
Jane Jacobs as Spontaneous Economic Order Methodologist: Part 1: Intellectual Apprenticeship

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The scenes that illustrate this book are all about us. For illustrations, please look closely at real cities. While you are looking, you might as well also listen, linger and think about what you see.

—Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Random House (1961, n.p.)

Abstract: As measured by citation counts, attempts to quantify “Jacobs spillovers,” and a growing number of books about or inspired by her work, academic interest in the work of urban theorist Jane Jacobs is at an all-time high. Although most commentators are still drawn to her writings on urban physical form and social interactions, a few have discussed her economic and ethical insights. Interest in the inductive methodology she used to generate her ideas and the “organized complexity” paradigm that shaped her worldview, however, has been sparse because of their apparent lack of sophistication. This paper, the first of two connected works in which we explore both the development and the full fruition of Jacobs as spontaneous economic order theorist and methodologist, posits that specific influences and experiences in Jacobs’ formative years and throughout her diversified intellectual apprenticeship led her to develop her unorthodox, yet predictive, research approach. Our follow-on paper discusses Jacobs’ use of metaphor and inductive methods as research tools firmly in, and of, the current philosophical understanding of the scientific method.

INTRODUCTION

As measured by citation counts (Harris 2011, p. 67), attempts to quantify ‘Jacobs spillovers’¹ and a growing number of books about or inspired by her work,² academic interest in the self-described “professional writer” (Martin 2000) and “author” (Laurence 2007, p. 5) Jane Jacobs is at an all-time high. Although most commentators are still drawn to her writings on urban physical form and social interactions (Jacobs 1961), a growing number have discussed her economic and ethical insights (Jacobs 1969a; 1969b; 1984; 1992; 2000; 2004b). Interest in the inductive methodology she used to generate her ideas, however, has been sparse because of its apparent lack of sophistication.³ As Martin (2000, n.p.) summarized it, Jacobs essentially “collect[ed]

tidbits of information from newspapers, books, conversation—whatever and wherever,” then “analyz[ed] her collection of facts and observations until she s[aw] a pattern,” and then “push[ed] and pumme[led] it to see if it holds up under scrutiny.”

Jacobs’ eschewing of both positivist and Marxian approaches arguably hurt the original reception given her work among what should have been her natural academic audience (most prominently urban planning, development economics, economic geography, urban economics and regional science) and was sometimes deemed sufficient grounds for dismissing it.⁴ As Hirt (2012b, p. 38) observed, Jacobs’ method was often disparaged as that of a “commonplace observer” rather than a “real [social] scientist.” Commenting formally on her article “Strategies

for *Helping Cities*” published in the September 1969 issue of the *American Economic Review*,⁵ economist Karl A. Fox (1970, p. 465) complained that she “gives us no definition of a city nor does she seem to recognize that a definition is needed. Lacking insight into the economic structure of the basic unit of her system, she also fails to provide us with useful criteria for policy intervention. I cannot operate with Mrs. Jacobs’ categories.” The prominent regional scientist John Friedmann (1970, pp. 476-7) dismissed her book *The Economy of Cities* published the same year as “essentially a philosophical tract and not the cool exposition of a scientific theory” in which “evidence is selected to shore up her beliefs, and where facts don’t seem to fit, either they are ignored or new ones are invented.” An anonymous (1969, p. 104) *Time* reviewer similarly accused Jacobs of reaching pre-ordained conclusions through a “beguiling window-box theory of economics in which personal conviction and anecdote weigh more than statistics” and by “dart[ing] around history hunting for examples like a bee in a clover field.” While conceding she was “terrific at generating ideas,” Canadian geographer Richard Harris (2011, p. 72) dismissed “her notion and methodology of proof” as “subjective and eccentric.” As Cichello (1989, p. 123) put it, Jacobs’ critics have typically complained she lacks “rigor and careful observation,” presents her data “sporadic[ally] and selectively chose [them] to make her case,” uses “incorrect or inconclusive” examples, categorizations, and ultimately fails to support her theory with models or statistics.

While Jacobs’ critics have some merit, many of the observations and insights she published in her 1969 book (much) better withstood the test of time than those of her positivist and Marxist detractors,⁶ an outcome that, in our opinion, can be traced back to a large extent to her unorthodox research approach. Because in many ways her own life was a testimony to the virtues of her seemingly idiosyncratic approach and main message, however, the first section will discuss some relevant aspects of her upbringing, education and professional career. The remainder of our paper will then provide a critical assessment of her status as a theorist and a more detailed discussion of the evolutionary metaphors that inspired her, her inductive method and her ontological stance. Our main conclusions are that Jacobs’ unorthodox research approach had some strengths over her contemporary alternatives and that where she went astray, as we will discuss in the context of her economic writings,⁷ was not in her inductive method per se, but in her failure to adhere consistently to the tenets of methodological individualism.

