees, vary in terms of their negative effect, and can and do overlap, both geographically and temporally. On the other hand, urbanism and anti-urbanism are not entirely subjective and relative – they are distinguishable concepts.

Against the principles upon which urbanism is conceptualized, the four planning cultures can be seen to fail on certain criteria and succeed on others. The same can be said of modernist urbanism, which is discussed in this chapter as the near embodiment of anti-urbanism. While it is recognized that everything about urbanism and its ideals is a matter of degree, modernist urbanism failed so completely, as Jane Jacobs and many others readily recognized, that its deleterious mark on American places can now be held up as an exemplar of anti-urbanism.

The principles of urbanism are not new or particularly controversial. That urbanism ideally rests on diversity (social, economic, physical), connectivity (appropriate integration of elements, as well as the concept of permeability), public space (opportunities for interaction), and equity (in terms of access to meaningful goods, services, facilities), and implies a variety of strategies necessary to make those principles work successfully, is widely acknowledged. Allan Jacobs and Donald Appleyard, for example, wrote a widely cited manifesto in which they argued that 'an urban fabric for an urban life' required the integration of activities, an emphasis on public place, and diversity. To these elements they added space enclosure and minimum density level, which is consistent but goes further than the defining parameters I use here. Other articulations have included the criteria of density (although without any given threshold), public space, variety, memory, and 'the stranger' (Jacobs and Appleyard, 1987; see also Larco, 2003).

Anti-urbanism and its fostering of separation, inequity, and various conditions that impede the principles of diversity, connectivity and equity, is the flip-side of this definition. It is easy to identify in the American pattern of settlement, particularly since it was stated so explicitly as an ideology in the twentieth century under the leadership of modernist architects and planners. But now, without this guiding ideological purpose, anti-urbanism has become a by-product of global realities. One of the key challenges of urbanism is therefore to find ways to forge a coherent relationship between globalized economic structure and the principles of diversity, mix, connectivity and equity. One way to do that is to recognize that urbanism is not simply a matter of efficiency and making globalized capital networks flow smoothly to maximize profit. It is also about individual spirit and collective good, a point made repeatedly and cogently by Lewis Mumford.

Diversity and the other related tenets of urbanism are not primarily an aesthetic concern. This is a contentious issue. Although aesthetics play a role, Melvin Webber

declared in 1963 that he was 'flatly rejecting the contention that there is an overriding universal spatial or physical aesthetic of urban form' (Webber, 1963, p. 52). To the degree that certain aesthetics are associated with urban forms that are diverse and connected vs. those that are not, this seems too strong a statement. Aesthetics in urbanism does not pertain to symbolic communication in the postmodern sense, but it can be interconnected to the proper functioning of urban places in terms of human need and behaviour. In any case, design in the environment is 'the bearer of the cultural value system of a community' and as such cannot really be completely detached from a discussion of urbanism (Lyndon and Halprin, 1989, p. 62).

There are no scientific proofs or moral laws backing up my claims about what urbanism is and is not. Rather, the broad parameters that define urbanism are grounded in recurrent empirical conditions, and by an historically-rooted understanding of the American settlement experience. The criteria are derived from outcomes, consequences and knowledge of what works, not in terms of universal truths, cosmology, or overarching world views, but as reliable, self-evident notions that, except in very specific cases, are necessary in order for urbanism to succeed. They are, in short, the cultural practices for making good cities, towns and other forms of human habitation as experienced in American history. They are also backed up by a great deal of writing about cities, and thus are not, as broadly articulated here, particularly contentious. In fact they have come to dominate the main ideas of urbanism in the early twenty-first century, under the familiar headings of smart growth, sustainable development, and New Urbanism. They are accepted ideas that nevertheless need to be explained well.[1]

As I work through the connections and conflicts within and between urbanist cultures, the underlying perspective about what will work or not work in the continued project of articulating and promoting American urbanism will become clearer. This viewpoint rests on a very basic idea: that the distinction between urbanism and anti-urbanism can be used to assess the positive and negative aspects of each planning culture. In other words, all four planning cultures are at their best when they are adhering to the main principles of urbanism, and they are at their worst when they veer away from it. Where the definition of urbanism gets complicated is in terms of process and extent: how to make urbanism happen and to whom and where it applies.

Throughout the evaluation, the criteria I use – diversity, equity, mix, connectivity, public space – serve to define the telos of the American planning cultures reviewed. The 'sketched historical and utopian urban form ideas' in a 'teleological format' have constituted a major part of the effort to mould American urbanism (Hill, 1993, p. 53). Having an end and purpose in mind – an Aristotelian final cause – gives some assurance that the diverse ideas will effectively interrelate. Note that this does not mean consensus, but rather coherence. Note too that it contrasts with the

view that equates planning with process itself. Instead, contested terrains, moral discourses, collective self-empowerment and other labels for the crucial role of public participation in planning are deemed an essential part of the expression of urbanism (see Friedmann, 1989).

The two dominant principles or criteria that are most often used to define good urbanism – diversity, or principles about mix and interconnection, and equity, or principles that in a spatial sense are about location and distance – can be found throughout the discourse on urbanism over the past century and longer. The debate is over specific articulation of these principles. A socially diverse environment can be physically non-diverse, or a homogeneous population can occupy a physically diverse urban place. Further, economic diversity can exist within places of physical monotony. There is no one answer. It is possible to say, however, that social, economic and physical diversity that effectively co-exist, and that therefore most likely exist within some underlying system of order (which may or may not be recognizable), are a condition of urbanism. Jane Jacobs had such a definition, and she called it 'organized complexity'.

Equity, unlike diversity, is much more an ideal in urbanism than something that has ever been achieved. Yet, there are settlement conditions that can be said to either help or hinder equity. In talking about urbanism, social equity is largely a matter of spatial equity, meaning that goods, services, facilities and other amenities and physical qualities of life are within physical reach of everyone, no matter what their social status, and no matter what their mobility constraints.

What makes the implementation of urbanist principles like diversity and equity challenging is that, in the U.S., such principles will need to be applied in a variety of contexts. In an idealized sense, it is necessary therefore to take basic notions like diversity, connectivity and equity and make them work successfully, on the ground, over time, for a diverse society. Where there is separation and inequity, or where there are impediments to diversity and equity, there may be elements of a failed urbanism.

Each principle, in order to be implemented successfully, tends to imply other notions about urbanism. Diversity implies the need for integration, and equity implies the requirement for accessibility. Integration means that urban elements are inter-related socially, economically and physically. Accessibility and integration imply the need for fine grain and permeability, and for things like small, dispersed facilities. They imply the need to consider pedestrian orientation in addition to other transportation modes. They engender considerations of three-dimensional form as factors in the quality of place and experience. They imply the need for citizen input and the importance of the communal and public realms. They necessitate civic space and collective movement in the form of public transit.

Most urbanists will say that good urbanism depends on a certain denseness of

social and economic relations. But density does not tell the whole story. Urbanism is the complex interplay between form and process, between structure and function, between social and economic systems and the supporting infrastructure these require. Diversity means that separation of urbanism into components, like land use categories, or miles of highways, or square footage of office space, or park acreage per capita – all of these abstracted calculations lead to, as Mumford termed it, the 'anti-city' (Mumford, 1968, p. 128). Jane Jacobs had the same argument in *Death and Life*, berating planners for treating the city as a series of calculations and measurable abstractions that rendered it a problem of 'disorganized complexity' and made planners falsely believe that they could effectively manipulate its individualized components (Jacobs, 1961). The real task of urbanism is to maximize interaction, promote interchange at all levels, stimulate both social and economic contact, and look for ways to promote diversity wherever feasible. That is the essence of urbanism.

But the physical articulation of these principles is not agreed upon. The principle of diversity of urban form is especially susceptible to an interpretation so broad that it becomes meaningless. In one recent interpretation, for example, urbanism was defined on the basis of indeterminacy, where the legitimate need to incorporate the ability for urbanism to adapt was said to be a matter of equating 'discontinuities and inconsistencies' with 'life-affirming opportunities' (Durack, 2001). This kind of definition, which lacks a clear idea about what diversity in urbanism requires, may just as readily condone haphazard growth and chaotic urban form. It can entail, on the one hand, an elevation of the importance of the 'mythic aspect of the ordinary and ugly' (Kelbaugh, 2002, p. 287), and on the other, a promotion of the view that strip malls merely represent a new, as yet under appreciated, aesthetic ideal (Kolb, 2000). In architecture, mass consumer culture or the speed of an automobile can become fetishized. All of these views are the extreme of urbanist relativism, akin to a philosophy that separates facts from values, regards all human nature as relative, and believes that virtues cannot be identified or ranked. Many architects believe urbanism is simply a matter of using architecture to help deal with, and perhaps work through, existing anxieties.

The urbanistic ideals explored in this book are about concerted, often planned efforts to engender or revitalize urbanism, not the appreciation of what exists irregardless of the level of urbanism involved. This is based on the assertion that concepts like diversity and equity are not completely ambiguous. For example, equity as a quality of urbanism means that, ideally, all residents of a place have equal access to the good things and equal distance from the bad. Equity as an element of urbanism is about geographic access and the locational distribution of elements and people. When this very basic idea is translated to physical principles of urbanism, it means that where people live must be equitably proximal to

what people need, irregardless of income and wealth, age, gender, race, or other socioeconomic conditions. This means that pedestrians must have access to the good things cities can provide – like public facilities and services – to the same degree that car-owners do, since equity conditioned on car ownership is not truly equitable. This condition of urbanism has significant implications, not dissimilar to the implications of diversity.

