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Jacobs versus Moses

A Fight for the City's Soul

In October 2006 the Gotham Center for New York City History at the City University of New York hosted a public forum. Engaged in a spirited conversation was a select group of historians, architects, planners, community activists, developers, and political appointees. The group debated which of two urban visions dominates New York City's approach to city building today—that of Jane Jacobs, the legendary urbanist and writer who penned the now-classic attack on planning, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*,[1] or her frequent antagonist, Robert Moses, the master builder of the mid-twentieth century.[2] Pointing to promotional posters that showed the pair posed as if ready for a modern-day gunfight at O.K. Corral, event moderator and Gotham Center director Mike Wallace suggested that the imagery was symbolic, indicative of "the ur status" Moses and Jacobs had achieved:

> They seem to have become almost iconic figures, touchstones with whom participants in contemporary debates on city building often seek to align themselves. In part, perhaps, this is because their clashes back in the '60s were so intensely dramatic. Yes, they each channeled and shaped forces far vaster than themselves, but their combat was also between two unique and powerful personalities. They really did detest each other, as far as I know, and what they believed the other stood for. (Wallace 2006)

Yet while Wallace and many of the gathered experts spoke as if Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses were truly physical combatants, metaphorical

gun-slingers and ideological opposites, situated at the far ends of the urban planning spectrum, one of the evenings' featured speakers offered a starkly different view. Serving as New York City's representative on the panel, Amanda Burden, Mayor Michael Bloomberg's director of city planning and chair of the City Planning Commission, argued that the time had come to stop focusing on the ways in which Jacobs and Moses were at odds and to consider instead the ways in which their ideas could work together. Clearly, Burden acknowledged, the debate over the different ideologies of "these two icons" would continue, even as Jacobs had won greater influence among planners, urbanists, and elected officials. But, she added, the need to build additional housing, create jobs, and lay the foundation for New York City's future growth demanded the kind of leadership, ingenuity, and drive that Moses embodied (Burden 2006a).

At the time the administration was in the middle of a protracted battle to push through its own ambitious redevelopment agenda. Moses-like in scope and scale, it called for a massive city makeover, with plans that ranged from an effort to win the 2012 Summer Olympic Games and a proposed $4.4 billion conversion of Brooklyn's Atlantic Yards from an open-air rail yard into a mixed-use community of luxury condominiums, affordable housing, office towers, and a $1 billion basketball arena designed by noted architect Frank Gehry to an aggressive agenda for rezoning neighborhoods across all five boroughs and an ever-expanding and evolving proposal to transform midtown Manhattan's Far West Side into the city's "newest central business district" (Pinsky 2008). By the summer of 2009, more than ninety-four rezonings covering eight thousand city blocks had cleared the City Council, with fifteen more on the docket. Among the more prominent projects remaining on the administration's agenda were the development of an East River Science Park as "the flagship" of the city's effort to become a biotech hub (Pinsky 2008); the redevelopment of the industrial neighborhood of Willets Point in Queens from a "toxic wasteland to a green and renewable neighborhood"; the rezoning of seventy-five-acre Coney Island in Brooklyn; and the rezoning and redevelopment of Hunts Point along the East River in the Bronx (Pinsky 2008). Central to a number of the projects—including Atlantic Yards, Willets Point, and a proposed expansion of Columbia University in West Harlem—was the specter of the powers of eminent domain being invoked to clear the way for redevelopment.

"Big cities need big projects," Burden maintained, going on to say:

> Big projects are a necessary part of the diversity, competition, and growth that both Jacobs and Moses fought for. It is to the great credit of the mayor that we are building and rezoning today, once again, like Moses on an unprecedented scale but with Jane

> Jacobs firmly in mind, invigorated in the belief that the process matters and that great things can be built through a focus on the details, on the street, for the people who live in this great city. (Burden 2006a)

To most readers of Jane Jacobs and admirers of Robert Moses, Burden's suggestion that it is possible, indeed desirable, to build like Moses with Jacobs in mind stretches all credibility. It certainly called into question many of the steadfast assumptions that for nearly five decades had cast the pair as fundamentally antagonistic, completely incompatible figures, even as it underscored the role their legacies continue to play in influencing broader debates in urban planning and the evolution of the built environment. It also said as much, if not more, about the contested nature in which those legacies can be read, remembered, and understood. Yet at another, perhaps far more fundamental level, Burden's invocation of the pair offered a window into the theoretical, ideological, and political context through which the Bloomberg administration pursued its redevelopment agenda.