I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THEORIST⁸

Jane Jacobs—born Jane Isabel Butzner in 1916 in Scranton (Pennsylvania)—gained widespread public recognition in 1961 with the publication of her instant classic *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, a scathing indictment of the bulldozer-driven/high-rise urban redevelopment policies of the time.⁹ Her goal then was not limited to attacking “the principles and aims that have shaped modern, orthodox city planning and rebuilding,” but “also, and mostly... to introduce new principles of city planning and rebuilding, different and even opposite from those now taught in everything from schools of architecture and planning to the Sunday supplements and women’s magazines” (Jacobs 1961, p. 3).

Unknown to most people familiar with her work, later in life Jacobs deemed her main contribution to have been in the area of economic development theory. Indeed, her own favorite book was her first significant foray into the field, *The Economy of Cities* (Jacobs 1969a) (Desrochers and Hospers 2007). In a 1967 speech she explained her interest in the issue stemmed from observing the stagnation of once thriving American cities such as Detroit and Pittsburgh whose problems “piled up faster than they [could] be dealt with” (Jacobs 1967 in Allen 1997, p. 90). As she would later state, she wondered “[w]hat was different about the cities that didn’t die, but kept on finding new things to do?” Because some successful cities were very old and others rather new, she “thought there must be various processes that can be seen through time” and set out to uncover them (Wachtel 2002).¹⁰

To oversimplify, Jacobs’ is a theory of endogenous economic development in which poverty is a state of affairs that has no cause and requires no explanation. As Rowe (2014, p. 28) puts it: “Her focus was not on eradicating poverty but rather on wealth-generation, which she saw as natural, and finding the obstacles to that generative activity. She famously described being cold as the absence of heat; therefore the task is to focus on how to generate heat rather than take away the cold.” Jacobs discovered and argued that when development occurs, the process creates and/or takes place for the most part in cities which she defined as settlements that “consistently generate [their] economic growth¹¹ from [their] own local econom[ies]” (Jacobs 1969a, p. 262).

Cities, Jacobs argued, provide the unique contexts in which (re)combining existing things in new ways and injecting improvisations and innovations into daily economic

life is practical because of their dense networks of entrepreneurs, suppliers and skilled workers, along with their supporting financial, capital, retailing and logistical infrastructure. The “greater the sheer numbers and varieties of divisions of labor already achieved in an economy,” Jacobs (1969a, p. 59) explained, “the greater the economy’s inherent capacity for adding still more kinds of goods and services. Also the possibilities increase for combining the existing divisions of labor in new ways.” As Ikeda (2012, p. 65) summarized it, from the perspective of an economic agent, being placed “in an environment in which new problems are regularly presented to him [makes it] easier to make discoveries, in the form of solutions to those problems, that are useful to himself or others that he knows. Ordinary people under these circumstances can make more discoveries or become better able to use their faculties to their full potential.” Ikeda added: “Frequent contact with a large number of people with diverse knowledge, skills, and tastes is the sort of environment in which these kinds of opportunities may emerge” (idem).

Jacobs (1969a) parted ways with much of the discipline of economics in many respects, such as her case on behalf of the superior innovative abilities of entrepreneurial start-ups in highly diversified urban contexts when compared to the research divisions of large corporations.¹² She also insisted that import replacement (a process that, unlike import substitution, is market-driven) is an essential fuel for economic development, not only in terms of wealth accumulation, but also in laying ever more diversified foundations on which future new activities could be created. As such, she argued, a thriving city will, like a thriving ecosystem, become more diverse over time. As the mathematician and philosopher David Ellerman (2005) points out, the Jacobsian perspective contradicts mainstream economists’ long standing emphasis on static efficiency—i.e., the habit of studying how existing resources are allocated between competing uses as opposed to how new resources and products are created through entrepreneurship and innovation—and comparative advantage - the principle according to which regional economies should specialize in what they do best.¹³

In 1984 Jacobs offered additional hypothesis and answers as to how city development affects non-urbanized regions in her book *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*. She later drew further parallels between the evolution of biological and economic systems in *The Nature of Economies* (2000) and discussed other dimensions of commercial life and economic development in *The Question of Separatism: Quebec and the Struggle over Sovereignty* (1980);¹⁴ *Systems of*

Survival (1992);¹⁵ *Dark Age Ahead* (2004), an essay in which she warned of “ominous signs of [societal] decay;” and in the first pages of a book she never completed (Jacobs 2004b).