But even where there is general acceptance of principles like diversity and equity, there is disagreement about whether such goals should be treated as matters of physical planning. Some question whether urbanism can be affected by manipulating elements of form, or whether such an approach merely superficially treats the symptoms of deeper problems. If economic and social systems are the root cause of bad urbanism, should not these be the target of any urbanistic goals, rather than improved physical designs? Should not good urbanism start with building the local jobs base, for example, reconnecting local economic networks, and empowering small-scale, independent improvement efforts?[2] This same underlying critique has been expressed in multiple ways for the past 150 years in proposals for improving the industrial and post-industrial city. It was the argument against urban design efforts at the very start: Friedrich Engels thought of proposals for ideal cities as folly unless the underlying capitalist system could be overthrown. Contemporary observers view proposals for changing the physical landscape as misrepresentative and therefore negligent of 'dominant and oppressed cultures, power and powerlessness' (Ellin, 1996, p. 157). Expressed another way, proposals for new urban landscapes may simply be expressions of market fragmentation. Such proposals are therefore 'reflecting and reinforcing the broader fragmentation and polarization of urban space' (Knox, 1991, p. 203).

At a minimum, urbanists have to consider the fact that physical and economic realities are interlocking. For example, the way in which a dendritic street system of arterials supports a strip mall is based on the latter's requirement for a certain number of daily drive-bys, thus necessitating a collector system that is often viewed as harmful to urbanism overall. The question is, do we adjust our view of urbanism according to dominant forces, or assume that changes will be made in support of our urbanistic goals at some future point? These questions constitute a major division in urban planning, forming two different perspectives on urbanism. The debate has created an essential divergence in every planning culture. What it relates to is the perception that fostering good urbanism based on the ideal of social equity in a capitalist system is a contradiction, since the engine of economic growth will always dominate any pretences of social concern.

In this book, I use a definition of urbanism that considers physical goals as both ends and means, that acknowledges the fact that underlying social and economic systems must be considered in tandem with physical objectives, but that

physical urbanistic goals are also vehicles of change. Building housing without jobs can undermine urbanism, but at the same time, the importance of the physical framework as a means of accomplishing a more effective integration of work and residence should also be acknowledged. There is little doubt that specific perspectives on social, political and economic relationships go hand-in-hand with specific physical outcomes. This means that recurrent principles of urbanism imply certain viewpoints about social and economic systems. For example, elevation of the importance of civic society goes hand in hand with paying greater attention to cultural infrastructure. A compact, pedestrian-scale, diverse community that emphasizes connectivity, access, and civic space rests on a social vision of shared, or communal, civic responsibility. By contrast, and as discussed below, the anti-urbanism of the modernist city is based on a social vision that is bureaucratically run from the top down, focused not on collectivism but on mass production and efficiency (Luccarelli, 1995, especially pp. 205–208). The modernist attempt to rationalize and make efficient the complexities of social and cultural life resulted in what many consider a cold, sterile urbanism.

The difference manifests itself in other ways. It can be seen as a contrast between the historically-rooted vision of what cities and urban places are supposed to be like, and the more recent view that we should find ways to make do with the urban forms that the marketplace or technology has given us. In this sense, the lines between urbanism and anti-urbanism have become blurred. Scepticism about normative views of urbanism translate into the idea that we should not necessarily despair about miles of asphalt in the form of highways and parking garages, but instead should look for ways to interpret these elements as interesting cultural phenomena, something to be studied and incorporated in new personal visions by forward thinking designers. All that is needed is the right equipment for a more broad-minded type of interpretation. In the book *The 100 Mile City* (Sudjic, 1992), for example, almost anything constitutes urbanism – a cluster of big box retailers on the highway, or an airline terminal. Furthermore, if we turn our backs on this 'new form', we are being both 'condescending and self-defeating' (Sudjic, 1992, p. 297). The individuality of experience found in the Las Vegas commercial strip, scrutinized in Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972), and more recently celebrated in *Everyday Urbanism* (Chase, Crawford and Kaliski, 1999), offer similar perspectives.

Division revolves around the problematic concept of 'order'. Order in urbanism has to be reconciled with diversity, and this has been a key sticking point in attempting to define urbanism. Diversity in all forms – social, economic, cultural, but also in terms of physical components – is essential for urbanism, but there are requirements for order as well. Some argue that order is required in order to identify the 'collective' aspects of urbanism, i.e., order is what conveys its public purpose. It

allows us to grasp a shared construct, a collective expression that counterbalances the individualism of diversity. Order supports the ability for diverse urban elements to relate to each other in some way.

A key contribution to understanding the complex relationship between diversity and order was made by Jane Jacobs, who argued that order is not the opposite of diversity. Her solution was more akin to the idea of imposing a few basic rules to guide a process, rather than the imposition of a pre-conceived plan put in place by one person or group. The same idea was behind Christopher Alexander's influential 1965 essay 'A City is Not a Tree' in which he argued against 'trading the humanity and richness of the living city for a conceptual simplicity which benefits only designers, planners, administrators and developers'. Separation, compartmentalization, and 'the dissociation of internal elements' were signs of the 'coming destruction' of urbanism.

But the incremental, complexity-generating processes promoted by urbanists like Jacobs and Alexander have to be weighed against the fact that specific design visions – in their ordered coherency, in the strength and conviction of their vision, in their 'clarity of standards' – have tended to have the greatest and most immediate impact on urban reform.[3] Such reform is often criticized as being anti-urbanist, but there are also urbanist successes. In the end, the general consensus that accommodating difference and diversity is a basis for urbanism may mean that there is a need to find a material expression for it that rests on some, however nuanced and subordinated, sense of order. The investigation of urbanism in this book leaves open the possibility that there are legitimate ways of nurturing diversity that involve pre-conceived designs and coerced urban forms.

Despite these means of balancing order and diversity, order continues to be equated with the attempt to deny social conflict and control the unexpected. This is why M. Christine Boyer (1983, p. 7) critiqued planning as preoccupied with 'disciplinary order and ceremonial harmony', whereby humans are organized, but alienated. Planners and architects with a normative vision are routinely criticized as being imposers and stiflers who are threatened by the unknown and the uncontrolled. It is a critique legitimately rooted in the fact that almost all ideas about the spatial planning of cities have been linked to some form of social planning and reform (Kostof, 1991). The transparency of social intent has differed – more overt in Haussmann's grand planning, perhaps less authoritarian in the planning of neighbourhood facilities – but the issue of social manipulation has always been a source of disapproval.

When the quest for diversity is brought under the aegis of urban planning, there is a fundamental conflict that surfaces. The question that critics pose is this: how can diversity, which is the byproduct of many individuals working in myriad, individual ways to constantly alter urbanism, be conceived of on a level that is not

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individually-scaled, but is the product of one planner's or one group of planners' decisions? This was the theme explored by Jane Jacobs (1961), Christopher Alexander (1979), Richard Sennett (1990), and countless other sceptics of the viability of the urban planning profession. Urban planners, in defence, argue that the 'freedom' of the random, chaotic, unregulated urbanism of individual choice creates an inhumane, sometimes anti-urban settlement form. This argument was made most cogently by Lewis Mumford.

In short, some urbanists find it impossible and politically untenable to support pre-determined definitions and parameters about urbanism – 'we are too adventurous, inquisitive, egoistic and competitive to be a harmonious society of artists by consensus' said Jacobs (1961, p. 374). Yet, there is a counter-recognition that maintaining integrity, liveability, and place requires intervention. In light of these competing renditions, perhaps the best strategy for defining urbanism is to offer a definition that is multi-dimensional, not uni-dimensional. It should be inclusive and not overly self-confident, but at the same time it should not be about accommodating all patterns and forms of human settlement. The question is, on what basis is this distinction justified, and how are ideals like diversity and equity translated into a specific language of urban form? The multiplicity of answers, within a framework of clear principles about urbanism, constitutes the main content of this book.

Anti-urbanism

If good urbanism is about diversity, equity, mix, interconnectivity and the ability to make those principles work successfully, what is the nature of anti-urbanism, and where does it originate? One way to summarize this is to look for ideas that seem to work against the basic principles, and, in the American context, there are some formidable forces that can be analyzed. These will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

As already argued, distinguishing between urbanism and anti-urbanism is not about density or even level of intensity. Louis Wirth (1938) argued in 'Urbanism as a way of life' that large, dense cities produced the greatest heterogeneity. This may be true, but diversity can be found at other scales too. The measure of a town, as Witold Rybczynski (1995) analyzed it, is not dependent on physical size or population level. Ebenezer Howard held that all the elements of a 'city' could be contained, at least theoretically, in a place the size of a town. And Spiro Kostof (1991) pointed out that urban places, to be cities, did not need to be of a particular population. Ancient settlements could be limited to a population of less than 5,000 inhabitants and still be considered 'urban'.

This justification for a more inclusive definition is not just about a broadened

consideration of urban intensity levels and scales. It is also about the idea that rural areas support urbanism by controlling, bounding or in some other way helping to define human settlement. This is why the view that urbanism should be bounded in some way and distinguished from rural environments and nature has been a recurrent theme in urbanistic thought and pervades every planning culture. In fact the desire to form 'a coherent and lasting relationship with nature' is a basic connection between even the most apparently divergent approaches (Fishman, 2000, p. 82).

Yet this has historically been a major source of puzzlement, and the inability to work out the difference between urban and rural domains has a long, tortured past in the annals of American urbanism. Part of the confusion has to do with how suburban development is to be reconciled with urbanism. Suburban development is routinely regarded as 'anti-urban' despite the fact that it has, throughout history, been viewed as an integral and necessary component of dense cities. Thomas Sharp, speaking about the problem in Europe, identified the essential issue in 1932 as one of 'debased' town development: 'Rural influences neutralize the town. Urban influences neutralize the country. In a few years all will be neutrality' (Sharp, 1932, p. 11). Now, the inappropriate mixing of the rural and the urban is one of the key concepts being used to define sprawl (Duany, 2002). The unsuitable mixing of urban and rural realms, not the rural itself, is thus one way to define anti-urbanism.