This book aspires to force that window wide open. Its aim is to use the ongoing Moses-Jacobs debate as a means for examining and understanding the administration's redevelopment strategies and actions, and in so doing offer a critique of contemporary urban planning in New York City. These are among the questions it seeks to explore: How have the legacies of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs been reinterpreted with the passing of time and evolution of urban space? In what ways have these legacies been mobilized in the service of particular redevelopment strategies—often in selective ways—reflecting the larger social and economic goals and agendas of those invoking them? And ultimately, what did the Bloomberg administration mean when it claimed to want to "build like Moses but with Jacobs in mind"?

That story begins with Jacobs and Moses themselves.

Larger-than-Life Rivals

In spite of the over-the-top characterization of the Gotham Center event, Jacobs and Moses had relatively few face-to-face encounters. Many of Moses's major projects were completed long before Jacobs came on the scene—his proposals for the construction of a highway across Lower Manhattan and the reconfiguring of Washington Square to make way for an extension of Fifth Avenue are among the more notable exceptions. In fact, while Jacobs clearly inveighs against Moses's approach to building—and her abhorrence of his authoritarian design lies at the heart of the activist bent in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*—in

the book she mentions her rival by name only seven times, preferring instead a more broad-brushed critique of the ideas and methods he so fully represents.[3]

As for Moses, did he ever publicly acknowledge Jacobs? More often he lumped her among an amorphous, nondescript crowd of naysayers, know-nothings, "malcontents" (Caro 1975, 1097), and "Beiunskis" (Moses 1944, 16) who stood in the way of progress and simply did not merit individual scorn. In fact, collective derision was a favorite weapon for Moses, one that for many years he wielded masterfully in minimizing and marginalizing opposition. One particularly representative example—almost joyfully recounted by Wallace to stoke the fires for the Gotham Center forum—came when, infuriated by efforts to derail his plans to run a road through Washington Square, Moses bellowed, "There is nobody against this. Nobody! Nobody but a bunch of . . . mothers!" Even in cases in which Jacobs, the mother of two sons and a daughter, was a clear target of his contempt, Moses avoided referencing her explicitly. In one instance—an especially acerbic letter written to her publisher characterizing *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* as "libelous junk"—Moses dismissed "the book" without referring to it by name and made no mention whatsoever of its author.[4]

Of course, that is not to say that the pair did not despise each other. Instead, it serves to illustrate how their duel, while between two powerful personalities at seemingly opposite sides of the debate over how best to plan and build cities, was and remains representative of things much larger. Jacobs was a thinker, an evocative writer. Her overarching goal was not to bring down Moses, though surely she reveled in his eventual demise. Her aim was to stop his projects: to derail the ramming of an expressway across Lower Manhattan and a thoroughfare through Washington Square Park, and to argue for a different way of thinking about, planning, and governing cities.[5] Moses, meanwhile, was a doer. His projects are his texts, and he had little interest in Jacobs or in most people it seems. His overriding focus was on getting things built.

As a result, it has been largely left to others to flesh out the full oppositional nature of the Jacobs-Moses dialectic. Because they were such powerful personalities who engaged in big debates over broad ideals, the two have come to be viewed as the larger-than-life symbols of those debates, as well as figureheads for the subplots subsumed in them. Over time, they have evolved into poster material for all manner of principles and broadly defined, easy dichotomies—good versus evil, progress versus preservation, people versus the state, diversity and density versus chaos and overcrowding, the city ascendant versus the city in decline.

Yet partly because Moses and Jacobs have become strongly identified with so many things—though forever in relation to New York City and

always in terms of their mutual opposition—their legacies remain works in progress, points of tension perpetually being reconstituted and reshaped by the ongoing spatial and temporal transformations of urban form. In a certain sense, Wallace hit the mark: their legacies have a remarkable and persistent way of participating in the shaping of urban processes.