Three little appreciated facts about Jacobs as economic development theorist are that she began publishing pieces on the subject at the age of nineteen, that she was formally schooled in economic geography at Columbia University, and that she occupied a number of jobs in which she was exposed to various aspects of real world economic life before becoming a full time writer. Peter L. Laurence, an architectural historian and Jacobs scholar and biographer who recently published a thoroughly researched volume on the intellectual development of Jacobs as an urban theorist, confirmed the scarcity of information on Jacobs’ intellectual apprenticeship (2016, p. 3): “Almost nothing was known about the great amount of writing she had done prior to *Death and Life*. [...] Jacobs’ early writing career and the formative years leading up to *Death and Life* remain largely unknown.” We will now discuss, and sometimes speculate as to the impact of, some aspects of Jacobs’ early personal and professional life on her analysis of economic development.

II. THE (IN)FORMAL EDUCATION OF AN AUTODIDACT¹⁶

As Laurence (2007, p. 6) observed, “Jacobs’ self-effacement left her readers with the now-stereotyped picture of the author as a housewife watching the “sidewalk ballet” outside her storefront home on Hudson Street [Greenwich Village, New York City].”¹⁷

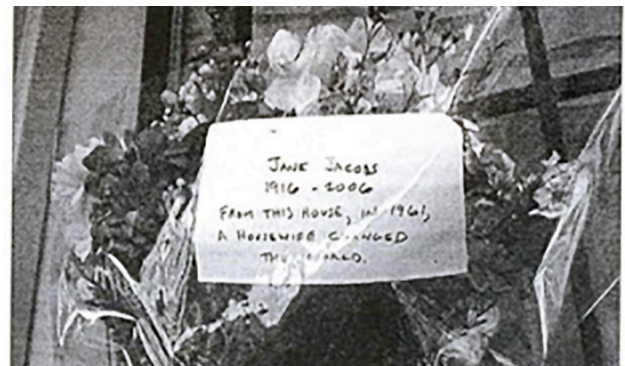


Figure 1: Bouquet of Flowers before Hudson Street 555. Source Schubert 2014b, 3.¹⁸

This notion of an amateur and uncredentialed stay-at-home mother or “layperson...who was not part of any

scientific networks” (Schubert 2014b, p. 4) is, however, inaccurate. Jacobs was actually a professional writer who completed a large number of university undergraduate courses. She belonged to a significant (if non-academic) intellectual community and benefitted from many opportunities to travel and visit firms and (re)development projects in her early adult life.¹⁹ As will now be argued, some of her outlook on economic life was also arguably shaped by the values she absorbed as a child and teenager.

Upbringing and Practical Business Experience

A British reviewer of *The Economy of Cities* observed over four decades ago that Jacobs “possesses such a sharp Yankee confidence in the benevolence of economic growth that the BBC ought to sign her up at once for a confrontation with [then prominent anti-growth economist] E[zra] J. Mishan” (Bendixson, 1970, p. 655). In a typical instance, Jacobs observed in 1967 that “[s]o far from denigrating cities because of the problems they create, we should recognize that these problems are opportunities. What we call faults of cities are really bringing problems to a head where they can be solved... Life keeps casting up new problems, and the cities have been, and certainly will continue to be, the places where they can be solved” (Jacobs 1967 in Allen 1997, pp. 92-93; see also Jacobs 1970).²⁰

Jacobs’ general philosophy owed much to her father, John Decker Butzner (1876-1937), a homeschooled Virginia farmboy who, by the time of his second daughter’s birth, had established a prosperous medical practice in Scranton (Pennsylvania). Jacobs later described him as “intellectually very curious, bright and independent” and of having a reputation as an especially skilled diagnostician, making him something of a “detective” in the medical profession (Wachtel 2002).



Figure 2: John Decker Butzner.

Source: Allen 1997, p. 32

As she formally stated in a foreword to a government interrogatory into possible communist sympathies or leanings (Jacobs 1952a in Allen 1997, pp. 169-170), she was brought up to believe that “there is no virtue in conforming meekly to the dominant opinion;”²¹ that “simple conformity results in stagnation for a society;” that “American progress has been largely owing to the opportunity for experimentation, the leeway given initiative, and to a gusto and a freedom for chewing over odd ideas;” that “American’s right to be a free individual, not at the mercy of the state, was hard-won and that its price was eternal vigilance;” and that the “American tradition of the dignity and liberty of the individual is not a luxury for easy times but is the basic source of the strength and security of a successful society.” As she would state in the interrogatory proper, she ultimately believed “in control from below and support from above” (Jacobs 1952b in Allen 1997, p. 179). The Butznors also often told their children “what a hard life farming was” (Wachtel 2002). As she recalled towards the end of her life: “My parents were delighted to live in the city. My mother came from a small town and my father came from a farm. They thought the cities were far superior places to live, and they told us why. And there were all kinds of people who believed that [at the time]” (Kunstler 2001).

