THE SUBURBANIZATION OF GERMAN AND AMERICAN CITIES

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Kenneth Jackson has concluded with a more or less depressing outlook on the American future after his accurate analysis of past and present phenomena. He has impressively linked ordinary suburban living to general trends of American policies, city planning, and middle-class interests.[1] In my essay I will address Jackson's comparisons between German and U.S. cities and add some more perspectives, especially with regard to Germany.

Looking at the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, all the trends and phenomena Kenneth Jackson has presented for the United States can also be found in Germany: suburbanization, land and home speculation, automobilization, as well as subsidized and idealized home ownership. But while it looks at first glance as if there have been similar developments in both countries, this is, in fact, not the case, primarily because politics and culture as well as social and economic processes differed considerably. In the following, these two aspects, similarities *and* dissimilarities, will be considered more closely and, at the end, related to path dependence theory.

Differing Strengths of Local Government

At the beginning of the twentieth century, American progressive reformers, among them numerous middle-class women, were committed to municipal reform, inspired by the idea that cities should have more responsibilities and more independence from the state to develop a modern "service city." They were willing to learn from European experiences and therefore developed a transatlantic network of communication.[2] While new special commissions were organized and city managers introduced, permanent, professional city management positions were much less established in America than in Germany, and they were less independent from economic interests.[3]

While American local governments were eager to improve the business climate in their cities, German local governments at that time were

more influenced by the idea of so-called municipal socialism. Evolving from the British Fabian Society, municipal socialism called for local governments to take over many technical and social services, from gas companies to cemeteries.[4] Municipal socialism was (more or less) implemented by groups of local officials that had rapidly increased since the 1880s. Although these local officials were used to cooperating with local elites and homeowners, they usually developed their own perspectives and norms and built up their own networks of communication among their colleagues and with reformers of other countries, especially Britain. Their self-confidence was based on the highly valued idea of local self-rule (*Selbstverwaltung*) dating back to the Stein and Hardenberg reforms in the early nineteenth century. Its idealization provided a smokescreen for the lack of wider political democratization until general voting rights were introduced after the revolution of 1918–1919. It also obscured the fact that despite their system of self-rule, German local governments were in reality constitutionally and financially dependent on the state.[5]

There were, however, great differences between Germany and the United States under Dillon's Rule (1903), which expressly transferred municipal responsibilities and functions to the respective state legislatures.[6] In fact, private developers and the direct or indirect representatives of business interests on the one hand and American counties on the other had more influence in shaping urban realities than business and counties (*Bezirke*) had in Germany. American cities were often regarded as nothing more than public corporations. As territorial boundaries were not rigidly set, overlapping authorities and so-called special districts, above all school districts, weakened the city as a communal entity and a decision-maker with respect to white middle-class interests.[7] By contrast, German local governments had much more influence on middle-class interests, including school development, especially high schools for girls in the decades before and after World War I.[8]

In the following paragraphs I will focus on several areas in order to demonstrate the differing strengths of the United States and Germany in terms of local governments' efforts to influence or resist developments affecting cities.

Regional Planning

Regional planning as a professional discipline was developed earlier and to a greater extent in the United States than in Germany. In fact, there were excellent regional planners in the United States of the 1920s, such as Henry Wright, Catherine Bauer, and Clarence S. Stein, actively supported by the well-known urban planner and theorist Lewis Mumford, among others. The Regional Planning Association of America, founded in 1923,

developed the idea of shaping metropolitan areas by creating city-like communities, but it could not—especially after 1930—affect the mainstream of regional development characterized by private auspices and private speculation.[9] Model garden cities were either an economic disaster, such as Radburn, N.J. (1928–32), or no more than excellent but isolated experiments, such as Sunnyside Gardens in Queens (1928), comparable to some model tenements built and administered by philanthropists, unions, and cooperatives and the few greenbelt cities of the New Deal era. Inspiring models were also built in the era after World War II, not least of all in the past twenty years, but without affecting American cities on a broad scale.[10]

Apart from some forerunners, regional planning in Germany had its breakthrough only during the Nazi period, i.e. under the auspices of racism.[11] After 1945, *Raumplanung*, although denazified, suffered both from its negative National Socialist heritage and from particular local interests clinging to the right of self-rule. Up to that time regional planning in Germany, continuing traditions from the late nineteenth century onward, consisted mostly of voluntary or compulsory incorporations of villages and small towns into larger cities (*Eingemeindungen*). The most impressive development was the Regional Reform (*Gebietsreform*) carried out by laws between 1968 and 1977 that decreased the number of independent local communities from 24,000 to 8,500 local units (*Kommunen*).[12] Since the 1960s regional planning could also have an impact by coordinating public traffic in both the city and its surrounding region. In addition, some regional planning concepts, such as the Hamburg "concept of axes" (*Achsenkonzept*) focusing on suburbanization along public traffic lines, could influence development, but only to some extent. Recently, regional planning has received more public attention.[13] The remedy has been seen in the creation of "polycentric regions."[14] At first glance, these attempts can be compared to the American efforts of shaping "edge cities," but differences with respect to the relevance of public transportation remain.[15]