Still, according to Burden, the Bloomberg administration's take on Moses and Jacobs suggests that what we think of these pivotal figures and their ideas at any given point in time seems to be fundamentally informed and wholly influenced by our image of the city at that particular moment. Urban thinkers and planners, after all, like the practice of planning and the ideas that guide it, build both literally and figuratively on the past, inheriting from bygone eras built environments and particular problems, as well as frameworks and conditions for thinking about potential solutions. Jacobs makes this point explicit in the often-cited introduction to *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. In the span of nine pages, she traces and critiques the evolution of planning theory by connecting past theoretical paradigms—from Daniel Burnham's City Beautiful through Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities to the utopian Radiant Cities of Le Corbusier—to their normalization within planning and design orthodoxy. It is from this context, of course, that she launches her withering "attack on current city planning and rebuilding" (Jacobs 1992, 1).

Moses and Modernism

At the heart of Jacobs's critique stands Moses's ability to marshal federal programs and the resources they represented as part of a broader modernist project prompted by visions of creating a new, more efficient and forward-looking society in the wake of World War II. On the eve of the war, New York City, like virtually all American cities, was heavily dependent on industry; it was the nation's largest industrial center, and nearly 40 percent of its workforce was still engaged in making things. Yet as early as the 1920s, groups like the Committee on a Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs[6] had begun arguing that the future of industry would lie outside the central city, and, in the years following the war, with the momentous socioeconomic shifts they would bring, the impetus turned to clearing the inner city of factories to make room for its postindustrial future.

At the same time, dilapidated housing, vast slums, and creeping blight framed the public's image of inner cities. In 1943, Charles Merriam, who had been a member of President Franklin Roosevelt's National Resources Board, suggested in a report titled "Make No Small Plans" that the country was "on the verge of a new era in city development," one in which a far broader and near-utopian focus would lead to programs and policies

"for sounder urban living" (Merriam, quoted in Gelfand 1975, 105). The resulting modernist moment, grounded in a liberal reformist tradition but constrained by market forces and the perquisites of private property, sought not only to address urban ills, like slums and blight, but to set in motion wholesale transformations of urban built environments that would position cities for a more harmonious future. As Columbia University planning professor Robert Beauregard so concisely captured it, "As capitalism was tamed, the city organized and prosperity diffused socially and spatially, the lower classes would rise to affluence and take on the values and behaviors of the middle class" (Beauregard 1989, 387). Even though Moses balked at what he saw as the social engineering inherent in much of the liberal orientation of the modernist enterprise, he embraced the aspirational vision of the new, postindustrial city it inspired—as well as the vast resources and power it promised—and he eagerly framed ensuing fights in terms of what kind of city needed to be built for the public good.

Within this environment, federal programs such as Urban Renewal and the Title I projects intended to see it through were conceived to counter the rapid suburbanization and decentralization that were threatening American inner cities. In essence, the Title I program presumed that the physical attributes of dilapidated neighborhoods were to blame for the blighted conditions and social ills that inflicted many urban cores. Substandard housing, as well as incompatible land use, overcrowding, a dearth of recreational amenities, and transportation infrastructure unsuitable to the automobile age all contributed to the creation and maintenance of slums. As such, Title I offered a simple solution: improve the built environment and you improve quality of life.

On one hand, these federal programs were devised to eliminate slums. Moses also saw them as a means of forcing the city into the postindustrial future. His projects razed not only blighted neighborhoods but also manufacturing districts, on which he would build massive public-housing projects as well as educational institutions and government centers intended to reinvigorate investment in New York City's threatened downtown. But just as Moses aggressively pursued Title I projects as a means of inner-city rejuvenation, he every bit as tenaciously hatched schemes to build new highways that would—in his view—further strengthen city centers by connecting them with their growing suburbs. Ultimately, though, opposition to the destruction of existing urban neighborhoods in order to build highways through the heart of dense urban areas meant a limited number of such projects were built—the Cross-Bronx Expressway being one notable exception—even as networks of suburban and interstate highway systems were expanding. In a spectacular example of unintended consequences, Moses's support for the automobilization of the country fostered the forces that propelled people and businesses out of the city centers he

was attempting to save. As Marshall Berman wrote in his groundbreaking critique of urban modernity, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*, "The development of modernity has made the modern city itself old-fashioned, obsolete . . . by a fateful dialectic, because the city and the highway don't go together, the city must go" (Berman 1982, 307).