Jacobs’ three siblings were Elizabeth (Betty) (1910-1993), John Decker Jr (1917-2006) and James (Jim) (1920-2009), all of who would regularly be thanked in the acknowledgment sections of her main works. Betty, typically referred to by her married name Elizabeth Manson, had originally studied interior design at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art and later became an esperanto enthusiast.²² James, for most of his career a chemical engineer at the Mobil Oil Company, was also active in local New Jersey politics and education.²³ Jane’s most famous sibling was her brother John who in time became a Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.²⁴



Figure 3, Jacobs and her siblings, 1945. Source: Allen 1997, 45. (Top, from left to right: Elizabeth (Jacobs' cousin), Kay and Jim Butzner, Elizabeth Butzner (Manson), John Decker Butzner Jr and Viola Peterson (Butzner); Bottom, from left to right: Jane and Robert H. Jacobs Jr.

Like all children, the young Jane Butzner was also a product of her broader local environment. For instance, she would later recount how important the nearby reference library, zoo and museum of natural history²⁵ had been to her development and how she “used to like to go to the railroad station in Scranton and watch the locomotives. I got a big bang out of seeing the locomotives and those pistons that moved the wheels. And that interested me how they were moved by those things and then the connection of that with the steam inside and so on” (Kunstler 2001). Perhaps the most important legacy Scranton imprinted in her mind, however, is that once thriving settlements can stagnate and force their best and brightest people to look for opportunities elsewhere.

Jane's lack of interest in formal education and her somewhat rebellious personality made her a mediocre student. At the urging of her father she learned shorthand and stenography upon graduating high school. Afterwards she spent nearly a year as an unpaid intern in a Scranton newspaper²⁶ and a few months with an aunt who ran a community center for the Presbyterian home missions in the mountains of western North Carolina, an opportunity pursued at her parents' behest because of their belief she should “get a good

look at a very different and interesting kind of life” (Jacobs 1961b in Allen 1997, p. 3). The moribund town she lived in, Higgins, was by then slowly emerging from a long period of decline and subsistence farming.²⁷

In 1934 Jane decamped to New York City to join her older sister. Finding work in the middle of the Great Depression proved challenging and she had to settle for a variety of (typically short-lived) clerical jobs in businesses that manufactured candies, clocks, drapery hardware, office supplies and bicycle, automobile, and aircraft components. This time undoubtedly taught her much about personal hardship (at one point the sisters had to subsist on pabulum²⁸), the realities of business life, and the importance of economic development. On the bright side, being frequently unemployed left her much time to explore the city on her own and eventually resulted in both the discovery of the various working districts located between Manhattan's Financial District and Midtown and of Greenwich Village where the sisters soon relocated.

Another landmark in Jane's personal life occurred in 1944 when her sister introduced her to one of her co-workers, an architect by the name of Robert H. Jacobs Jr. (1917-1996), who would soon become her husband and intellectual companion. Although his exact influence on her work is difficult to assess, Jacobs would write in the acknowledgements to *Death and Life* that “[m]ost of all I am grateful to my husband... by this time I do not know which ideas in this book are mine and which are his” (Jacobs 1961, n.p.).

Writer in (In)formal Training

In her first few years in New York City Jane Butzner launched her career as a writer in two ways. First, she published a number of freelance pieces in well-known outlets, with her initial break consisting of four articles on the inner workings of the leather (“Leather Shocking Tales”), cut flowers (“Flowers Come to Town”), fur (“Where the Fur Flies”) and diamond (“Diamonds in the Tough”) districts published in *Vogue* between 1935 and 1937.²⁹ In these and later years readers of popular publications such as *Cue: The Weekly Magazine of New York Life*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and the *New York Herald Tribune* would also come across her work. She further tried her hand, although much less successfully, at poetry and science fiction.

Between 1935 and 1938 she worked part-time as a research assistant for two writers. One was a stockbroker who hired her for a few weeks to help him research a book on financial markets. The other was Robert H. Hemphill,

a financial writer employed by the *New York Journal-American*, for whom she did library research work, cut clippings, and kept track of “bills bearing on economics as they were introduced in Congress and obtained copies of them” (Laurence 2009, p. 29).

Between 1938 and 1940 Jane Butzner enrolled at Columbia University’s Extension Program,³⁰ but did not complete a degree for administrative reasons (a combination of bad high school grades and of having earned too many credits for an extension student) and a personal desire to study whatever interested her. She also published her first (edited) book with Columbia University Press, *Constitutional Chaff: Rejected Suggestions of the Constitutional Convention of 1787* in 1941. According to Laurence (2009), this project was for the most part completed outside of formal schoolwork.³¹ Laurence (2016, p. 55) described *Constitutional Chaff* as a book inspired both by her [Jacobs’] courses in constitutional law and the development of legal institutions and by the ‘enthusiasm and wisdom’ of her friend, landlord, and former employer, Robert Hemphill. While the exact nature of Hemphill’s involvement in *Constitutional Chaff* is unclear, she [Jacobs] wrote in 1949 that ‘the idea of such a study, and the method for working it out was my own conception.’