Housing Policies

Regional planning must be viewed in combination with urban planning. Local governments have especially directed urban planning, including new residential areas. Private speculation, which had been extremely prevalent in the early *Kaiserreich* (*Terraingesellschaften*), was later consciously restricted by local governments purchasing land and developing its infrastructure on their own. Looking at German urban planning, an example of influential planning was the huge program of subsidized, relatively well-equipped housing developments of the 1920s, with houses

of two to four stories mostly located at the edges of the cities, like Frankfurt-Westhausen or Karlsruhe-Dammerstock.[16] At that time, in contrast to the American situation, suburbanization was steered by immensely active city planners like Ernst May in Frankfurt or Martin Wagner in Berlin. The desire of members of the lower middle class and workers for nature or for a supplemental economy was only taken into account by Schreber garden plots that had often already been built in the *Kaiserreich*, and to some extent by lots for tenants of the new housing developments.[17]

Since the carefully planned, modern housing developments in many German cities of the 1920s were medium-sized in terms of density, low-density suburbanization by single-family houses could be held to a minimum at that time. To be sure, the cities expanded since the late nineteenth century, not least of all by *Villenkolonien* and some pre-war "garden-cities," as well as a few special types of suburban agglomeration in the course of the Weimar Republic.[18] The extension of cities by single-family houses also slowly proceeded during the Nazi period, promoted by the policy on the "reprivatization" of housing, decreased interest rates, and the rise of homeowner's loan corporations (*Bausparkassen*) for the "Aryan" middle class. However, the most impressive step in suburbanization by single-family houses occurred in the Federal Republic, within the framework of "social housing policy" (*Sozialer Wohnungsbau*). First-time home ownership of a single-family home of limited size that included a small apartment as a rental unit (*Einliegerwohnung*) was subsidized by special laws in 1950 and especially in 1956, as well as by tax reductions up to 2006. In the period of the Cold War, home ownership, which normally meant suburban home ownership at this time, was interpreted as a symbol of individual and political freedom, similar to the situation in the United States. Suburbanization was also gendered in order to cultivate the conventional form of family in modern times: the bread-earning husband working in the male-dominated, seductive or dangerous city center all day and his wife with his children cultivating domesticity in the "safe" suburbs.[19]

As there was still a scarcity of accommodation even in the sixties local governments stimulated the construction of huge housing developments at the edges of the cities. In contrast to the concept of Ebenezer Howard's garden cities as well as to the biological-organic concept of a divided and broken-up city during Nazi Germany and, in a denazified version, in postwar West Germany, the new satellite cities, such as Bremen-Vahr (24,000 inhabitants), Munich-Neuperlach (74,000 inhabitants) and Halle-Neustadt (90,000 inhabitants) in West and East Germany combined the principles of density with the principles of economical construction and functionalist structure.[20] Simultaneously, but more intensively during the 1970s, West German academics, urban planners, citizens' initiatives, and

feminists criticized these housing developments as an undesirable culture of monotony and mono-functionalism.[21] Supported by local governments and the public, non-profit organizations and private companies reacted against these earlier developments by erecting groups of multi-family houses of greater architectural variety and smaller size that also were supposed to be accepted as an alternative to single-family houses.

Looking back at the American Progressive Era, the reformers' hope that the construction of model tenements and model garden cities would create a broad reform of housing policies was in vain.[22] In 1930, the reform-oriented journal *The Survey* published an article on subsidized housing programs under the headline, "Wake up, America."[23] At that time, however, the majority of American policy makers rejected subsidies for housing projects, arguing that housing conditions were better in the United States than in Europe, an argument that was opposed by the reformers. It was only the New Deal program that led to a break in the tradition of having only private housing policies, although the new housing blocks were anything but attractive (see below). Besides the public housing program, however, New Deal policy decisively promoted the ownership of single-family homes in 1934 by a law guaranteeing mortgages. Thus, suburbanization by single-family houses could continue on a large scale, especially as it was heavily promoted after World War II, as Kenneth Jackson has also outlined. It was only the rise of the New Urbanism since the 1980s and 1990s that led to some attempts to revitalize the idea of the city in the United States.[24]

Seen as a whole, the various episodes of suburbanization by single-family houses in the course of the twentieth century occurred less rapidly and later in Germany than in the United States. This was not only due to the lower economic prosperity of the German middle and upper working classes, more expensive land, and higher construction costs, as Kenneth Jackson correctly pointed out, but also due to German (local) governments' policies of managing urban development.[25]

Automobilization

Since Kenneth Jackson explicitly elaborated the links between suburbanization and automobilization, the comparison between American and German policy in this regard is necessary. The striking point is that mass automobilization in Germany only happened from the late 1950s and 1960s onwards, not from the 1920s as in the United States. Up to that time, German suburbanization more or less followed the public transportation lines, while in the United States, the early car orientation led to early sprawl. Later, however, during the postwar "economic miracle," cars, although not yet very numerous at the time, received the highest priority

in the eyes of many German urban planners: the concept was the "car-friendly city" (*autogerechte Stadt*) corresponding to American urban developments. German cities received wide streets designed for cars, while pedestrians and bicyclists were marginalized. In this period, developments in both countries were quite similar. This car-dominated era of the 1960s and early 1970s in German urban planning was, however, accompanied by heavily state-subsidized construction of new subways, partly to get still more space for cars, partly to promote public transportation. While this transportation policy was two-sided, the resistance of many citizens' initiatives (*Bürgerinitiativen*) to the domination of cars in German cities from the 1970s on had a clear goal: to re-create the city as a livable, post-functionalist space. And there is no doubt that these protests, supported by academic studies, led to a strong counter-reaction stimulated by the observation of American developments unwanted in Germany in the future.[26] To be sure, the increase in the number of cars could not be stopped by these arguments and the countermeasures were not easy to implement, but in the end the policies that were adopted to counteract earlier developments improved the situation by installing many pedestrian zones and bike lanes and by reevaluating various inner city centers according to the new concept of a polycentric city.[27]