The more pervasive characterization of anti-urbanism in America concerns the principles of separation and segregation. While each of the urbanist cultures reviewed in this book can be said to contribute partially to anti-urbanism (separation, inequity), the cultures I focus on are distinguished precisely because they are *essentially* aimed at defining urbanism in a way that upholds the basic principles defined above. Again, some of the cultures have been more successful at upholding certain principles than others. The important question still to be discussed is: what should be made of the normative ideals that seem to be about the opposite, that were intended to create a type of settlement that, based on the criteria for urbanism identified above, can only be described as 'anti-urbanist'? While the anti-urbanism discussed in the remainder of this chapter is connected in many ways to all other planning cultures, and many would see the models described below as extensions of ideals already well established, they can nevertheless be readily separated out as approaches to human settlement that were so counter to an urbanism of diversity, connectedness and equity, that they stand apart as object lessons of what anti-urbanism is.

Two sets of ideas stand out in particular as exemplifying anti-urbanism in the American context: post World War II suburbanization, generally in the form of large-scale residential development; and modernist concepts of urbanism promoted through planners and architects associated with the Congrès Internationaux

Figure 3.1. The phenomenal growth of zoning, mostly by single-use categories. From a textbook on planning published in 1931. (*Source*: Karl B. Lohmann, *Principles of City Planning*, 1931)

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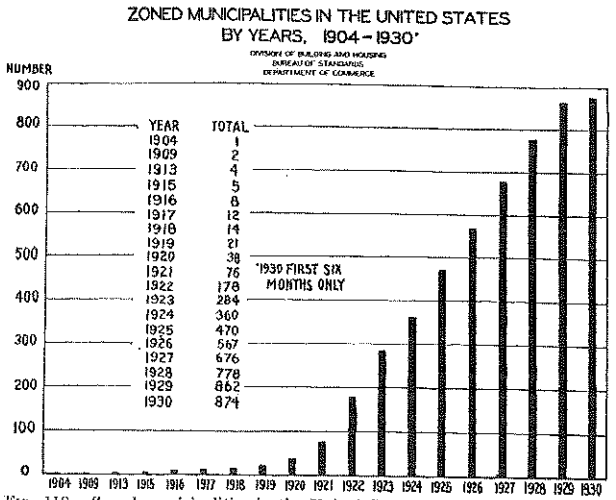

Fig. 118.—Zoned municipalities in the United States by years, 1904 to 1930.

Figure 3.1. The phenomenal growth of zoning, mostly by single-use categories. From a textbook on planning published in 1931. (*Source*: Karl B. Lohmann, *Principles of City Planning*, 1931)

d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM). Both of these anti-urban phenomena have been discussed at length in numerous texts. Here, I review them in order to illuminate the essential differences between urbanism and anti-urbanism in America. I will spend more time on the issue of modernist urbanism not because it had a greater effect, but because its position as being anti-urbanist is more complicated.

In the case of suburban extension, the anti-urban tendencies vary in degree. In Chapter 6, I present the case that some aspects of the planned community, often a primary means of extension, form an important dimension of American urbanism. But where the planned community ideal leans too heavily on separation, white middle-class escape, and an exclusively residential focus, all of which constitute segregation and inequity, the link between the planned community and American urbanism becomes difficult. Such communities become more a case of anti-urbanism than urbanism.

Levittown is the quintessential example of residential development in the form of a planned community that was clearly built on the idea of spatial separation of land use and population. But there are examples where the planned community was built more urbanistically, that is, with ideas about diversity, equity, and the creation of more inclusive communities rather than isolated residential enclaves. Then there are examples of planned communities that seem to fall somewhere in between, such as the 'decentralized industrial growth poles' created by industries in the Los Angeles area, described by Greg Hise as examples of 'peripheral urbanism' (Hise, 1996). Here were discrete communities with a workplace-residence link, complete with neighbourhood centres and other daily life needs. They were not commuters suburbs. To the extent that they did in fact offer a full range of services

and were intended to be socially and economically diverse, it is possible to discuss their urbanistic contributions.

Aside from these exceptions, postwar suburbanization is generally regarded as the antithesis of urbanism since it was based on principles of separation, segregation and inequity. And it was nurtured for years by planning organizations, the federal government, and powerful groups like the National Association of Home Builders, a topic explored in Marc Weiss' *The Rise of the Community Builders: The American Real Estate Industry and Urban Land Planning* (1987). That study showed how development was not simply unfettered sprawl, but was orderly, controlled, and designed. The community builders helped put in place the deed restrictions, zoning, subdivision regulations, and other land development controls that engendered the segregated pattern of postwar suburbanization. Although not all developments had the same level of anti-urbanism, the ubiquitous, large tract of single-family housing was an obvious example of separation. It usually also connoted inequity by excluding housing for lower-income groups and failing to provide services that were not automobile-dependent. What Ada Louise Huxtable called 'slurbs' became an embodiment of homogeneity and conformity (quoted in Shaffer, 1988, p. 275).

It is this anti-urbanism that has now come to epitomize much of the American pattern of development, a general attitude about settlement that began in the early part of the twentieth century and was fully in place by 1940. As Weiss makes clear,

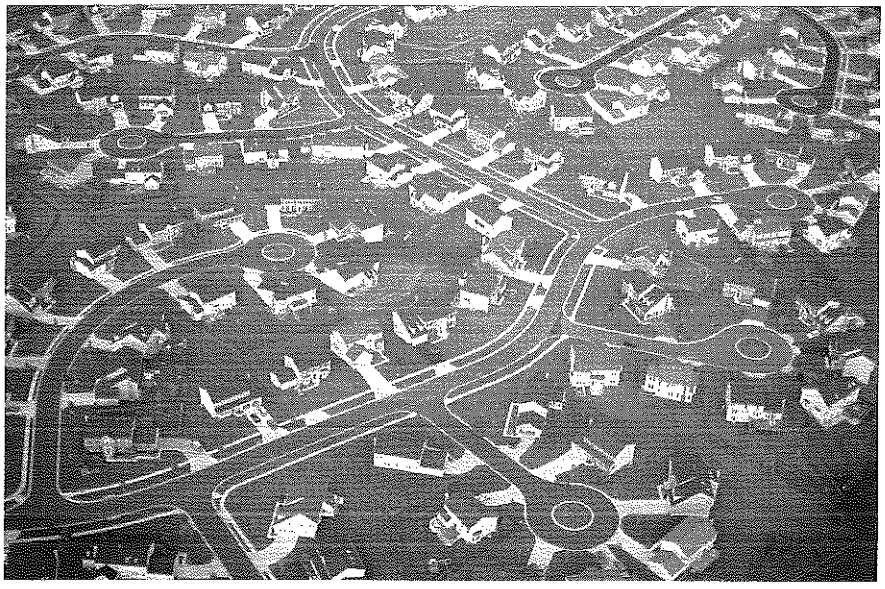

Figure 3.2. Growth by subdividers and lotsellers, the predominant American pattern of growth. (*Source*: Landslides Aerial Photography)

the attitude grew out of the need for greater market control. This has always been the main pre-occupation of community building, and the main reason why it is often viewed as an exercise in anti-urbanism. This is especially true since many community building enterprises were (and are) geared to upper-income groups, catering to their need for residential exclusion.

Weiss points out that, because of their support for public planning, the community builders were not typical subdividers, but were a 'minority breed' (Weiss, 1987, p. 5). Mere subdividers or lot sellers actually created instability in the marketplace, and the community builders sought to undermine them. But the residential exclusiveness of the community builders, together with the efficiency of the lot subdividers, created a situation conducive to the subsequent postwar production of sprawl. The promotion of large-scale residential land subdivision, coupled with supporting federal policy, automobile dependence, increasing affluence, and racial tension, supported the rapid deployment of a settlement model that ran counter to the key tenets of urbanism.

At the same time that these forces were disrupting urbanism peripherally, a second category, generally referred to as 'modernist urbanism', was creating a different type of disruption. Whereas postwar suburbanization, whether guided by the community builders or not, was about peripheral, low-density, residential extension, modernist urbanism covered all aspects of urbanization – from downtown redevelopment to suburban shopping malls, to expressways that traversed the entire system. Unlike postwar suburbanization, modernist urbanism had a conceptually powerful, well-reasoned and well-articulated ideological basis. The mindset of the community builders was also articulated and publicized, but its physical vision was less ideological.

If we define urbanism on the basis of diversity, equity, and the related principles discussed above, then modernist urbanism would seem to epitomize the opposite. This is not a particularly controversial statement, as the modernist city is often derided on the basis of being anti-urban (see Boyer, 1983, p. 283). But it is important to stress at the outset that there are grey areas. While the most obvious source of anti-urbanism is the doctrine of the Functional City promulgated by the Modern Movement in architecture (discussed below), there are many ideas associated with the movement that are not so easily categorized as being urbanist or anti-urbanist.

We can look at two examples in which the principles of urbanism are not clear-cut, and where the dispute over implementation issues is ongoing. First is the debate over traffic separation. The question is whether the separation of pedestrian and automotive space is essential and non-detrimental, or whether it is deemed simply another type of separation that is antithetical to urbanism. Many planners throughout the past century have advocated separate systems. Lewis Mumford, Clarence Stein, Henry Wright and others believed that pedestrian routes

and facilities like cafés and schools were being ruined by the noise and fumes of wheeled vehicles, thus making separation imperative. A counter-argument, from Jane Jacobs to the New Urbanists, has insisted that separation does more harm than good, and that there are other ways of mitigating the mix of traffic and people.