"The Kind of a Problem the City Is"

Jacobs, of course, would zero in on these destructive impulses within Moses's modernism and in response develop her own interpretation of what makes a city successful, prompting Marxist cultural theorist Fredric Jameson to assert that modernity "began to end the night Jane Jacobs delivered the first lecture in what was to become *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*" (Jameson 1996, 32). Yet while she is often portrayed as a revolutionary, radical thinker and an anti-planner, Jacobs's critique of planning emerged from a distinct historical lineage; a range of prominent earlier urbanists influenced her thinking. Among the more influential of these were members of an ecological tradition within early urbanism that included Camillo Sitte, the nineteenth-century Viennese writer and critic whose appreciation for the organic intricacy and complexity of the medieval city form inspired a critique of the technical aspects of planning, and Robert Morris, an influential eighteenth-century English writer and theorist who argued that the architect's overriding concern should be the interplay between design and nature. Like Sitte, Morris celebrated ancient built form and distinguished between organic—though not necessarily unplanned—cities and those conceived through more rigid applications of the grid.

Sitte, in particular, serves as a theoretical forerunner to Jacobs. Writing in the nineteenth century, at a time when enhancing the salability of subdivided property was paramount, he believed that the market alone, as a purely mechanical instrument, would not yield "good" urban design and artistic principles. Instead he argued that a limited form of planning focused on issues of relationship and proportion could produce more livable cities. He championed the curved, irregular layouts of Europe's medieval towns, the juxtaposition of varied buildings as a means of framing visual features, and the use of aesthetic and historical precedent to create human scale.[7]

These ideas, of course, would find purchase in Jacobs's own conceptualization of good urban form. In the introduction to *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs wrote of the "underlying order" and organized complexity of cities, and she argued that to approach understanding them as if they were simple problems involving one or two variables—housing or transportation, for instance—examined in

isolation, only invited failure, as previous planning practice could attest (Jacobs 1992, 15). Instead, Jacobs advocated for thinking of cities as processes, unique and interrelated, but natural and observable, nonetheless: "The cities of human beings," she wrote "are as natural, being a product of one form of nature, as are the colonies of prairie dogs or the beds of oysters" (Jacobs 1992, 444). Through these close observations she would devise her precepts for making cities livable—a mix of uses, diversity, short blocks—and over time these would take hold as a set of planning and design principles that would come to serve almost as best practices within the field of urban design.

This tension between ecological and modernist visions of the city, however, provides still more background for the Jacobs-Moses divide. Decades before Moses lambasted Jacobs for her broadside against his version of the future, Le Corbusier, whose Radiant City towers-in-the-park would find material—if somewhat diminished expression—in Moses's superblock housing developments, mocked Sitte's views on medieval design, saying they were not only "based on the past" but "in fact WERE the past . . . a sentimental past . . . on a small and petty scale" representative of the "scatter-brained mentality of a donkey" (Le Corbusier, quoted in Lilley 1999, 435; emphasis in original). Such polemics quickly informed conceptions of "good" and "bad" urban form for succeeding generations of urbanists, serving as useful tools in ideological arguments over how best to plan and build cities. As the historical geographer Keith Lilley suggests, "What emerges from this is a complex picture in which the ideas of particular urbanists came to be misrepresented, or misunderstood, either deliberately or unintentionally, by their contemporaries," in a battle of ideas that is very much mirrored in the ongoing "gunfight" between Moses and Jacobs (Lilley 1999, 428).

It is this duality, then, this constant push and pull of cause and effect that continues to inspire the periodic revisitings and reassessments of Moses and Jacobs: a conference at Hofstra University in 1988 in celebration of the centennial of Moses's birth; another, "Ideas That Matter," in Toronto in 1997, which generated renewed public interest in Jacobs; then, of course, their deaths—Moses's in 1981, Jacobs's a quarter century later—which sparked further reflection on their ongoing influence on urban form. In between, occasional essays or opinion pieces in the print media, typically provoked by events or new ideas in planning and development, set off additional rounds of reengaging these figures and their pivotal roles.