Looking to the United States, reactions against the domination of cars could also be found in the 1960s and 1970s. Pedestrian zones were introduced in some American cities, but these measures could not succeed to a large extent.[28] And most suburbanites have been dependent on their cars, as Kenneth Jackson has elaborated. To be sure, there were always criticisms of such developments in the United States, such as Lewis Mumford's social concept of cities and regions, or Jane Jacob's 1961 book that rejected suburbanization and praised lively streets, or Richard Sennett's critical search for urban creativity, but they could not change overall public opinion.[29] Thus, the question arises whether the car culture in the United States, which had already started in the 1920s, forty years earlier than in Germany, had reached a point of no return in the United States after the 1950s and 1960s, while in Germany the culture of unchallenged car domination not only occurred much later, but was already challenged and resisted after ten or twenty years.

Segregation

In both societies, segregation can be viewed as a component of urban development that affected inner cities and suburbs alike. During the nineteenth century's urbanization and industrialization, German cities became divided by class. Moreover, since the late nineteenth century, zoning ordinances indirectly promoted social segregation in the new

residential areas, while the designation of some areas as *Villenkolonien* had the voluntary segregation of parts of the upper class as an explicit goal. A certain degree of social segregation, both, voluntary and compulsory, had also continuedto be recognizable in the following decades of the twentieth century.

There were, however, also efforts to avoid social segregation. It was the fear of the *classes dangereuses* that led to a policy of integration, especially after the European revolutions of 1848/49. The prototype of a tenement developed by town planner James Hobrecht in the 1870s was designed to encourage people from various social strata to live close to one another, although the classes were clearly separated by the different locations and appointments of the apartments within a tenement.[30] The basic idea was to promote people's personal knowledge of people of other classes. To be sure, the Berlin *Mietskasernen*, with up to eight dark and narrow buildings surrounding courtyards, were a parody of this idea. The integrative idea, however, was still recognizable: Decent middle-class families lived in the decent-looking apartments on the first and second floors of the front building with its decent-looking architecture, while poor families inhabited the overcrowded rear buildings. Thus, it is no accident that workers comprised only about 65 to 70 percent of the residents of so-called working-class neighborhoods in the *Kaiserreich* period.[31] Consistent with the goal of social integration, the new model garden city Hellerau was also intended for people from all classes, although the social status of the inhabitants was clearly recognizable by the different appearances of their respective houses.

This idea of a mixture of social and economic classes within a neighborhood—realized through a mixture of various housing types and different densities of occupation—more or less dominated German urban planning.[32] The subsidized housing developments of the 1920s, such as Frankfurt-Römerstadt or Frankfurt-Westhausen, included lower- and mid-level officials and employees as well as some carefully selected families from the upper working class as tenants of the functionalist and modern-looking apartment blocks. The few model housing developments of the Nazi era, such as Braunschweig-Mascherode and Braunschweig-Lehndorf, also brought together people from various social classes in different housing types corresponding to class, but the Nazis introduced the selection of applicants according to race as supposedly necessary for their new *Volksgemeinschaft*.[33]

The principles of social and architectural mixture in new residential areas also dominated in many subsidized housing developments built in the decades after World War II, but then in denazified, i.e. non-racial terms and contexts.[34] As a consequence, urban planners like Konstanty Gutschow referred not to the German heritage, but to the American

neighborhood-unit plan of the Chicago School.[35] During the 1950s, West German laws with respect to subsidized housing projects explicitly addressed the broad strata of population. Thus, public housing projects, especially in war-devastated inner city districts, had, with few exceptions, a relatively good reputation that has only partly changed since the second half of the 1970s, when middle-class families gained better homes and were replaced by welfare families and poor migrants—so-called guest workers' families and later ethnic Germans.[36]

In some ways, the idea of social integration was linked to the Germans' longing for the social and political harmony of an imagined homogeneous and socially harmonious German Volk. This had racial consequences, especially after 1933. On the one hand, this had the consequence that Germany had many barracks and camps, including concentration camps for those it considered the "others."[37] On the other hand, however, the policy of urban social integration avoided the development of visible slums. With some exceptions, it has also avoided the establishment of "Little Italys" or "Little Turkeys," as well as visible urban and suburban ghettos.[38]

Politicians have normally been eager to disperse poor people. This was supposed to happen in the course of slum clearances during the Third Reich as well as in the era of modernization during the 1960s and finally in the era of gentrification beginning in the 1980s. German state and local politicians have always been committed to hiding all the many contradictory facts behind relatively attractive buildings, such as public houses for homeless people in nineteenth-century cities. Another example is the so-called *Judenhäuser* into which Jews were relocated in the months before their deportation. As these buildings looked normal from the outside and were located in various city districts, non-Jewish Germans could know that Jews resided there, but could not at first glance see the inhuman conditions inside the houses.[39] It was certainly no accident that the Nazis avoided constructing Jewish ghettos in the so-called *Altreich* after 1933 because they presumably feared that ordinary "Aryans" would be shocked by such an unusual sight.[40]

