

Quelle

Jane Jacobs: Auszug aus *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961)¹

„[I]f we look at the parts of cities most literally attractive – i.e., those that literally attract people, in the flesh – we find that these fortunate localities are seldom in the zones immediately adjoining massive single uses.

The root trouble with borders, as city neighbors, is that they are apt to form dead ends for most users of city streets. They represent, for most people, most of the time, barriers.

Consequently, a street that adjoins a border is the terminus of generalized use. [...] They fail to get a by-the-way circulation of people going beyond them in the direction of the border, because few are going to that Beyond. If those adjoining streets, therefore, become too empty and therefore in turn are shunned, their adjoining streets may also be less used. And so it goes [...].

Borders can thus tend to form vacuums of use adjoining them. Or to put it another way, by oversimplifying the use of the city at one place, on a large scale, they tend to simplify the use which people give to the adjoining territory too, and this simplification of use – meaning fewer users, with fewer different purposes and destinations at hand – feeds upon itself. [...] A kind of unbuilding, or running-down process is set in motion.

This is serious, because literal and continuous mingling of people, present because of different purposes, is the only device that keeps streets safe. It is the only device that cultivates secondary diversity. It is the only device that encourages districts to form in place of fragmented, self-isolated neighborhoods or backwaters. [...]

Sometimes visible evidence of the running-down process is almost as graphic as a diagram. This is the case in some parts of the Lower East Side of New York; it is especially striking at night. At the borders of the dark and empty grounds of the massive, low-income housing projects, the streets are dark and empty of people too. Stores, except for a few sustained by the project dwellers themselves, have gone out of business, and many quarters stand unused and empty. Street by street, as you move away from the project borders, a little more life is to be found, progressively a little more brightness, but it takes many streets before the gradual increase of economic activity and movement of people become strong. And each year the vacuum seems to eat a little farther in. [...]

Sometimes a newspaper account describes some vivid incident of the running-down process – for example, this account of an event in February 1960 from the *New York Post*:

„The slaying in Cohen’s butcher shop at 164 E. 174th St. Monday night was no isolated incident, but the culmination of a series of burglaries and holdups along the street ... Ever since work started on the Cross-Bronx Expressway across the street some two years ago, a grocer said, trouble has plagued the area ... Stores which once stayed open to 9 or 10 o’clock are shutting down at 7 P.M. Few shoppers dare venture out after dark, so shopkeepers feel the little business they lose hardly justifies the risk in remaining open late [...].“

Sometimes we can infer the formation of such vacuums, as when a newspaper advertisement lists an amazing bargain – a ten-room brick house, recently rehabilitated, with new copper plumbing, to be sold for \$ 12,000 – and the address pins down its location: between the borders of a huge project and an expressway. [...]

The exact reasons for scantness of use at a border vary.

¹ Jacobs, Jane, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York 1961, S. 259–261.
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Some borders damp down use by making travel across them a one-way affair. Housing projects are examples of this. The project people cross back and forth across the border [...]. The adjoining people, for the most part, stay strictly over on their side of the border and treat the line as a dead end of use.

Some borders halt cross-use from both sides. Open railroad tracks or expressways or water barriers are common examples.

Some borders have cross-use from both directions, but it is limited, in appreciable amounts, to daylight or it falls off drastically at certain times of year.”

Jane Jacobs: *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), in: Themenportal Europäische Geschichte, 2018, <www.europa.clio-online.de/essay/id/artikel-4555>.

Auf diese Quelle bezieht sich ein einführender und erläuternder Essay von Haumann, Sebastian, *Der transatlantische Paradigmenwechsel in der Stadtplanung. Zur westeuropäischen Rezeption von Jane Jacobs' The Death and Life of Great American Cities in den 1960er- und 1970er-Jahren*, in: Themenportal Europäische Geschichte, 2018, <www.europa.clio-online.de/quelle/id/artikel-4554>.