A second, related example has to do with the issue of whether hierarchical plans can accommodate the complexity of urbanism. Lewis Mumford wrote in the essay 'Social Complexity and Urban Design' about the problem of hierarchical circulation, whereby expressways undertake the 'impossible task of canalizing into a few arteries what must be circulated through a far more complex system of arteries, veins and capillaries' (Mumford, 1968, p. 161). What was needed to alleviate the mistake of 'monotransportation' was to make 'the fullest use of the whole system'. Related to this, Christopher Alexander later advocated a 'semi-lattice' urban network to replace the hierarchic structure of a tree endorsed by functionalist planning in his essay 'A City is Not a Tree' (Alexander, 1965). But there is another side to the issue. Some urbanists call for both hierarchical and non-hierarchical structures, based on the idea that some spatial differentiation is needed. They do not advocate a centralized, rigid hierarchical order, but they do argue that hierarchy that is multi-scaled and promotes connectivity need not be dismissed altogether. It may be a matter of accommodating both hierarchy and network, separation from traffic sometimes and integration in other instances, and knowing how the two can be combined. Often it is a matter of not allowing one interpretation to dominate absolutely, whereby an imbalance is created. This, many would say, was the downfall of the modernist city.

If there is a need for balance and flexibility in interpreting the requirements of urbanism, that is something the ideology of modernist urbanism did not permit. Modernism itself is rooted in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, in which classical learning was rediscovered and rational order and reason formed the basis of social understanding and change. As a cultural phenomenon, modernism was more a matter of breaking with European realism in about the mid-nineteenth century, whereby the passiveness of 'reflectionist aesthetics' was rejected in favour of something more socially transformative (Pinkney, 1993). Modernism in the context of architecture and urbanism has an even more specific definition, associated with ideas formed in reaction to the industrial city, and, by the 1920s, ideas in which the 'dead hand of tradition' was firmly rejected in favour of technological innovation, formalism, universalism and functionalism. These were rationalist paradigms, combining what was believed to be progressive social organization with Platonic geometric shapes (Lang, 2000, p. 85).

The start of the modern period in urbanism is sometimes linked to Tony Garnier and his Cité Industrielle, displayed in Paris in 1904 and unique because it embraced the basic principles of mass production and industrial efficiency and applied them

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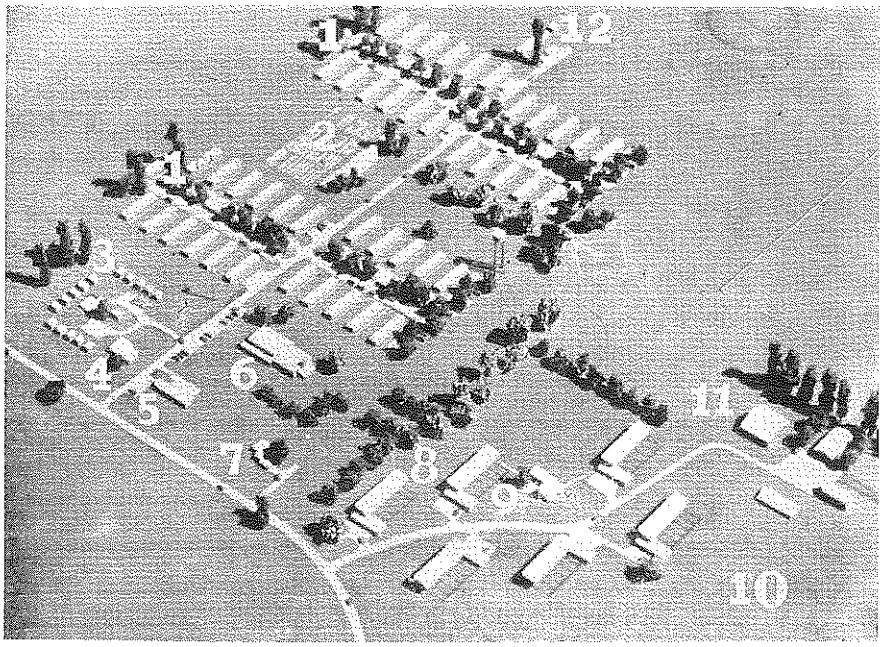

Figure 3.3. 'Rural Urbanism' according to CIAM, showing functional arrangement of land use. Included are row shelters (1); apartments (6); a central utility building (2); and 'homemaking and laundry building' (9). (*Source*: Jose Luis Sert, *Can Our Cities Survive?*, 1944*a*)

to city form. The plan boldly rejected past historical styles and offered a 'machine-age community' of hydro-electric plants, aerodromes, and highways, all strictly segregated according to function (LeGates and Stout, 1998, p. xxxi). It also separated the building from the street and the pedestrian from vehicular traffic, signalling the beginning of a century of free interpretation of urban form.

Modernist ideas about urbanism that reached full flowering by the 1950s and that exerted a powerful effect on urban form are widely familiar. These are: the separation of land uses, the accommodation of the automobile in the form of high-speed highways, the rejection of the street and street life, the treatment of buildings as isolated objects in space rather than as part of the larger interconnected urban fabric, the reliance on two dimensional plans that ignored the three dimensional aspects of urban form, the encouragement of unformed space, the rejection of traditional elements like squares and plazas, the demolition of large areas of the city to make unfettered places for new built forms, and the creation of enclosed malls and sunken plazas. These ideas and others were part of an ideology about urbanity, generated by planners and architects, that was already in evidence in the 1920s. As such, they were not ideas that came by default: they were part of a proactive programme of reform. And although these principles were ideologically driven,

they were not always well explained. For example, the rejection of the street was considered self-evident by many Modernist architects, but no specific justification was given (Mumford, 2000, p. 56).

The ideas have been referred to as the Functionalist Movement (Trancik, 1986), but were essentially the main tenets of the organized group, CIAM. As Eric Mumford recounts in his detailed study, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928–1960* (2000), the CIAM definition of urbanism was essentially a continuation of longstanding ideas that had taken hold by the 1920s – that is, the focus on efficiency in city-building, the strong belief in the ability of technology to solve social problems, and the reliance on the master planner/expert to accomplish a better world. As Jane Jacobs analyzed things, Le Corbusier's Radiant City came directly out of Howard's Garden City, the former was simply adapted to much higher densities. Garden city advocates and regionalists who were later aghast at Le Corbusier's brutal towers in a park were only getting what they deserved, Jacobs contended, which was essentially a more intense interpretation of the city for the automobile. Super-highways, super-blocks and pedestrian separation had all been advocated prior to CIAM. Garden city advocates had to admit that they had already severed the building line from the street line in the early decades of the twentieth century. And the demolition of large sections of cities – so-called 'slum clearance' – was already an established part of urban planning in the 1930s. CIAM clearly strengthened the general approach, but it cannot be said to have solely created it.

What is striking about the history of CIAM is how much its rhetoric sounded like the common sense principles of virtually every other urbanist culture – principles that, on an abstract level, are not difficult to agree with, even now. They advocated the equitable distribution of wealth, utopian, future-oriented plan-making, affordable housing, efficiency in production methods, collectivism, and the need to situate places of work within reasonable distance of places of residence. A set of resolutions crafted in 1933 at the 'Functional City' CIAM event consisted of such statements as 'the city should assure individual liberty and the benefits of collective action,' that 'all urban arrangements should be based on the human scale', and that 'urbanism should determine the relationships between places . . . according to the rhythm of everyday activity of the inhabitants' (Mumford, 2000, p. 87). Siegried Giedion stated unequivocally that what was most important to CIAM was 'planning from a human point of view' (Giedion quoted in Sert, 1944*a*, p. xi). Later, in a reaction against functionalism, CIAM's Team X architects stressed notions like 'human association' and 'cluster' to claim an urbanism more responsive to human need (Mumford, 2000, p. 7). In a broader sense, we can even connect Le Corbusier's insistence on density as the prerequisite of economic, social and cultural vitality, with Wirth's insistence on social heterogeneity as a basis of urbanism. On the surface, it would seem to be fitting of a basic, urbanistic approach to settlement.

But CIAM associated architects, among many others not associated but nevertheless subscribing to the same modernist approach to urbanism, parted company with traditional urbanism by embracing entirely new ways of thinking about cities. Traditional and historically referenced urban forms were not allowed to be part of the new modern city. In fact the new ideology, abstracted and 'free', was superior because of its newness. Without constraints, ideas could be taken to their extreme conclusion. Abstracted principles could be elevated to approach what the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead called 'the fallacy of misplaced concreteness'.[4] When this happened, the complexity that was the original source of the abstraction became undervalued.

Principles were abstracted, traditional methods of place-making were rejected, and architects, working under a newly found freedom of expression, were individually given much credit for the ability to change society. Le Corbusier's belief that the mass production strategies advocated by Henry Ford and Frederick Winslow Taylor were 'natural' and therefore 'above politics' (Mumford, 2000, p. 20)