In contrast to Germany, social and racial segregation in the United States were officially legitimized because the rhetoric of "separate but equal" dominated both political culture and social reality. Functional zoning ordinances, widespread since the 1920s and legitimized by the Supreme Court in 1926, supported the trend toward increasing social segregation in the new suburban districts.[41] Forest Hill Gardens, the prototypical garden suburb built in 1908, was anything but socially mixed. One American urban planner summed up the American legitimization of spatial segregation, writing, "A reasonable segregation is normal, inevitable, and desirable, and cannot be greatly affected, one way or the other,

by zoning."[42] Furthermore, private contracts between developers and buyers fostered racial segregation until 1948, when this sort of contract was forbidden.[43] Although there were always some critics of racial segregation, city planning commissions were used to defend racial segregation by referring again and again to long traditions and broad public acceptance. The argument that appropriate residential areas for people of color were to be constructed in order to avoid racial unrest and to give minorities the opportunity to practice good citizenship in "their" areas was intended to make even critics accept segregation. New Deal housing policies also promoted racial and social segregation, shaping inner-city ghettos by building new public housing projects. This was also the case after 1945.

The academic discourse on neighborhoods did not promote social heterogeneity, either. Even the well-known socioecological Chicago School defined social and cultural homogeneity in urban neighborhoods as a natural process creating "natural areas," formed more by drawing people in than by pushing people out. Even when Clarence Perry's plan based on neighborhood units of five thousand people came to be considered the ideal size for an administrative unit and the optimum for a face-to-face, participatory democracy, the idea of homogeneous neighborhoods never totally disappeared, although it was softened by Park's belief in people's assimilation in the future.[44]

The core issue for most white Americans has been the maintenance of white schools, "secure" white neighborhoods, and stable investments, knowing that if neighorhoods became racially mixed, the value of their houses and hence the value of their main savings would be reduced. Thus, housing policy, as well as market effects, academic discourse, middle-class interests, and customary lifestyles expressed and promoted the view of segregation as a matter of course. Although there have been some gradual changes beginning in the last decades of the twentieth century, the outlines of long-term segregation are still conspicuous when looking not only at the "normal" suburbs, but also at both the new "gated communities" and the edge cities.[45]

Mental Maps and Life Styles

As a rule, cities have always been in large part cultural constructions, permanent components of people's mental maps. Children's paintings of a German city often have the same elements: a wall, a church, a tower, a city hall, a market, and many houses with steeply sloping red roofs and smoking chimneys. These images, reflecting the image of the medieval city, have obviously been transferred from one generation to the next, and were integrated into the cultural memory of Germans despite the fact that the profiles of German cities have radically changed.

To be sure, the construct of this kind of German city was usually not the big city, but the small and medium-sized one. This view corresponded with that of many reformers on both sides of the Atlantic. The concept of Ebenezer Howard's garden city, which could be integrated into different political systems, numbered only about 30,000 inhabitants.[46] The garden city of Radburn mentioned above had 3,000 inhabitants. Lewis Mumford's planned regional cities had an intended size of 50,000.[47] On both sides of the Atlantic, anti-urbanism, widespread since the acceleration of urbanization by the 1880s, was often pure anti-metropolitanism.[48] Big cities were equated with an uncontrollable and therefore dangerous jungle.[49] Apart from their agrarian romanticism, the Nazis also preferred small and medium-sized cities, whose necessity was then legitimized by racist arguments.

There had, however, been some opposite trends before the Nazis suppressed them. By the turn of the century and especially in the 1920s, modern metropolitan life, including mass culture and the new sensory challenges posed by traffic noise and electricity, had been highlighted and positively (or at least ambiguously) interpreted by numerous artists and writers, and supported by both unknown and well-known urbanites.[50]

Notwithstanding these inspiring images of the twentieth-century metropolis, many German cities nourished a cultural memory of the city that was primarily based on history. Numerous institutions and media provided for the awakening, maintenance, and strengthening of people's awareness of the historical roots of their city, above all *Heimat* or city museums and city archives, supported by associations for local history and historic preservation.[51] Official city celebrations also fostered the city's rich heritage.[52] Documentary films, city guides, old drawings, the local press, and broadcasting were excellent media to convey the special characteristics of a city to the inhabitants' mental maps. During the first half of the twentieth century, this was the way cultural conservatives shaped the city's allegedly organic personality, which was said to be closely connected to the old regional culture *(Stammeskultur)*.[53] After 1933 racial interpretations followed that *völkisch* line. In the early postwar era the imaginary picture of the old German city remained prominent, despite the destruction of many cities, and came to be regarded as an icon of Western civilization *(Abendland)*. Since the 1980s, urban image policies have used the profile of the old city as a marketing strategy. As a result, Germans' various images of the city have been deeply engraved into the minds of ordinary people, even after large parts of many cities were destroyed in World War II. The Dresden *Frauenkirche* is the latest example of a complete reconstruction, supported by the argument of not only

rebuilding a significant church, but also the entire city profile of *old* Dresden.[54]

To be sure, trends toward the reconstruction of city landmarks are only one side of the coin. The other are the many opposite trends that achieved the destruction of old inner-city districts and individual historic buildings. Moreover, while many old buildings destroyed in the war were not reconstructed, others were replaced by new commercial buildings or by urban freeways in the 1950s and 1960s. At that time, the historical parts of the city were often marginalized by city policies.[55] Since the middle of the 1970s, however, strong efforts to take care of old buildings have been made, stimulated by the European Year of Historic Preservation in 1975 and corresponding national laws.