According to Laurence (2016), Jacobs’ first book was well reviewed and was cited for decades by constitutional scholars. “Likely unaware that Jane Butzner was also Jane Jacobs,” (Laurence 2016, p. 57), scholars outside the disciplines of constitutional law and legal history, had, until recently, missed Jacobs’ opening salvo of illuminating the inner workings of complex systems.

Discussions of Jacobs’ time at Columbia are typically framed along the lines that “she signed up for courses in any subject that interested her” such as biology, chemistry, constitutional law, the development of legal institutions, geography, geology, patent law, philosophy, sociology and zoology and before long “was enjoying school for the first time, feeding her curiosity about how the world worked” (Flint 2009, p. 9). She would later comment that her “formal education in the conventional economics of the day [at] Columbia University... was scanty and superficial” (Jacobs, 2004b in Zipp and Storring 2016, p. 411). In the end though, she “had a wonderful time with various science courses and other things that I took there. And I have always been grateful for what I learned in those couple of years” (Kunstler 2001).

Laurence (2009, p. 76)³² suggests that if she “had matriculated, it would likely have been as a Geography major. She took the most courses in Economic Geography, a

study which anticipated her books on cities and economics.” Furthermore, rather than “being random or unrelated interests,” Jacobs’ science courses “all fell within the larger field of geography” and the “study of natural ecology in these courses complemented and informed the study of human ecology in her geography courses” that would, in time, “produce seminal theories of city functions and dynamics” (Laurence, 2009, p. 78). Indeed, in a piece published in 1940 in *Cue* magazine Jacobs described herself as a “city naturalist” who could understand the built environment by following and studying the “rivers,” “trails,” and “tributaries” of the city’s infrastructure (Jacobs 1940), a characterization that was very much in line with the spirit of human geographers at the time.

Laurence (2009, p. 77) suggests two lasting impacts of Jacobs’ time at Columbia. The first is the critical perspective of her professor (although likely adjunct faculty) Herman Frederick Otte (1940) on the Tennessee Valley Authority, as he was then completing his doctoral dissertation on the topic.³³ The second is her introduction to Belgian historian Henri Pirenne’s (1949/1925) *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade*, arguably the book that most significantly impacted her thinking (Laurence 2016).³⁴ Laurence (2016, p. 54) observed: “The life sciences were her key to developing Pirenne’s historically oriented theories of ‘death and life’ into new and timeless principles about city dynamics.”



Figure 4, Henri Pirenne (1862-1935).

Source: http://pepeworks.blogspot.ca/2010_03_01_archive.html

Although Laurence’s description of the academic stature of geography education at Columbia might be somewhat overstated,³⁵ his hypothesis on Jacobs’ choice of major and its influence on the rest of her writing career is plausible and can be supported by additional evidence and speculation. For instance, perhaps her main influence among faculty might have been George Thomas Renner (1900-1955) who was first appointed on a part-time basis as visiting Associate Professor of Geography at Columbia’s Teachers

College in 1936 and later ensconced as a full professor in 1939.³⁶ Although mostly remembered for being the cause of a “great map scandal”,³⁷ Renner was a Columbia PhD, the University of Washington’s (Seattle) first professional geographer (1927-1933), a senior economist and later consultant with the National Resources Planning Board (1934-1943), and much more of a polymath than Otte.³⁸ Like his colleague though, Renner was by and large hostile to New Deal policies. As he would state in 1944, he “got [his] dislike of politics in Seattle and [his] fear of New Deal economics in Washington, DC” (quoted by DeBres 1986, p. 386). One can get a sense of his take on public planning in a 1947 article on the dynamics of industrial location:

To assume, therefore, that the general principle of industrial localization and the several geographical laws of location can be disregarded and reversed by planning, would seem to be a result of both uneconomic and ungeographic thinking. No major industrial region could be deliberately created, and it is doubtful whether any important minor district can be brought into existence merely by the exercise of violation and forethought, without scrapping the entire free-enterprise system and the profit motif. The desire manifested in many states to create areas of intensive industrialization is thus doomed to failure. This does not mean, however, that decentralization is impossible. Rather it means that the geographical limits of such decentralization are fairly rigidly fixed. (Renner 1947, p. 189)

Perhaps just as important, Renner co-authored with Charles Langdon White (1897-1989), then of Western Reserve University (Cleveland), the 1936 textbook *Geography: An Introduction to Human Ecology* (White and Renner, 1936) and is considered the first economic geographer to have adopted an ecological approach to industrial location (Sit 1980, p. 413) in which he suggested studying urban economic linkages through the prism of “industrial symbiosis” rather than the (soon to be) more influential concept of “agglomeration economies.”³⁹ While Renner’s ecological approach failed to gain much of a following, it might have made a more lasting impression on Jane Butzner. As Jane’s son Jim told us in an interview, his mother never forgot anything.⁴⁰



Figure 5, George Renner. (1900-1955)

Source: Percy, 1948, p. 244.