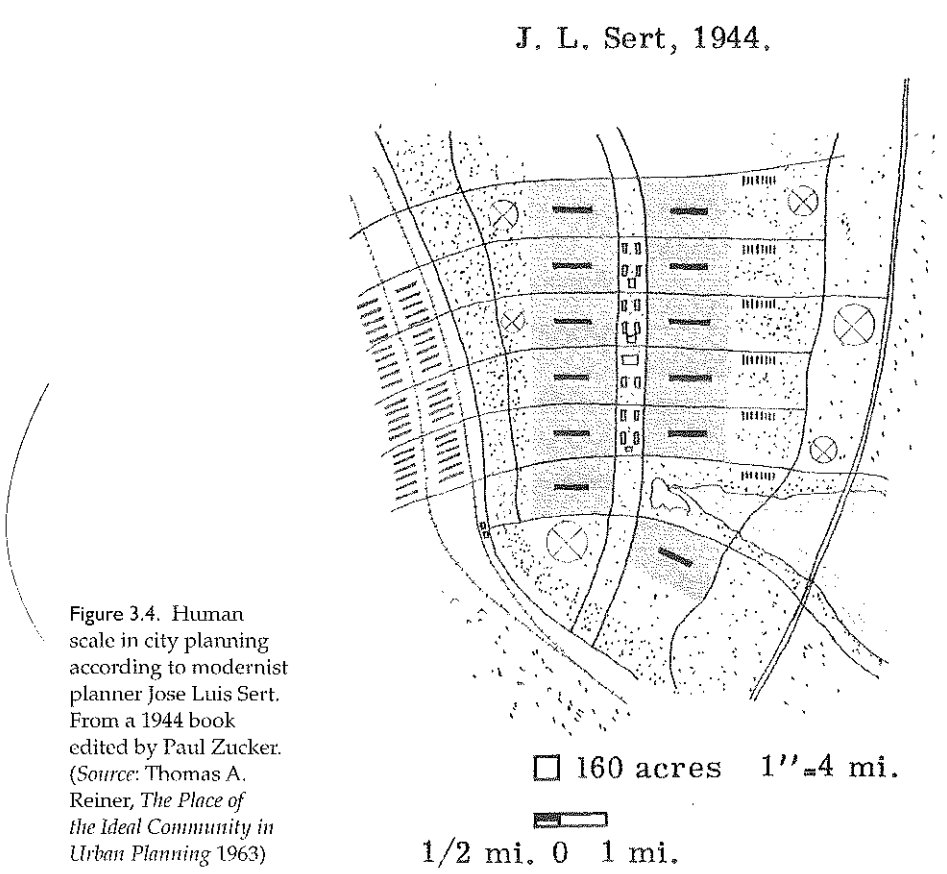

Figure 3.4. Human scale in city planning according to modernist planner Jose Luis Sert. From a 1944 book edited by Paul Zucker. (*Source*: Thomas A. Reiner, *The Place of the Ideal Community in Urban Planning* 1963)

is indicative of the kind of city-building approach that was in fact antithetical to the more humanistic thinking of planners like Geddes and Unwin. The latter group sought individual liberation through collective enterprise, something CIAM also claimed concern for, but which CIAM arrived at through a completely different urban logic. That logic was about arranging and combining the material elements of urbanism as if they were abstract, geometric shapes.

The force with which these ideas took hold is explained by the existence of multiple intersecting currents that crossed paths in the mid part of the twentieth century. Le Corbusier is said to have had an impact because he combined two dominant ideas – the bureaucratized, standardized, machine-made environment, and the natural, open space environment to offset it (Mumford, 1968, p. 118). On the other hand, modern architecture is also blamed for causing the split between planning and architecture. The exhibition of modern architecture organized in 1932 by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock for the Museum of Modern Art expressed the importance of formal style over social function, leaving planning and architecture with no common language (Boyer, 1983, p. 303).

In short, the CIAM movement gave expression to an anti-urbanism that went far beyond anything that had been put forward before, and crafted a supporting language that replaced all prior conceptions. The focus on collectivism, the merger of art and science, and the ability of architecture and urbanism to create social cohesion were not new or uniquely co-opted by CIAM members. But CIAM transformed these concepts in a way that was so abstract and so removed from history, local condition, and pedestrian scale that it became a fundamentally different project. The denial of history was not only expedient (which indeed it was), but it was seen as a positive way to gain insight into a newly emerging urban reality. The result was another manner of separation, a loss of connection with time.

Some observers have pointed out that modernism was not completely ahistorical, and that there was always a subculture in CIAM where tradition and history remained more prominent. They point to the fact that Siegfried Giedion liked to lecture on ancient Greek architecture and urban form (Ellin, 1996, p. 303). However, the appreciation stopped short of any materially translated connection. Whatever the intellectual appraisal of history, the urban structures and forms created under modernist ideology lacked referent. Architecture was to be 'of its time'.

Under an ideology that suppressed past forms, Catherine Bauer proclaimed things like 'we must first get rid of all our preconceptions as to what a building *should* look like: for the new conditions . . . determine entirely new forms' (Bauer, 1934, p. 218). In a similar vein, Le Corbusier had famously recommended the destruction of Paris and then Manhattan as mere accretions of the past that must now make way for modern forms (New York had also, incidentally, been slated for demolition by Ruskin and Frank Lloyd Wright, among others). In its place was

a proposal for the complete reorganization of urban life. The highly ideological system of abstracted rules about urbanism had little connection to local or regional culture, material, or building types. Individual expression in urbanism, other than by the architects themselves, was condemned. Le Corbusier interpreted walls of individually formed houses as a 'grotesquely jagged silhouette of gables, attics, and zinc chimneys' (Le Corbusier in Mumford, 2000, p. 56). This left little room for historical continuity. As Kenneth Frampton notes, the problem with CIAM was not necessarily its conflicted ideology, but that 'there was ultimately no ground left upon which to continue any kind of rational discourse' (Frampton, 2000, p. xv).

Maintaining historical connection did not have to mean imitation and sentimentality but CIAM members seemed not to recognize this. The difficulty, for the modernists, was that people generally did not share their appreciation of a-historical form. Some admired its rational purity, but architectural bleakness was rarely beloved outside the architectural *avant garde*. Some people may have been awed by the vision of skyscraper downtowns laced with highways – the type immortalized in Norman Bel Geddes's 'Futurama' at the 1939 World's Fair – but CIAM's need to reject what they regarded as bourgeois forms and styles from the past ultimately produced places that disenfranchised the average urban dweller. It was a detached set of propositions that ultimately produced a grim urban reality.

While almost all urbanist cultures have been concerned with efficiency, technological solution, and social purpose, CIAM members pushed the notion of functionalism to an ideological extreme. The efficiency principle began to exclude other considerations and merged with stripped down design to reinforce the idea that maximizing open space (light and air) and minimizing construction costs, was a perfectly worthy way to build cities. The Functional City became a uni-dimensional cure for urban ills, all by way of scientific principle devoted to furthering the common good.

Jane Jacobs thought other urbanist proposals like garden cities and the City Beautiful were similar. Yet there were key differences. Notions of human behaviour, scale, context, urban form, treatment of space, circulation – elements of urbanism came together in fundamentally different ways under modernist urbanism. One example of this difference can be seen in Le Corbusier's approach to the building of high rises. The very high densities he promoted, surrounded by open green spaces and highways, and inserted in the urban core by way of radical 'surgery' (as in Plan Voisin), was an exercise in abstraction and detachment, with little regard for concepts like appropriateness and context that were deemed much more important, or perhaps inescapable, in other, previous visions of an improved urbanism. Garden city dogma included a reappraisal of dense urban conditions and corridor streets, but it was not a complete rejection nor a reconstituted urban vocabulary. The new, radicalized language of modernist city form can be seen vividly in Ludwig

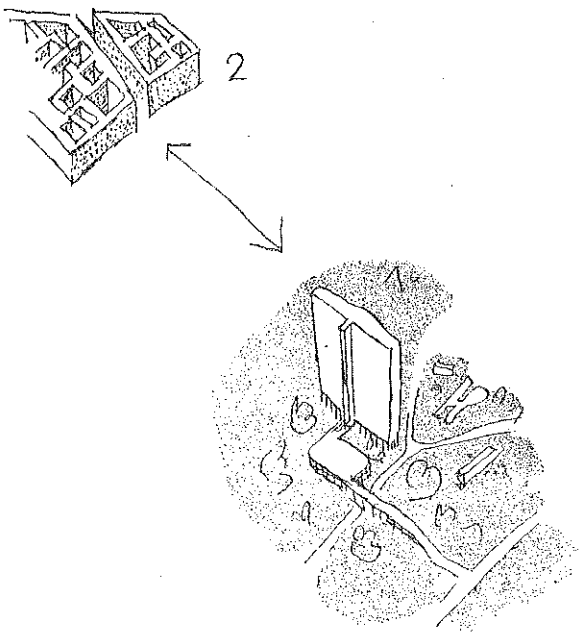

Figure 3.5. One of Corbusier's concise drawings, showing how roads 'teeming with a confusion of vehicles and pedestrians' can be transformed in a 'Vertical Garden-City'. (*Source*: Le Corbusier, *Concerning Town Planning*, 1948, © 2004 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ ADAGP, Paris/FLC)

Hilberseimer's 1927 counter-proposal to Le Corbusier's Ville Contemporaine, 'Scheme of a High-Rise City' in which virtually all functions are combined in one block-long building. The detached, abstracted scheme was well suited to a highly organized mass society, but unlikely to be embraced by urbanists of the garden city or City Beautiful variety (Banik-Schweitzer, 1999, p. 68).

The problem was not with density, but with the devaluing of context. Andres Duany has commented that 'high density housing offers an inferior lifestyle only if it is without urbanism as its setting'.[5] Thus, what comes across in the modernist love for the high-rise 'solution' is an aversion to diversity. Gropius thought of high rises as the only real means for counteracting the congestion that resulted from low-rise buildings. It was believed that the coverage of land by row-houses and detached or attached two-storey buildings would disintegrate the city, creating its very antithesis (Martin and March, 1952). The high-rise would eliminate ground-level overcrowding, exactly what Gropius was after. But social diversity, as Jacobs and many others later argued, could not be effectively locked up in high-rise buildings

and contained, and doing so denied human complexity. It needed, among other things, to be externally connected.

On some level, large-scale plans for urbanism are related to each other simply by virtue of their involving massive land acquisition, creative financing, and the need for cooperation between public and private entities. There are connections by way of communal land ownership or the acquisition of large, centrally located parcels for redevelopment, and possibly, the transferring of profits from the developer to the community. It is on this basis that Ebenezer Howard and H.P. Berlage have been linked to CIAM and Le Corbusier (Mumford, 2000). Via the principle of cost saving through large scale development, the modernist Catherine Bauer is linked to the garden city architect Raymond Unwin (Birch, 1980*a*). Here again, however, there are wide differences in urbanistic outcome, despite the similarity of certain processes. The fact that Howard advocated a community of 30,000 while Le Corbusier's was 3,000,000 gives some indication of the variation in concern for place, form and context. Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City can be compared to Ebenezer Howard's vision of garden cities on the basis of self liberation (Hall, 2002, pp. 279–281), but the physical articulation of form and the collective experience it was to invoke are not comparable. And Berlage's street oriented perimeter blocks at Amsterdam Zuid had the social mark of uniformity, but they were four-storey, traditional row housing blocks that defined space in the same way as the corridor street. They were superblocks with internal green spaces, but there was no functional separation, rejection of the street, or centralized density. They still retained traditional concepts of place-making, and this is what made these and other projects significantly dissimilar from most CIAM proposals.