The European Year of Historic Preservation even spurred on some urban planners in the GDR. They recognized that the huge prefabricated housing developments (*Plattenbau-Siedlungen*) at the edges of the cities and the broad boulevards, the *Magistrale*, could not make up for people's feelings that the conspicuous decay of many inner cities was a far-reaching loss.[56] Although some well-known inner city neighborhoods like the Berlin *Nikolaiviertel* were reconstructed, attempts at renovation in many other city centers remained marginalized even during the 1980s. Thus, people tended to interpret the progression of the *visible* decay of city centers as a symbol of the decay of the entire East German state in the 1980s.[57]

To be sure, various images of cities can also be found in the United States. The New England town of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was often invoked and highly valued by Lewis Mumford and others. The Main Street city has been the topic of literary classics (Sinclair Lewis) and the favorite of innumerable Westerns. The skyscraper city has become symbolic of a modern city, especially for the American brand of modernism. But these completely different prototypes of cities have remained fragmented urban images and, as a rule, have not melded to form a single city imaginary.

Moreover, in the early twentieth century, in contrast to many German museums, American city museums were less committed to strengthening local and regional identities, instead focusing more on displaying the collections donated by wealthy citizens. Meanwhile, this has changed. Similar remarks can be made on preservation issues. Although the historic preservation movement in the United States can be traced back to the 1850s, its efforts were often neglected by commercial interests. Since the 1960s, however, citizens' initiatives have often successfully campaigned for the preservation of entire areas as historic districts.[58]

While American progressive reformers before World War I had still been committed to the city as a whole, after the war academic and public

interests were redirected toward smaller communities, i.e. neighbor-hoods.[59] This shift supported the legitimation of suburbanization and weakened people's links to the city as a whole. To be sure, by 1900 there was the City Beautiful Movement, which was eager to enhance urban design and to improve the appearance of cities, especially that of Chicago, by integrating nature into the cities and building parkways, boulevards, and civic centers close to the central business districts.[60] Although this policy did not address urban social and racial problems and therefore was interpreted as merely cosmetic, it was often connected with women's commitment to municipal reform and therefore might have improved public views of the city, not only in terms of aesthetics.[61] But evidently these efforts were not effective in changing the minds of middle class Americans regarding where they wanted to live: in suburbs, a trend that increased rapidly since the 1920s. As a result, middle-class Americans, accustomed to moving many times during their lives, have been more committed to their suburban neighborhoods, their school districts, their church districts, and their small communities than to the city as a whole and metropolitan life as a value per se. This attitude can be traced back to the colonial period and to American values of individualism and com-munitarianism. It also can be traced to the daily necessities of immigrants and to the community's "particular salience for women."[62] The side-effect, however, was that, except for the "special species" of the New Yorker or the Bostonian, the city as a constructed entity was not as deeply inscribed within the mental maps of Americans as it was in the mental maps of Germans.

In contrast to the United States, the German middle class has been characterized by a wider range of lifestyles. Although many middle-class families with children have chosen to move to suburban neighborhoods, others voluntarily have opted to live in inner-city neighborhoods. Tax incentives for the renovation and modernization of old apartments, for example those built during the *Kaiserreich*, and for ownership of apart-ments, especially since the 1970s, have also increased the attraction of inner-city life.[63] As a consequence, home ownership has not only led the middle class to move to the suburbs, but has also encouraged members of the middle class to remain in the cities. Moreover, the existence of the many West German citizens' initiatives, which have been eager to par-ticipate in decision-making processes outside the local parliaments since the 1970s, might also be interpreted as an expression of people's com-mitments to good living conditions within the cities. In addition, the blossoming of shopping malls outside German cities in the past twenty years notwithstanding, for average Germans, "going shopping" still means going to a city center, not driving to a suburban shopping mall. Moreover, the development of more polycentric city structures by reju-

venating inner-city neighborhoods as well as attempts to provide lively city centers after closing hours have no doubt contributed to making urban living more attractive. Admittedly, however, many of these approaches have had only limited success due to opposing trends and interests, as well as limited local budgets.