Apart from the specific influence of Otte and Renner, one can also venture a few guesses as to the type of material Jacobs’ professors would have exposed her to. Presumably a few classics in the field could have been covered, be they excerpts from Daniel Defoe’s *A Plan for English Commerce* (1728) and *The Complete English Tradesman* (1726) that discussed regionalized industries in early 18th Century England (1728, pp. 86-88; 1726, 401), how English people learned a variety of trades from other Europeans (1728, pp. 300-303), and the unique role of London at the center of British Trade (Defoe 1726, p. 389) or else Alfred Marshall’s (1920/1890) famous passages on ‘industrial districts’ and the external benefits that single-activity or closely related producers derive from sharing fixed costs of specialized infrastructure and services, skilled labour pools and specialized suppliers while sharing and building upon a common knowledge base. More likely though, Jane Butzner would have been introduced to these concepts through some of the textbooks of the time.⁴¹

Perhaps too she imbibed the case study, bottom up and detail-oriented approach of American economic geography, a sub-discipline that was then very much an off-shot of the German Historical School of economics in terms of both style and substance (Barnes 2000; 2012). As the Institutionalist economist Erich Zimmermann (1888-1961)⁴² observed in the preface to his 1933 book *World Resources and Industries*: “The geographer, approaching the study of economic life from the angle of underlying physical realities, pushes upward from the physical basis toward the cultural superstructure. The economist, in turn, whose main task is the exploration of a limited section of the cultural superstructure, probes downward toward the physical foundation” (Zimmermann 1933, p. vii).⁴³ Or as Dartmouth professor Albert Sigfrid Carlson (1907-1975) commented a few years later, the geographer “is dealing with a dynamic complex world. He realizes that neither statistics nor theoretical knowledge can fully compensate for the lack of personal practical experience. Therefore he emphasizes

the need for actual study in the field and contact with the leaders of industry. He appreciates that the research files of many commercial houses contain excellent treatises on his subject..." (Carlson 1937, p. 271).

Although there is no proof of a direct influence, Jacobs' later work also shows much affinity with the writings of Dartmouth economic geographer Malcolm Keir.⁴⁴ In a collection of essays previously printed in various professional magazines⁴⁵ and academic journals that was first published in 1920 and in a more integrated form in 1928, he described local dynamics later rediscovered under the labels of 'industrial districts,' 'innovative milieu,' 'clusters,' 'regional innovation systems' and 'learning regions.' Keir (1920 p. 61) thus documented that "similar to birds of a feather, professions or businesses tend to flock together;" that the "greatest resource that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts possesses is her abundant supply of skilled men and women collected in various localities where special work is being performed" (idem, p. 73); and that "[a]n adequate supply of especially trained labor is the foremost advantage enjoyed by the individual units that comprised a localized industry" (idem, p. 73).

One obvious advantage of geographically localized industries was that if "one plant desires to expand it can draw upon the reservoir of labor already created." In these environments,

[a]ll the factories in the town are constantly filling this reservoir [of know-how] because each mill is a training school for the others. The young boys upon leaving school follow in the steps of their fathers, learning by actual experience in the factory the moves peculiar to the particular industry, and at home, on the streets, or at recreation imbibing the secret 'rules-of-thumb' current among the workmen and known only to them. The very atmosphere seems charged with a mysterious power drawn upon by the men to further the efficiency of their labor, a force which is lost in a city whose industries are largely diversified. The whole accumulation of skill is at the beck of the firm which needs it, and in an industry where trained men are required, its value is beyond estimate (Keir 1920, p. 73).

Keir (1920, 69) also wrote much about start-up firms in such contexts, such as when he observed that

[w]hen an experienced superintendent decides to become his own boss oftentimes he finds that he can

best succeed in the shadow of the plant where he was once an employee, because in a strange place he is unknown, but in the town where he has worked for years the banks know and trust him and the business he purposes to enter is a tested proposition. It has been stated that every cotton-mill started between 1790 and 1814 was by men who themselves had been trained by Samuel Slater at Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Growth of this kind, through former workmen, has made Trenton the seat of pottery manufacture, and Gloversville the chief center for the manufacture of men's gloves. (REF??)