More recently, the Bloomberg administration's ambitious plans to remake New York City, along with the rhetoric—loaded with references to both Jacobs and Moses—surrounding the resultant wave of redevelopment activity that washed over the city, rekindled interest in the pair and

their ongoing influence. In early 2007, two Columbia University historians—Hilary Ballon and Kenneth Jackson—launched a Moses rehabilitation campaign with the opening of a three-part exhibition, *Robert Moses and the Modern City*, and the publication of a companion collection of essays of the same name along with the subtitle *The Transformation of New York*. Not to be outdone, that September, Jacobs's supporters gave her legacy its own shot in the arm with the opening of *Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York*, a three-month exhibit at the Municipal Art Society of New York.

Soon, a flood of books seeking new ways to add to and, in some cases, reinterpret the meanings of Jacob and Moses appeared. In the summer of 2009, Random House, the publisher of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, produced *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took On New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City*, in which Anthony Flint, an author and a journalist with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, recounts the "epic rivalry of Jacobs and Moses," a "thrilling David and Goliath story" of "the struggle for the soul of a city" (Flint 2009, back cover). Like an earlier, though largely overlooked, biography, *Jane Jacobs: Urban Visionary*, by journalist Alice Sparberg Alexiou, that appeared within weeks of Jacobs's passing, Flint's work is populist in tone and provides a running commentary on Jacobs's role in defying Moses's plans—a story that is conspicuously missing from Robert Caro's seminal Moses biography, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*, which was first published in 1975. It also served as a rebuttal of sorts to Ballon and Jackson's Moses revisionism.

In early 2010 yet another journalist delivered an impassioned defense of Jacobs as a critical response to Ballon and Jackson's redemptive effort on behalf of Moses. Writing in *The Battle for Gotham: New York in the Shadow of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs*, Roberta Brandes Gratz took up Jacobs's mantle as the feisty defender of small-scale dynamism and do-it-yourself neighborhood regeneration. Gratz, who describes herself as a friend and follower of Jacobs, draws on firsthand accounts to argue that Moses's fall, and the federal government's related abandonment of its urban renewal program, allowed for the type of "organic rejuvenation" that marks New York City today—a rejuvenation, of course, that was prescribed by Jacobs (Gratz 2010a). According to Gratz (2010b), and to Alexiou (2006) and Flint (2009), Jacobs had still won, and Moses had still nearly wrung the life out of New York City.

But is this the full story? After almost fifty years of debate, a handful of biographies, dozens of interpretive studies, and the seemingly perpetual reexamination of their "ur status" at opposing ends of the urban planning spectrum, have we fully explored and firmly fixed the nature of the Moses-Jacobs divide? Are the two and their ideas fundamentally

incompatible? And what should we make of the Bloomberg administration's effort to knit them together?

For sure, there are many and very important differences—not to mention much acrimony—between Jacobs and Moses. If we think of the two in terms of urban renewal, the size and shape of city blocks, catastrophic money as opposed to gradual money, those differences do seem to make an imposing case for the incompatibility of their approaches to making cities better places. Moses's moment was made possible by an era of big government, and he enthusiastically served as an early proponent of the public-private model of redevelopment at a time when cities and their post–World War II middle classes were threatened by shifting socioeconomic currents. The expressways, bridges, cultural and civic institutions, housing developments, beaches, and parks that he built not only transformed New York City but thoroughly revolutionized the way midcentury America planned its urban spaces. Jacobs's opening, meanwhile, came at Moses's—and big government's—expense. With the activist state in withdrawal from the failure of modernist programs like urban renewal and the fiscal crisis of the early 1970s, her glorification of the democratic individualism of the street, informed by discernibly normative middle-class values, came to dominate the planning ethos.