Concluding Remarks

This commentary is based on the insight that city comparisons between countries only make sense if they are contextualized in their respective societies and related to their policies in the way Kenneth Jackson has inspiringly done for the United States. Mass consumer society and technological progress, the main components of the so-called modernization of Germany and the United States, have led to basically similar developments. This relatively obvious explanation of the central similarities, however, has been challenged when considering the conspicuous differences between these developments. To be sure, the two world wars and two dictatorships might have compounded German economic backwardness, but this kind of explanation is not sufficient. Might it therefore be useful to apply the theory of path dependence, which holds that the direction a country has taken in the past will probably continue to influence future developments? If so, the divergent courses of American and German suburbanization can be considered a consequence of divergent societies, divergent political systems, divergent mentalities, and divergent histories. One should keep in mind, however, that the concept of path dependence, usually embedded in economic theories, has very limited epistemological value for historians, because all "paths" themselves are extremely complex and dynamic processes. Moreover, this theory is "only" a theory of probability. It does not preclude the possibility of a gradual or radical change of policies and activities, as numerous American city reformers might hope at present: It merely views this as unlikely. Looking at Germany, the present neo-liberal trends might increasingly erase future differences between German and American cities, as some critics have argued.[64] If this is true, it might represent a significant exception to path dependence theory's power of probability. Is it possible that the unlikely will become reality?

Notes

[1] See also his book: Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York and Oxford, 1985). I am grateful to Eve Rosenhaft, Dirk Schubert, Georg Wagner-Kyora, and Richard Wetzell for their criticism and assistance.

[2] This has been investigated by Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998).

[3] Jon C. Teaford, *The Twentieth-Century American City: Problem, Promise, and Reality* (Baltimore and London, 1986). Frederic C. Howe is one of the best-known municipal reformers. The results of the reforms differed considerably between the cities.

[4] Wolfgang R. Krabbe, *Die deutsche Stadt im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1989), 121–126; see also Jürgen Reulecke, *Geschichte der Urbanisierung in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), 118–130.

[5] This was especially the case after Erzberger's finance reform was carried through in 1920. As known, in the periods of the Nazi state and the GDR, local self-rule was completely eliminated.

[6] Kenneth Fox, *Better City Government: Innovation in American Urban Politics, 1850–1937* (Philadelphia, 1977), 30–33.

[7] The following text focuses above all on members of the middle class because they primarily became suburbanites.

[8] Krabbe, *Die deutsche Stadt*, 108–110.

[9] The best example of ideas for metropolitan areas was the "Regional Plan of New York and its Environs," completed in 1929 and sponsored by the Russel Sage Foundation. Roy Lubove, *Community Planning in the 1920s: The Contribution of the Regional Planning Association of America* (Pittsburgh, 1963); Stephen Ward, *Planning the Twentieth-Century City: The Advanced Capitalist World* (Chichester, 2002).

[10] This is not the place to mention all the current reformers, among them the feminist planners and architects. Some examples can be found in Marianne Rodenstein, *Wege zur nicht-sexistischen Stadt: Architektinnen und Planerinnen in den USA* (Freiburg i. Br., 1994); Kristine B. Miranne and Alma H. Young, eds., *Gendering the City: Women, Boundaries, and Visions of Urban Life* (Lanham etc., 2000).

[11] Above all, forerunners of regional planning were the traffic association Berlin (*Zweckverband Berlin*) in 1912, the establishment of Greater Berlin in 1920, and a similar association in the Ruhr region (*Ruhrsiedlungsverband*) in 1920. Planning institutions were established on the state level (*Landesplanungsbehörden*).

[12] Krabbe, *Die deutsche Stadt*, 98.

[13] Thomas Sieverts, *Zwischenstadt: Zwischen Ort und Welt, Raum und Zeit, Stadt und Land* (Braunschweig etc., 1997). Three groups are currently participating in a debate. One group, representing the interests of private developers and business, simply wants deregulation according to the American model. Another group is primarily committed to the so-called European city as a permanent model for city planning in the present and future alike, completely condemning suburbia and post-suburbia. The third group simply regards sprawl as inevitable and therefore focuses more on the possibilities of shaping it and regulating its future development within the framework of regional planning. One of the consequences is the creation of the *Region Hannover* with its own democratically elected authority that distributes the incomes of the entire region and tries to regulate the processes of suburbanization and post-suburbanization in the region.

[14] See e.g. Christian Heppner, *Garbsen—Neue Mitte am Rand? Die Entstehung einer Stadt im suburbanen Raum 1945–1975* (Hannover, 2005). Many cities, however, have become shrinking cities, especially in eastern Germany. This has challenged city planners in a new way. Häußermann and Siebel, *Neue Urbanität* (Frankfurt am Main, 1995), 154.

[15] Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York, 1991).

[16] The beginning of modern urban planning was the Prussian Building Line Law (*Fluchtliniengesetz*) in 1875 and the many construction ordinances that followed.

[17] For more see Adelheid von Saldern, *Häuserleben: Arbeiterwohnen vom Kaiserreich bis heute*, 2d ed. (Bonn, 1997).

[18] One well-known example of these garden cities is Hellerau near Dresden. As a rule, the term garden cities only denotes city-dependent areas at the edges of the city with single-

family houses including a garden. Regarding suburban agglomeration, we should above all recall the new single-family houses built for soldiers' families after World War I and the erection of very simple houses in times of misery, particularly during the Great Depression.

[19] The argument on gender and family was already heard on both sides of the Atlantic in earlier decades. Susanne Frank, *Stadtplanung im Geschlechterkampf: Stadt und Geschlecht in der Großstadtentwicklung des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Opladen, 2003), chapter 8; Adelheid von Saldern, "Social Rationalization of Living and Housework in Germany and the United States in the1920s," in Adelheid von Saldern, *The Challenge of Modernity: German Social and Cultural Studies, 1890–1960* (Ann Arbor, 2002), 134–163.