Like other commentators before and after him, Keir (1920, p. 74) observed that knowledge was geographically sticky as "manufacturers who ha[d] attempted to draw even the most highly trained individuals to act as teachers in another remote city have met with failure after failure because the *group* was not skilled and had not known the trade from childhood." "The group skill found in a localized industry," he added, "is the reason why the industry clings to one small section of the country; it is the greatest single advantage that employers find when they set up their plants where others have thrived for years" (idem).

More originally, Keir also hinted at the importance and advantages of regional diversity, although not as systematically and with as much focus and gusto as Jacobs later would. Like her, he rejoiced in tracing the origins of important firms to modest beginnings serving other lines of work, such as the rise of many New England manufacturing concerns from small subsidiaries of the ship building trade (Keir 1920, p. 40). He also observed that, over time, prosperous settlements tended to become more economically diverse because of "the multiplication of allied industries, the increase in the number of supply houses, or the presence of plants utilizing wastes" (idem, p. 70). In a prelude to later debates on Jacobs spillovers, Keir (1919, p. 47) described the unavoidable "blight of uniformity" that affected employees in specialized industrial towns. The problem, as he saw it, was that geographically localized specialization

tends toward narrowing the minds of the townspeople. A young man brought up in Fall River, say, has but little choice of occupation; he must become a weaver or a loom-fixer or some other artisan connected with cotton manufacture, because by upbringing, education and example he is forced into that path, and furthermore he goes to work at an early age. It may happen that many a square peg is rammed into a round hole in this way, or a life constricted

which might under better conditions have expanded. There is something deadening to the human mind in uniformity; progress comes through variation, therefore in a town of one industry a young man loses the stimulus for self-advancement. (Keir 1919, p. 47; reprinted in Keir 1920, pp. 83-84; and Keir 1928, p. 139)

Social uniformity also resulted in a dearth of variety in terms of role models, lethargy in terms of personal advancement and the creation of a self-perpetuating laboring class, something he deemed “inimical to American ideals” (Keir 1920, p. 84). Another unfortunate result of monoindustrial towns was “indifference toward education... for a desire for knowledge is one of the characteristics attached to progress, inasmuch as aspiration feeds on inspiration” (idem). As evidence of this, Keir observed that the towns of Lowell and Lawrence, each with a population of approximately 100,000 individuals, had but one high school. By contrast, Springfield and Worcester, then towns of similar size “but whose industries are highly diversified” had respectively three and four. Keir (idem, p. 84) inferred from all of the above it was a “disadvantage... for a young man to grow up in a community whose industries are all alike” because “the chances of his of getting a well rounded education are slim” (idem, p. 84).



Figure 6: Malcolm Keir
(1887—1964).⁴⁶

Source: Dartmouth Archives

Professional Writer

The Iron Age (1940-1943)

In 1940, because, as she would later say, she could spell Molybdenum (Flint 2009, p. 10)⁴⁷—although perhaps her prior experience in the metals industry, varied coursework and publication record might have helped—Jane Butzner landed a job as an assistant to the managing editor of *Iron Age*, Chilton Company’s⁴⁸ flagship metals industry trade magazine. Hard working and talented, she soon rose to the level of editor and associate editor. In the process, she quickly moved beyond collecting industry statistics by phone and began regular travels in the American manufac-

turing belt “to visit metals industry firms and scrap metal dealers” and “to gather news and information on market conditions in person” (Laurence 2009, p. 90).

In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, Butzner further traveled regularly to Washington where she interacted with a range of bureaucrats to discuss war production issues, gather news, identify ideas for articles and get expert advice. By late 1942, she began to attend scientific conferences and important industrial meetings throughout the Northeast and the Midwest where she was tasked with developing news items from conference talks and choosing papers to be abstracted (Laurence 2016). Laurence added (2016, pp. 63-64): “She sought out contributions from scientists and metallurgists directly, worked with them on presenting their ideas, edited their manuscripts, and laid out their articles. When necessary, she visited the magazine’s press in Philadelphia to handle last-minute layout and editing problems, and during a vacation period, she managed the magazine’s Cleveland office.”

Although she left the magazine in 1943 on a sour note,⁴⁹ Jane Butzner undoubtedly learned much of value during her stay at *Iron Age*, from the technical details of metal production to the inner workings of large businesses and the regional linkages that united some significant components of the US manufacturing belt.

Government Writer (1943 - [1946] - 1952)

At the end of 1943 Jane Butzner became a feature writer for the Office of War Information⁵⁰ where she was again rapidly promoted and given assignments that resulted in a variety of articles, chapters and pamphlets on US “history, geography, culture, science, military prowess, and other subjects that were translated and distributed overseas” (Laurence 2007, p. 8).