Yet when viewed from a broader, more critical framework, one can argue that both figures espouse a distinctly class-based strategy for remaking the city, and it is here where they converge in contemporary New York City redevelopment politics. As Burden's (2006a) evocative characterization suggests, in devising its own vision of the city's future, the Bloomberg administration has culled from both Jacobs and Moses, faithfully adopting certain aspects of each figure's foundational ideas while reinterpreting others to fit the administration's view of the successful city in a twenty-first-century context. In this sense, while Moses's modernism appears to stand in stark contrast to Jacobs's localism, when synthesized within the Bloomberg administration's ambitious redevelopment plans, they converge in a call for disciplining space for capital accumulation and the building and rebuilding of the city at the expense of those of lesser class privilege.

This can be seen not only in the ways Moses's and Jacobs's ideas have been adopted, interpreted, and in certain cases bent to conform neatly to the purposes of others but also through the direct relationship between their precepts and the processes of gentrification. Moses's approach envisioned the clearance of slums and blight, the segregation of public housing, and the development of civic institutions, such as Lincoln Center and the United Nations. Jacobs's scheme involved a fix-it-up ethos and house-by-house, block-by-block rehabilitation of aspiring neighborhoods. In both cases, as well as in the selective incorporation of their ideas by the Bloomberg administration, real estate–based economic development

within the context of an economically restructured postwar urbanism was trumpeted as the key to urban regeneration.

What follows is an exploration of how this could be true and what the resulting details look like.

To fully understand how the legacies of Jacobs and Moses have contributed to debates over urban form and the direction of urban redevelopment over time, this work examines the ways in which they have been mobilized at specific junctures in urban planning history. Chief among these are ongoing struggles over urban design, including the emergence of New Urbanism and the development of major projects that bear its mark; the ongoing evolution of New York City's planning infrastructure in general and its zoning regulations in particular; and the release by the Regional Plan Association in 1996 of its Third Regional Plan, *A Region at Risk*. Each of these critical junctures plays a significant role in the organization of this work, informing, and in certain cases framing, individual chapters.

Chapter 2 ("The 'Patron Saint' and the 'Git'r Done Man'") charts the evolutionary arc of the Moses and Jacobs legacies by exploring how perceptions of the pair have evolved over time. A particular emphasis of the chapter is on the ways those legacies have been read, reinterpreted, and at times mobilized in the service of specific planning ideologies, up to and including their appearance in contemporary debates over development policy in New York City. Ultimately, the chapter highlights the degree to which debates over Moses and Jacobs and their legacies increasingly hinge on conflicting and often competing interpretations, allowing them to be co-opted by mainstream forces within planning and development.

With revisionist elements of recent scholarship serving as the basis for both positive and negative comparisons between Moses and a Bloomberg administration intent on a revival of build-big urbanism, Chapter 3, "The Bloomberg Practice," offers a closer look at four of the megaprojects that have helped define redevelopment in New York City for much of the first decade of the twenty-first century: the effort to kick-start redevelopment of Manhattan's Far West Side by bringing the 2012 Summer Olympic Games to New York; the ambitious—and contentious—plans to redevelop the Hudson rail yards in Manhattan and the Atlantic rail yards in Brooklyn; and Columbia University's effort to expand by annexing seventeen acres of the Harlem neighborhood of Manhattanville in the face of significant community opposition. The chapter also introduces the administration's strategy of synthesizing Jacobs and Moses to win approval of specific projects and promote the city's overall development agenda.

Chapter 4, "Calls for a New Moses," turns to a closer examination of the campaign to incorporate enough of Jacobs to make the Moses-like aspects of the Bloomberg redevelopment agenda politically palatable and win over public opinion. As a means of contextualizing that discussion,

the chapter provides a brief history of the collapse of planning and development in New York City that followed in part from Jacobs's crusading response to Moses-style top-down large-scale planning and projects.

Chapter 5, "Planning and the Narrative of Threat," further interrogates the power of rhetoric in planning and introduces a recurring theme in New York City planning history: the narrative of threat, which is explored in detail through a close reading of the Regional Plan Association's influential report, *A Region at Risk: The Third Regional Plan for the New York–New Jersey–Connecticut Metropolitan Area*. The chapter also explores the influence of Jacobs and Moses on this report. *A Region at Risk* came to serve as an important model for an emergent neoliberal form of urbanism as well as the Bloomberg administration's redevelopment agenda.