The conceptions of urbanism being espoused by urban planners in the U.S., either in the form of plans for existing cities or as new, self-contained planned communities, rarely lost sight of a specific outcome. Planners were increasingly concerned with process, but they did not initially reject the material subject matter, the physical, detailed, conditions of urban form in the way that CIAM proponents did quite early on. This is especially true of City Beautiful era planners, and later, planned community advocates. But in Le Corbusier's 1928 Ville Radieuse, urbanism had become open-ended, fixed but strangely detached, and concerned more with process. The statement on the title page of *La Ville Radieuse* by Le Corbusier that 'plans are the rational and poetic monument set up in the midst of contingencies' gives an indication of the level of abstraction that was transforming this new conceptualization of urbanism into something very different from that of Burnham, Geddes, and Unwin (cited in Mumford, 2000, p. 49).

The level of abstraction that CIAM was promoting comes through clearly in their manifesto, *Can Our Cities Survive? An ABC of Urban Problems, Their Analyses, Their Solutions: Based on the Proposals Formulated by CIAM*, written by Jose Luis Sert,

published in 1944, and containing the statement of principles known as the Athens Charter. Meant for the mass American public, the polemic of the functional city was strongly argued in the text, but its presentation was fairly detached. Details of urban form, planning and design are lacking, perhaps as a way of ensuring that the mistakes of past urbanism – with its 'parade' of mere aesthetics – would not be repeated. As Joseph Hudnut argued in the preface, city design in places like Paris had 'a basis no firmer than a logic of form and a reward no deeper than an aesthetic experience'. The antidote was a city planning that was based on 'those processes by which material things are shaped and assembled for civic use' (Sert, 1944*a*, p. iv).

Can Our Cities Survive? is a revealing look into the mindset of the modernist approach to city-making. The solutions to the problem of the congested city are not only explicitly laid out, but they expose an approach that has been so widely discredited by the past 50 years of experience that, with hindsight, the proposals seem almost absurd. But there was nothing light-hearted about the advice, on page 62, that 'Modern building technics should be employed in constructing high, widely spaced apartment blocks whenever the necessity of housing high densities of population exists'. This was because 'only such a disposition can liberate the necessary land surface for recreation purposes, community services, and parking places, and provide dwellings with light, sun, air, and view'.

What we know now is that this is an anti-urbanist statement of separation and detachment. In fact, most of the proposals of the Athens Charter, have, at their root, separation. This makes them appear simplistic and utterly denying of the intricacies of urbanism. An example of how diversity is purposefully thwarted is in the call to have dwellings grouped in neighbourhood units so that 'the number of points of departure' could be reduced as much as possible. 'Express highways' would be used to connect destinations and origins in the urban system. In this arrangement, people were viewed like robots moving between points on a map, with highways serving as 'channels' to move the population to and from 'districts' as fast as possible. With highways serving as the fastest means of connecting two points, 'the evacuation of great masses of the population in the business district' could be easily accomplished.

The separation endemic to the functional city also squelched social diversity. In this it prefigured the monocultural, single-class housing separation of suburban sprawl that CIAM architects outwardly condemned. The CIAM manifestation of this principle was overt. In Le Corbusier's *La Ville Contemporaine*, for example, class was highly differentiated. The social structure that the city reflected was one of segregation by occupation, where one's job dictated one's dwelling type (Hall, 2002, p. 225). In Chandigarh, the new capital of the Punjab designed by Le Corbusier, such differentiation was built in.

Perhaps most importantly, what is missing from modernist urbanism is

the notion of place-making, or what Lewis Mumford called 'social and civic character' (Mumford, 1968, p. 119). It could not really be any other way. All goals and principles were based on scientific, 'rational' decision-making devoid of recognition of the importance of culture and symbolism, and as if progress were a matter of geometric order. The narrow focus on speed and efficiency caused an inability to appreciate past urban forms, since traditional urbanism was unlikely to have been motivated by such modern considerations. A focus on utilitarian needs meant not only separation but a rejection of amenity and aesthetics. Planning in the 'grand manner', for example, was rejected because, although likely to 'achieve magnificence', it failed to function 'structurally in the life and movement of the city' (Mumford, 1968, p. 180).

Because of the focus on utility, modernist city design produced sterile places of institutionalized quality. It is a general rule in city-making that, as Boyer put it, 'functional and rational precision exude a cold and sober aesthetic' (Boyer, 1983, p. 282). The initial rhetoric coming from CIAM might have sounded right, but the translation of principles into city building was recognized as highly problematic. CIAM members liked to talk, for example, about 'The Human Scale in City Planning' (Sert, 1944*b*), but Lewis Mumford pointed out that 'there is nothing wrong with these buildings except that, humanly speaking, they stink' (Mumford, 1968, p. 184). It was as if the rise of the 'Orgman', the 1950s sociological conception of the anonymous, mobile urban man, was now finding an architectural parallel (see Jencks, 1987). It was an architectural expression of the relationship between abstractness and capitalism. Since capitalism seems incapable of grasping the substance and materiality of life (Kracauer, 1975), experiencing the city mechanically would seem the perfect method of capitalist expansion. What it meant was that there was no attention given to context, to the spaces between buildings, to the perspective of residents as they moved through the built environment, to the city's experiential qualities. Presumably, these were unimportant to CIAM members, or at least such considerations were subordinated to matters of efficiency, speed, and rationalized separation.

There was a separateness, too, in the way cities related to nature. It was as if urbanity needed to get out of the way to allow more of nature to come in. Ironically, what started as perhaps a logical need for green space wound up being a criticism of traditional urban forms as 'urban and stony', as if the quality of being 'urban' was something pejorative and in need of replacement by something greener (Mumford, 2000, p. 56). Concrete and steel would make this happen – it would allow people to live more compactly and therefore open up larger areas of green. But the modernist city related to nature in a very different way from, for example, the garden city. The modernist city abstracted nature. Nature became another statistical category to be rationalized and controlled. The complexity and diversity of nature, as in urbanism, was something to be overcome.

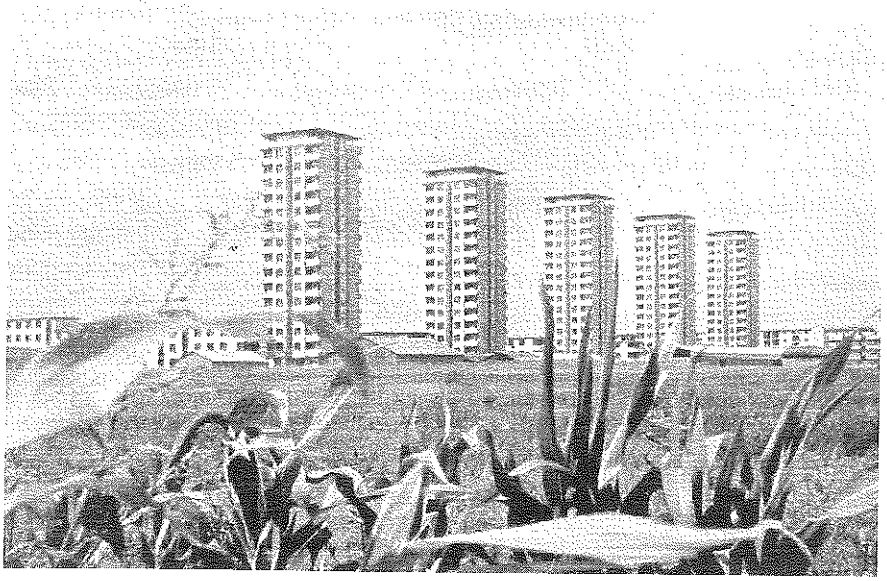

Figure 3.6. How 'Dwelling areas reclaim their right to occupy the best sites', according to CIAM. (*Source*: Jose Luis Sert, *Can Our Cities Survive?*, 1944*a*)

The idea of opening up the city to let in light and air led to wholesale clearance. 'Slums can not be remodelled,' Sert proclaimed unequivocally (Sert, 1944*a*, p. 24), and therefore 'the only remedy for this condition is the demolition of the infected houses'. And there was an insistence that the areas slated for a 'clearance programme' be large and inclusive, not minimized. That the cleared out area should be large enough was mandated by the need for 'a new urban scale' including 'new street patterns for modern traffic requirements' (Sert, 1944*a*, p. 36). What was to replace them was their antithesis, and dwellings that did not therefore consist of high rises set in large green areas (towers in a park) were berated in Sert's book. The point was illustrated with a number of examples of 'dwelling blocks' that had clearly got it wrong because they lacked the necessary space around them, and because of their incorrect insistence on 'perpetuation of traditional street patterns' (Sert, 1944*a*, p. 37).

CIAM proposed to quarantine the new housing developments it used to replace the slums. Rehousing projects were to control the environs of sites 'so that these environs might not again in the future have a deleterious influence upon the newly constructed area' (Sert, 1944*a*, p. 36). Here was another manifestation of separation in urban form – cordoned off neighbourhoods protected from outside encroachment. It was the urban translation of the doctrine of 'separate but equal'. It also gave such projects a case of what Stern and Massengale call 'projectitis' – the tendency to cut off connections to surrounding neighbourhoods because of

'artificial programmatic requirements' (Stern and Massengale, 1981, p. 48). The emphasis on accommodating housing need while simultaneously increasing open space invariably meant that buildings had to become monumental. Even worse, in combination with the stripped down 'International Style', and the decontextualized and purified aesthetics of the Bauhaus, the principle of the high-rise set in green space eventually translated into high-rise slab housing projects that were nothing less than disastrous. While CIAM members had no direct involvement in this translation, they can be cited for making such housing projects appear the only logical, rational choice (Mumford, 2000).