[20] There were, of course, big differences between East and West German satellite cities in terms of concepts, contexts, and quality. The biological-organic concept was based on analogies between the body of a human being and city planning. See Johannes Göderitz, Roland Rainer, and Hubert Hoffmann, *Die gegliederte und aufgelockerte Stadt* (Tübingen, 1957). This type of modern urban planning differed considerably from the other type of modern urban planning, the Bauhaus functionalism and the functionalist principles of the Athens Charter (1933).

[21] The new feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s pushed the questioning of functionalism and its long distances for women and propagated a "city of short ways" and multifunctional neighborhoods.

[22] This idea of model building might be compared with models of the early socialists, such as those built by Charles Fourier and Robert Owen.

[23] *The Survey*, 15 April 1930, 90.

[24] New cities in the shape of artificial-looking neo-traditionalism, like Seaside in Florida, are not primarily characteristic for this movement. The Charter of the New Urbanism of 1996 proclaimed the fight against sprawl and the total commercialization of city centers.

[25] The other strata of the working classes mostly had no choice as to where to live.

[26] For these academic studies, see Alexander Mitscherlich, *Die Unwirtlichkeit unserer Städte* (Frankfurt am Main, 1965); Hans Paul Bahrdt, *Humaner Städtebau: Überlegungen zur Wohnungspolitik und Stadtplanung für eine Zukunft* (Hamburg, 1968). Opponents of American developments were supported by Jacob's criticism. See Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York, 1961).

[27] I am grateful to Jan Logemann for these hints.

[28] See e.g. Kent Robertson, *Pedestrian Malls and Skywalks: Traffic Separation Strategies in American Downtowns* (Aldershot, 1994); Harvey Rubenstein, *Pedestrian Malls, Streetscapes, and Urban Spaces* (New York, 1992).

[29] Jacobs, *Death and Life*.

[30] See also the picture of a Paris tenement from the 1850s on the cover of the book edited by Lutz Niethammer, *Wohnen im Wandel: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alltags in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Wuppertal, 1979).

[31] Von Saldern, *Häuserleben,* 49.

[32] This was also Lewis Mumford's idea in the 1950s. See Dirk Schubert, "Die Renaissance der Nachbarschaftsidee—Eine deutsch-anglo-amerikanische Dreiecks-Planungsgeschichte," in Ursula von Petz, ed., *"Going West?" Stadtplanung in den USA – gestern und heute* (Dortmund, 2004), 133.

[33] Similar trends could be observed in the National Socialist neighborhood plan "Ortsgruppe als Siedlungzelle" with 6,000–8,000 "Aryan" people. For more, see Schubert, "Die Renaissance," 141–42.

[34] It is worth mentioning that after World War II, so-called Displaced Persons, among them Jews, were informally discriminated against in the process of distributing scarce accommodations, as an investigation of Lower Saxony shows. Holger Lüning, *Das Eigenheim-Land.*

Der öffentlich geförderte Soziale Wohnungsbau in Niedersachsen während der 1950er Jahre (Hannover, 2005), 199–201.

[35] Schubert, "Die Renaissance," 143–146.

[36] After the events in the Parisian suburbs in 2005 the question has arisen whether such a rebellion could also happen in Germany because of the process of ghettoization. Although the responsible politicians have been eager to relieve such fears, trends are recognizable towards increased separation and exclusion of marginalized people. The city is expected to be endangered by fragmentation to a new extent. See e.g. Albrecht Göschel, "Vom Disparitätenproblem zum Desintegrationsproblem," *Die Alte Stadt* (2000): 114–125.

[37] The United States has developed a country of prisons.

[38] An exception can be seen in the company settlements (*Werkssiedlungen*) for so-called Ruhr Poles in the Ruhr area during the *Kaiserreich*. Berlin-Kreuzberg, for instance, can be interpreted as "Little Turkey." So far, however, migrants' accommodations have normally been relatively small and ethnically mixed areas. According to current discussions on "parallel societies" (*Parallelgesellschaften*), an economically forced concentration process due to neoliberal urban policies might promote the fragmentation of the cities in the future.

[39] Some houses had belonged to Jews before their dispossession.

[40] As is well known, ghettos were, however, erected in the occupied Eastern countries in the context of the Holocaust.

[41] Dirk Schubert, "'Heil aus Ziegelsteinen'—Aufstieg und Fall der Nachbarschaftsidee: Eine deutsch-anglo-amerikanische Dreiecks-Planungsgeschichte," in *Die Alte Stadt* (1998): 146.

[42] Robert Whitten, urban planner, cited in Mel Scott, *American City Planning Since 1890* (Berkeley, 1969)*,* 198.

[43] Scott, *American City Planning*, 198.

[44] Five thousand people was also the size of the model garden city Sunnyside Gardens.

[45] Robert A. Beauregard, "Edge Cities: Die Peripherisierung des Zentrums," in Walter Prigge, ed., *Peripherie ist überall* (Frankfurt and New York, 1998), 54–56.

[46] See e.g. Dirk Schubert, *Die Gartenstadtidee zwischen reaktionärer Ideologie und pragmatischer Umsetzung: Theodor Fritschs völkische Version der Gartenstadt* (Dortmund, 2004).