The administration's synthesis of Jacobs and Moses, however, goes beyond rhetoric. Chapter 6, "The Armature for Development," addresses administration efforts to incorporate selective aspects of each within its redevelopment strategy, most prominently through the aggressive rezoning of New York City. Once again, the legacies of Jacobs and Moses played a vital role in the evolution of zoning as a tool for city planning, and that history is recounted before the chapter turns to a detailed analysis of the Bloomberg administration's rezoning strategy. By recognizing the power of its land use decisions to drive development in "underutilized" neighborhoods even as it promotes middle- and upper-class qualities of life in other neighborhoods, the administration has mobilized zoning as the chief vehicle for remaking the city along class lines.

Chapter 7, "Ideas That Converge," takes up the call for a critical analysis of what the Bloomberg administration means when it talks of building like Moses with Jacobs in mind. It relies on a close reading of Jacobs's foundational concepts and a recounting of Moses's record as the master of modernist urbanism to make the case that the Bloomberg administration's synthesis of the two figures and their ideals is a selective usage that promotes gentrification.

Chapter 8, "Ideas That Travel," turns to the resonance of Jacobs's and Moses's ideals beyond New York City by mapping how, through the processes of policy mobility and best-practice production, the dialectic embodied by their legacies has traveled. In Jacobs's case this played out most directly in the planning discourse of Toronto, the Canadian city where she lived and worked for the last four decades of her life. There, against a backdrop of opposition to a Moses-like highway and housing projects, Jacobs's ideals have been repeatedly mobilized to justify real estate–oriented development, generating gentrification in the process. Whereas Jacobs's legacy is characterized by activism and ideals, Moses's imprint is physical: it can be seen in the parks, highways, and infrastructure that bear his mark, not only in New York City but also in Portland,

Oregon, where in the waning years of World War II he was invited to develop a plan for a postindustrial city. Of course, with Jacobs's "triumph," Moses would be banished to planning exile, and it would not be until the Bloomberg-inspired rehabilitation effort that his legacy would again be seen in a positive light and appeals to his ability to execute big projects become a recurring element in the rhetoric surrounding development projects across the United States.

Chapter 9, "Design as Civic Virtue," details how design—or what critics deride as a fixation on the way things look—also has emerged as a critical concept within the Bloomberg administration's distillation of Jacobs's and Moses's ideals. It examines how, under the direction of Amanda Burden, the administration's director of city planning, design has become a powerful means for enhancing real estate values and encouraging development that is reflective of a broader class-based planning ideology. It contends that the administration's articulation of design as a civic virtue and its constant celebration of the transformative potential of the parks, plazas, streetscapes, and buildings planned and constructed as part of the production of an "aspirational" city serve to naturalize and normalize the class-based values inherent in its larger redevelopment scheme.

Finally, Chapter 10, "Building Like Moses with Jacobs in Mind," problematizes the approach to urban redevelopment that emerges from the Bloomberg administration's synthesis of Jacobs and Moses within the context of recurring crises of global capitalism. It argues that the financial crisis that began in 2008 offers a valuable opportunity to examine the fallacies and limitations of real estate–driven redevelopment and to explore the relationship of Moses's and Jacobs's legacy to those processes. Ultimately, it makes the case that neither figure offers a meaningful model for addressing the stubborn problems—poverty, lack of affordable housing, and segregation along class and racial lines—that continue to vex today's cities. Within the redevelopment narrative created by the Bloomberg administration, building like Moses with Jacobs in mind becomes a mechanism for intentionally and artificially constraining the debate over urbanism to a narrow band that blindly accepts and promotes the logic of capital accumulation within contemporary urbanization.

Just as to varying degrees Robert Caro, Hilary Ballon and Kenneth Jackson, Anthony Flint, Roberta Brandes Gratz, the Bloomberg administration, and others have marshaled concepts and ideas—and in some senses ideology—to create narratives around Jacobs and Moses, this work is a narrative in its own right. As such, it is not intended to be passive. Rather, the intention is to focus a critical light on the limitations of the legacies of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs and their relation to ongoing debates over urban form as well as to scrutinize the redevelopment agenda of the Bloomberg administration in New York City.