The isolated building, free floating in space, a megastructure in a superblock, also contributed to anti-urbanism by promoting separation and by suppressing diversity. Freestanding and competing 'towers' vied for attention while contributing nothing to the integration of space. The phenomenon of the isolated building and the building line separated from the street line was not limited to housing, of course. It became a symptom of all types of downtown redevelopment plans. Cultural centres of major U.S. cities often exhibited the basic form of isolated building set in open space, part of a master planned project. The difference between these types of schemes and the City Beautiful were significant if viewed in terms of the rules of traditional urban form, street and block arrangement, and the relationship between building and street. Plan-makers in the grand manner would have been concerned that their open spaces should not become lifeless since their primary concern was the civic realm. But the modernist isolation of buildings resulted, as Oscar Newman pointed out, in disregard for the functional use of space surrounding buildings. Modernist planners did not seem to understand the crucial difference between visual open space and habitable open space, and thus became like sculptors working in an unencumbered sculpture garden (Newman, 1972).

Many see this conception, pushed in widely disseminated books like Siegfried Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941), as a damaging over-reliance on the architect's individualized notion of space. It thrived particularly well in the commercial American city where the individual building could be aggrandized even if it lacked civic, cultural, or religious significance. Modernist ideology supported the view that buildings did not have to be subordinated to the urban fabric as a whole. This often resulted in ambiguity. Because of the failure to appreciate the importance of context and the need to create connectedness between buildings, buildings became ensconced in vast expanses of asphalt, useless plazas, and other forms of what Trancik calls 'lost space' (Trancik, 1986).

Another consequence of the isolated building was the tendency to locate buildings in non-standardized ways, creating a chaotic urban fabric that has now become a defining characteristic of sprawl. Rather than a gradual increase in intensity of land use from periphery to centre, the Corbusian system translated

into a haphazard urbanization of rural lands. Now, at least in part a result of this thinking, the American urban pattern plunges abruptly from edge city high rise to single-use residential development, creating a non-hierarchical city that, instead of an organized system of greater or lesser intensity, or any method of spatial differentiation, is extended using 'easily reproducible units pulled from the box of urban tinkertoys' (Abbott, 1993, p. 138). Other authors have likened the result to a train wreck (Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Speck, 2000).

The process advocated by CIAM for land subdivision almost guaranteed this non-hierarchical arrangement. The modernists repeatedly emphasized the need to do away with small lots, with what they saw as 'a chaotic maze of land fragments' that needed to be replaced by a single, consolidated land unit. This was how housing was rationalized – not only by new technologies (cement slab, glass), but by an enlarged scale of development. CIAM architects were not the only

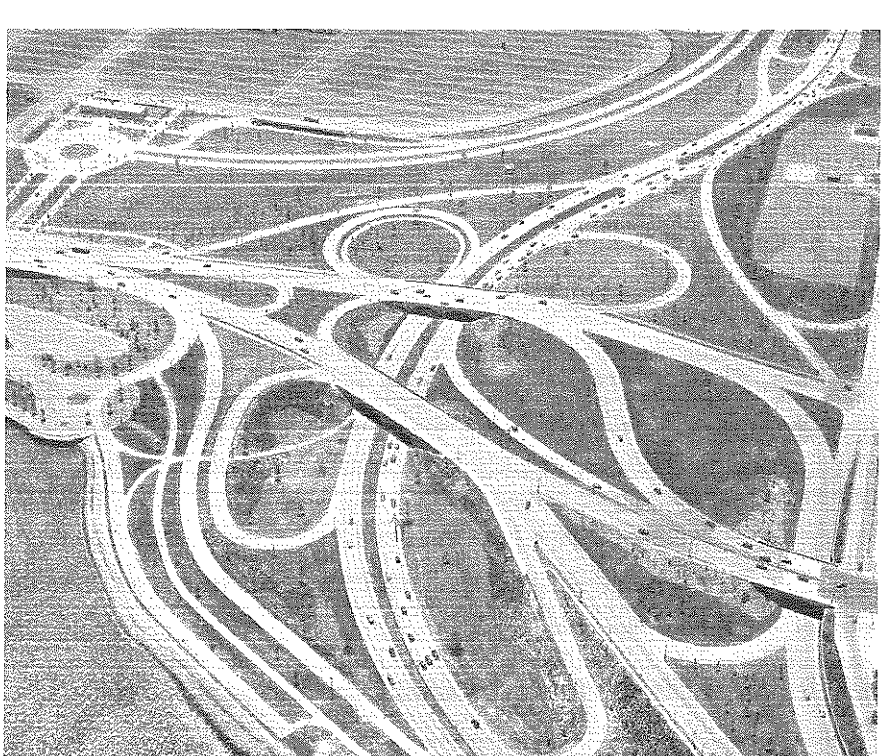

Figure 3.7. Sert's manifesto boasted 'the great possibilities that are being developed in modern highways' and included this one from Long Island as a 'good example'. (*Source*: Jose Luis Sert, *Can Our Cities Survive?*, 1944*a*)

group to accept this new unit of urbanism. Catherine Bauer, the housing advocate and fan of Walter Gropius, agitated for the 'complete neighbourhood' as the unit of planning, financing, construction, design, and administration (Bauer, 1934). The neighbourhood planner Clarence Perry also adopted a modernist scheme in his low-cost treatments, resulting in bleak high-rises set in generous open spaces and described in his book as 'blight resisting' (Perry, 1939). Ultimately, the monolithic planning scale not only fostered building placement that separated and decontextualized the urban fabric, it almost guaranteed the elimination of diversity. Fifty years later, one of the key methods for generating urban diversity is generally acknowledged to be through the mechanism of small lot development.

In fact, variety was not something viewed as positive. Small scale diversity was something to be avoided because it meant the loss of control and uniformity. Property limits and streets simply got in the way of large scale rehousing projects. This is why Unwin never became a modernist, and why Howard and Unwin would have hated collective living that stressed uniformity of style. Their interpretation of collectivity did not have to do with sameness.

Again, it is this division between the traditional elements of urban form – street, block, square – and the CIAM conceptualization of form as high rise building set in green space that reveals a stark contrast in approach. The modernist rejection of figural space may have seemed reasonable on the surface: to free up more open, green space and let in more light and air, one could build at higher and higher densities and therefore occupy smaller and smaller land area. This could produce the 'biologically important advantages' that Le Corbusier thought so important (cited in Mumford 2000, p. 38). It is also reflected in the fact that consideration of the third-dimension was limited to height, since 'it is in admitting the element of height that efficacious provisions can be made for traffic needs and for the creation of open spaces for recreation or other purposes' (Sert, 1944*a*, p. 150). But, as Eric Mumford points out, this was a 'fateful formulation' used to justify 'vast numbers of high-rise slab projects built over the last seventy years around the world' (Mumford, 2000, p. 38).

The organization of the urban environment in terms of the essential categories (functions) of dwelling, work, transportation and recreation was a key aspect of anti-urbanism. Separation of uses was, in general, a modernist idea, and Tony Garnier's separation of living and working areas was one of the earliest articulations. Functionalism became virtually synonymous with separation. Jacobs referred to it as 'sorting', and thought it destroyed cities. In the U.S., the proliferation of zoning by functional use category was well underway by the 1920s and was reinforced in the 1929 *Regional Plan for New York and its Environs*. Later, the 'Functional City', CIAM's best known theoretical approach, constituted the theme of its 1933 Congress. Using statistics to project the amount of land needed for a

particular use, numerous plans were created that looked interesting on paper, but excluded consideration of contextual, figural space.

For an urbanist like Lewis Mumford, the proposal to organize cities according to separate functions was immediately suspect. In a letter rejecting Sert's invitation to write a foreword to the CIAM manifesto, *Can Our Cities Survive?*, Mumford asks, 'what of the political, educational, and cultural functions of the city: what of the part played by the disposition and plan of the buildings concerned with these functions in the whole evolution of the city design' (quoted in Mumford, 2000, p. 133). Obviously, Mumford was not buying the view espoused by CIAM that modernization in the form of speed and other technological improvement was making the functional city inevitable. What he saw was a negation of the complex weave of urbanism into rationalized, disaggregated, functionally 'pure' and therefore controllable categories.

Movement systems were to be vertically separated. Automobile traffic was to be accommodated usually above all else, a way of thinking that had significant repercussions in the post World War II era, continuing through to today. It was an ideology that viewed the speed and flow of traffic as worthy phenomena in their own right. Already in the 1920s, architects aligned with CIAM, like the Rotterdam group Opbouw, were proclaiming that traffic should be the 'foundation of town-planning design' (Mumford, 2000, p. 22). This should be compared to Raymond Unwin, who earlier wrote that the less area given over to traffic, the better (Kostof, 1991).