[47] Andrew Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought, 1820–1940* (Manchester, 1985), 295.

[48] According to Lees, anti-urbanism was not as intense in the United States as it was in Germany, and it had other connotations. Lees, *Cities Perceived*, 288–89.

[49] The search for control and moral order of cities was often linked to functionalism and social rationalization of people. This concept could be integrated into various political systems. For more, see von Saldern, "Social Rationalization of Living." In the United States, settlement houses, schools, and neighborhood centers tried to educate and Americanize immigrants during the 1910s and 1920s.

[50] In this context Georg Simmel should be recalled. For more on this topic see e.g. Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, 1996). Sigrid Weigel analyzes the gender aspects integrated in city images. See Sigrid Weigel, *Topographien der Geschlechter: Kulturgeschichtliche Studien zur Literatur* (Reinbek, 1990); see also Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Radio, Film, and the Death of Weimar Culture* (Berkeley, 2006).

[51] In general see Rudy Koshar, *Germany's Transient Pasts: Preservation and National Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill and London, 1998).

[52] Adelheid von Saldern, ed., with the cooperation of Lu Seegers, Alice von Plato, and Elfie Rembold, *Inszenierte Einigkeit: Herrschaftsrepräsentationen in DDR-Städten* (Stuttgart, 2003) and Adelheid von Saldern, ed., with the cooperation of Lu Seegers, *Inszenierter Stolz: Stadtrepräsentationen in drei deutschen Gesellschaften (1935–1975)* (Stuttgart, 2005).

[53] See e.g. Krijn Thijs, "Elastische Geschichte. Berlin und drei Erzählungen seiner Vergangenheit" Ph.D. thesis, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2006, publication forthcoming; Adelheid von Saldern, "*Volk* and *Heimat* Culture in Radio Broadcasting during the Period of Transition from Weimar to Nazi Germany," *Journal of Modern History* 7 (2004): 312–346; Adelheid von Saldern, "City, Museums for the People, and New Media (1900–1933/34)," *Journal of Urban History* 32 (2005): 61–81.

[54] A current research project, sponsored by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and investigated by Georg Wagner-Kyora (History Department, University of Hanover and the Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg) deals with several local rebuilding projects in West German cities between 1949 and 1989. See Adelheid von Saldern and Georg Wagner-Kyora, "Demokratie und Wiederaufbau," in *Der Architekt* 3–4 (2005): 44–51.

[55] Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, "American Influences on Urban Developments in West Germany," in Detlef Junker et al., eds., *USA und Deutschland im Zeitalter des Kalten Krieges* (Cambridge, 2004), 588; Joachim Petsch, *Eigenheim und gute Stube: Zur Geschichte des bürgerlichen Wohnens* (Cologne, 1989), 201–205.

[56] After World War II, the cities in eastern Germany were, however, rebuilt on the basis of the old city plan. Johann Jessen, "Suburbanisierung: Wohnen in verstädterter Landschaft," in Tilman Harlander, ed., *Villa und Eigenheim*: *Suburbaner Städtebau in Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 2001), 323.

[57] Adelheid von Saldern, "'Alte und junge Stadt': Zur Ambivalenz der Erinnerungsorte sozialistischer Utopie in den sechziger Jahren," in von Saldern, ed., *Inszenierte Einigkeit*, 392.

[58] For more, see Niels Gutschow, "Denkmalpflege in den USA," in *Die Alte Stadt* (1986): 99–112.

[59] Paul Nolte, "Eingemeindungen und kommunale Neugliederungen in Deutschland und den USA bis 1930," in *Archiv für Kommunalwissenschaften* (1988): 36.

[60] The idea of creating civic centers had supporters on both sides of the Atlantic. Howard's garden city included a civic center, and the garden city Radburn was also enriched by a community center. The well-known reformer and architect Bruno Taut for example was also committed to the idea of civic centers. In the period of Nazism and in the GDR community centers in new cities were closely linked to the domicile of the respective state party.

[61] See e.g. Lubove, *Community Planning*, 45. At the same time, the Austrian planner and architect Camillo Sitte (1843–1903) also wanted to beautify the cities, but his aesthetic principles referred to the model of the old European city. In 1907, a Prussian law against the disfigurement of villages and outstanding landscapes (*Preußisches Gesetz gegen Verunstaltung von Ortschaften und landschaftlich hervorragenden Gegenden*) was passed. It was adopted by the other German states and could be used as a frame for special local ordinances. Gerhard Albrecht et al., eds., *Handwörterbuch des Wohnens* (Jena, 1930), 688. For more on the City Beautiful, see Bonj Szcygiel, "'City Beautiful' Revisited," in *Journal of Urban History* 29, no. 2 (2003): 107–132.

[62] Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870–1940* (Oxford, 2000), 290.

[63] Especially single households and couples with no children have been attracted by urban lifestyles.

[64] Hartmut Häußermann, "'Amerikanisierung' der deutschen Städte," in Prigge, *Peripherie*, 82; Wolfgang Müller and Ruth Rohr-Zänker, "Amerikanisierung der Peripherie in Deutschland?" in Klaus Brake, Jens S. Dangschat, and Günter Herfert, eds., *Suburbanisierung in Deutschland: Aktuelle Tendenzen* (Opladen, 2001), 35–42.