The focus on designing for cars, speed and unimpeded flow was simply a narrow conceptualization of settlement that discounted the complexity of cities and human behaviour. It caused CIAM to get some basic truths about urbanism wrong. For example, Sert's treatise proclaims that 'the insufficient width of streets

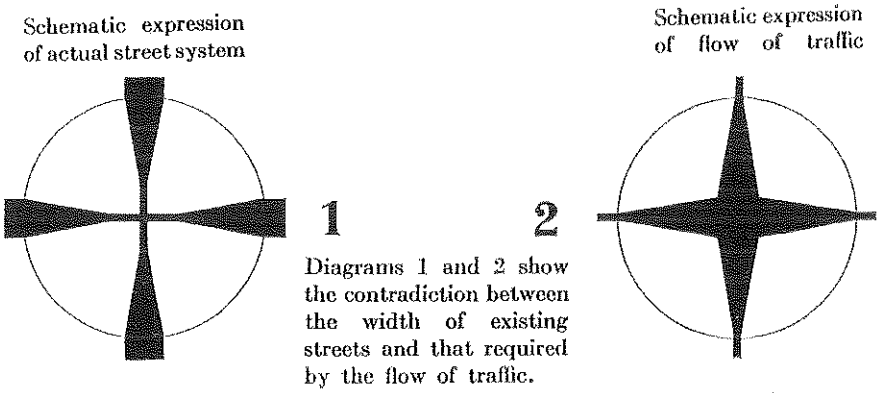

Figure 3.8. The diagram, Sert wrote, suggests 'the gravity of the situation' . . . 'where the traffic is greatest, the streets are narrowest'. (*Source*: Jose Luis Sert, *Can Our Cities Survive?*, 1944*a*)

causes congestion' and that 'distances between cross-streets are too short' (Sert, 1944*a*, pp. 170, 174). There was dismay at the fact that the 'absence of parking space' means that 'the city motorist can no longer drive up to the place where he wishes to go'. Such statements signify a gross misinterpretation of urbanism by failing to address the interrelationships that sustain it – between, for example, land use and transportation.

The failure of the functionalist city and its procurement of separation was recognized by CIAM's own membership. Team X, the British architectural group led by Alison and Peter Smithson, criticized the functionalist approach toward the end of CIAM's organizational life in the early 1950s. They recognized that the separation that CIAM fostered was untenable, giving way to an inorganic form of urbanism. What the Smithsons retained, however, was the rejection of traditional urban form. The Smithsons analyzed neighbourhood life with its discernible 'hierarchy of associational elements' expressed in such traditional forms as house, street, district and city, but then they emphasized that they wanted only to reinterpret the 'idea', not the forms. Their 'task' was 'to find new equivalents for these forms of association in our new non-demonstrative society' (Smithson, 1982, p. 7). Streets and squares could not be used because 'the social reality they presented no longer exists'. Instead, 'streets-in-the-air', as proposed in Team X's Golden Lane competition project of 1952, were a new, more up-to-date expression of the hierarchy of association, now 'woven into a modulated continuum representing the true complexity of human association'. This was to replace the functional hierarchy of the Athens Charter.

But it was still another form of abstraction, another system of separation, another rejection of historical context and the traditional forms and patterns of urbanism. Almost all of the schemes of CIAM – isolated and monumental buildings, functional categories of land use, functional grids, streets in the air and separated circulation systems – shared these qualities. And unfortunately, many translated into city building principles with unquestioned authority in the decades following World War II. In fact, much of what happened to modern cities was prefigured by Le Corbusier's 'little sketches and terse statements' (Barnett, 2003, p. 28). In part it was due to the tremendous clarity and order of the vision of a mechanized, segregated and highly rationalized city, all presented in a 'monomaniacal' diagram showing the relationship between the height of buildings, the spaces between them, and the angle of the sun (Solomon, 2003, p. 173). And it lent itself well to the bureaucracy of planning. Where the vision could not be implemented via project planning, it could be translated into a zoning code to 'reflect, if only a little, the dream' (Jacobs, 1961, p. 23).

The legacy of modernist urbanism, functionalism and CIAM is an anti-urbanism of isolated buildings set in parking lots and along highways, of separated forms of

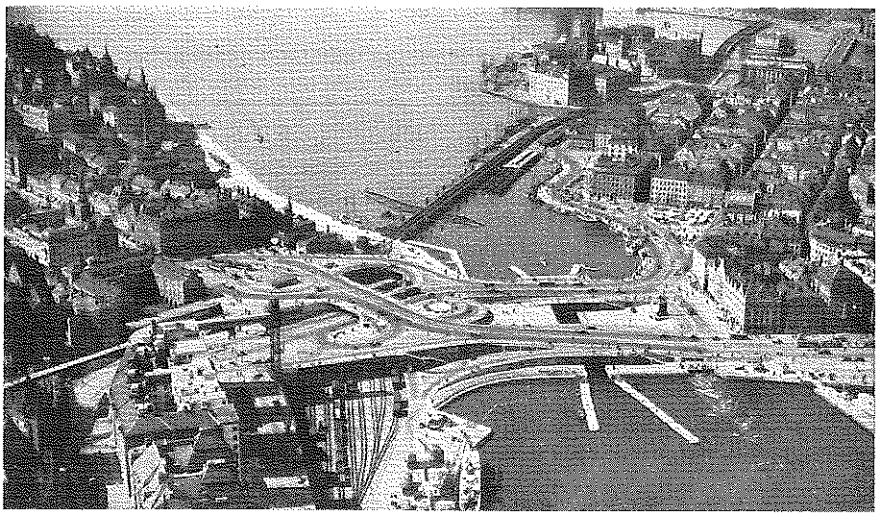

Figure 3.9. The modernist traffic solution was to provide 'unimpeded flow of traffic'. According to Sert, such solutions, like the one above for Stockholm, 'do not in any way interfere with what may be of interest in the architecture of this historic district'. (*Source*: Jose Luis Sert, *Can Our Cities Survive?*, 1944*a*)

housing and land use, of an inequitable pattern of access, and of a downgrading of public space to utilitarian rather than civic concern. It was a well-organized polemic. The manifesto *Can Our Cities Survive?* was widely disseminated, not only to important federal agencies like the National Resources Planning Board and the Federal Housing Administration, but also to educational institutions (like Harvard's Design School) as a textbook. Robert Moses and other powerful city planners at mid-century were responsible for implementing these ideas on a large scale. The first 'tower in the park' project in the U.S. was in New York in 1940 (Parkchester), which housed 42,000 people in fifty-one high rises. Soon after, New York built Stuyvesant Town, which housed 24,000 in thirty-five, 13-storey structures. These projects and many others – virtually every city in the Northeast and Chicago had numerous examples – quickly became the sole expression of public housing. In 1951, Pruitt-Igoe Homes in St. Louis would be heralded by *Architectural Forum* as the 'best high apartment building of 1951' (Mumford, 1995).

Already by the late 1950s, however, the ill-effects of CIAM's approach to urbanism were becoming the subject of popular criticism. Jane Jacobs was the most forceful, and her critique is still unmatched. But there were many others. There was recognition of the need to return to, as Christopher Tunnard wrote in 1953, in *The City of Man*, a place of 'memory, hope and visual pleasure' (Tunnard, 1953, p. 384). There were calls for 'contextuality' and the appreciation of the vernacular, and proclamations of the death of the Modern Movement with its 'blueprint for

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approach to was the most others. There vrote in 1953, unnard, 1953, ne vernacular, 'blueprint for

placelessness' and 'centralized corporate decision-making' (Ley, 1987). Rowe and Koetter's *Collage City* was an effective critique of modern architecture and urbanism, which they viewed as 'too contradictory, too confused and too feebly unsophisticated to allow for any but the most minor productive results' (Rowe and Koetter, 1978). Christian Norberg-Schultz (1990) lamented the loss of traditional urban structure and its associated meaning. Aldo Rossi assembled building typologies and forms as a kind of counter response to CIAM ideology (Rossi, 1984). Trying to re-establish the 'experience of place' became the cause of regionalism, historicism, townscape, and the legibility of Kevin Lynch.[6] From the planner's side, the response was to reject master planning in favour of advocacy planning, beefing up the techniques of public participation in direct counter-response to the expert-driven urbanism of CIAM. Ecologists and social scientists also weighed in with strong critiques of the Modern Movement in architecture. The ecologists based theirs on the failure to understand place and natural ecology, and the social scientists for attempting the social engineering of humankind.

However, despite these rejections and counter offensives, modernist ideas about city-making have become so thoroughly a part of the entrenched system of settlement that turning the tide on the CIAM approach to urbanism has still not been accomplished. And as post World War II productive capacity expressed itself in phenomenal material growth diverted to the suburbs, there was no viable model other than the modernist city ready to re-direct it. The International Style of architecture associated with CIAM has been overthrown, but the method of urbanism has proven more tenacious. No doubt this is because modernist urbanism offered an easier, cheaper method of reconstruction, particularly following World War II. From zoning and subdivision regulation to financing and engineering standards – all of these dimensions of city building fed off of CIAM's intrinsic separation and inequity much more readily than any notions of planning for diversity and equity. In post-CIAM urbanism, functionalism stayed on as a bureaucratic organizing device (zoning) now stripped of its underlying, untenable ideology. This was retained even when the new, postmodern ideal of breaking down divisions came to the fore. In the midst of a postmodern collapse of distinctions between fact and value, city and suburb, academic disciplines, and a range of other dualisms (Ellin, 1996), functionalism as an administrative reality of urbanism thrived.

Obviously, CIAM cannot be held responsible for all failure in American urbanism. It is no doubt the case that, as Eric Mumford argues, 'CIAM became a foil, the producer of an anti-urban urbanism that had met its symbolic fate with the demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis in 1975' (Mumford, 2000, p. 269). And, although the Athens Charter is now recognized as 'an anti-idea of the city' (Huet, 1984), it was never intended to contribute to sprawl. CIAM architects strongly decried sprawl for its lack of collective context, a critique that is

now echoed in the arguments used by New Urbanists. The model of a skyscraper downtown linked by highway to commuter suburb, all with a strong racial and class bias, was not something proposed by CIAM. But it was the legitimation of separation on a variety of fronts that made its way from CIAM to general urban planning practice, a trickle down of theories about rationalized planning that helped generate an anti-urbanism of sprawl.

Notes

1. David Brain, personal communication, August 2003.
2. These arguments have been made by Michael Pyatok (2002).
3. See, for example, Altshuler's discussion of the intercity freeway (Altshuler, 1983, p. 227).
4. Personal communication, Michael Mehaffy, 2002
5. Andres Duany, Pro-Urbanism listserve, August 22, 2003.
6. Although now, history of place has been segmented into nodes, landmarks, and other artifacts that can be fit into the reordered, functional city. See Jencks (1987); see also Boyer (1983).