In December 1945, (the by then) Jane Jacobs left government service for nine months, took on various freelance editorial assignments, and was subsequently hired by the State Department’s Magazine Branch where she worked mostly as a writer and editor for *Amerika* (later *Amerika Illiustrirovannoye* or *America Illustrated*), a *Life*-inspired glossy Russian-language magazine designed to provide Soviet citizens with a glimpse of American life.⁵¹ Widely popular among Soviet masses, its distribution was gradually hindered by Soviet authorities while being paradoxically subjected to McCarthyite recriminations and scrutiny, resulting in the suspension of its publication in 1952 (Crane 2010). Interestingly, one of Jacobs’ supervisors was Alger

Hiss whose help she asked in trying to obtain a visa to visit Siberia and whom she listed as a reference on a few occasions. These inconvenient facts undoubtedly explained much of the attention directed her way by the FBI in the late 1940s and early 1950s⁵² and arguably reinforced her inherent libertarian leanings. As she would tell Kunstler (2001) years later:

The fear that [McCarthyism] struck into people. The fear for whom they might associate with. How could all these people turn into such sheep so suddenly? And when this miasma of McCarthyism lifted it was almost as magical. We were trying to get signatures on a petition that a [freeway] wouldn't go through Washington Square. This was in the 50s and we set up a table with petitions near the park and asked everybody who came by and was enjoying the park if they would sign. And so many people wouldn't sign. We'd say, "Well, you don't want a road through here, do you?" No, they didn't want a road through there, but "You don't know who else might be signing. It might be dangerous to sign." Sometimes a husband would tell a wife. So that's when this strange fear pervaded everything.

At *Amerika* Jacobs was given the opportunity to write on a wide variety of topics, including American cities and architecture, school planning, and urban redevelopment. As Laurence (2007, p. 8) observes, her article on slum clearance, written approximately a year after the passage of the United States Housing Act of 1949, gave her the opportunity to follow the development of the urban renewal program almost from its inception and to establish several connections with the architectural writing community of New York City, including editors and contributors to *Architectural Forum* and *Progressive Architecture*. By the end of her nearly ten years as a government writer she occupied the top editorial role in her branch.

Architectural Forum

Looking for a new position, Jacobs hesitated between *Natural History*, published by the American Museum of Natural History, and *Architectural Forum*, a magazine to which her husband already subscribed and where one would find ample discussion of large-scale urban redevelopment projects as well as critiques of the design of schools, hospitals, shopping centers and office buildings (Jacobs

1961b). Part of Henry Luce's Time Inc. magazine conglomerate that included, among others, *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune*, *House & Home* and *Sports Illustrated*, *Architectural Forum* paid much better than *Natural History* and ended up being her choice for this reason.⁵³ Jacobs first did some work on a trial basis in May 1952 and formally joined the magazine in September of that year. She would remain as a member of its senior editorial staff until October 1958 when she took a leave of absence to write *Death and Life*. She briefly returned to *Architectural Forum* after the publication of her book, but formally left it for good in 1962.

Architectural Forum was a good match for Jacobs. First, it accommodated her passion for seeing the bigger picture, the contextualized and systemic view of her subject matter, as its editor-in-chief Douglas Haskell's policy was to "step out of the 'narrow bounds' of architectural criticism, to emulate other forms of cultural criticism, and to write the kind of architectural criticism that had previously resulted in the threat of libel suits" (Laurence 2009, p. 126). Second, the magazine's scope matched Jacobs' interests: "*Forum* would intensify its effort to address the 'problem of cities.' Haskell boasted that the *Forum* was already the most up-to-date American architectural journal where urban redevelopment was concerned" (Laurence 2016, p. 99). After being assigned the school, hospital and shopping center beats, Jacobs eventually became an urban redevelopment specialist. By 1956 she had not only covered various projects in New York (primarily East Harlem), New Orleans, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Washington, and Fort Worth, but she had also visited several prominent architectural firms and got acquainted with most of the major architects and several important urban planners of the time (Laurence 2016).

Like her colleagues, Jacobs was at first supportive of modern architecture and urban redevelopment efforts (Laurence 2016; Zipp and Storing 2016). In time, though, she began to express misgivings, most notably in an influential lengthy essay "Downtown is for People" (Jacobs 1958) published in *Fortune* in 1958. One problem was the obvious contradiction between what she had been led to believe and what she could observe on the ground, including the apparent dishonesty of public officials. As she would comment years later, one of the architects who helped justify the obliteration of Boston's West End in the late 1950s told her "he had had to go on his hands and knees with a photographer through utility crawl spaces so that they could get pictures of sufficient dark and noisome spaces to justify that this was a slum—how horrendous it was" (Kunstler 2001).

As she would write a friend soon after the publication of “Downtown”:

How my ideas developed... Oh my God, who knows how their ideas developed?! The nearest I can pin it down is two things: First of all, I had a pervading uneasiness about the way the rebuilding of the city was going, augmented by some feeling of personal guilt, I suppose, or at least personal involvement. The reason for this was that in all sincerity I had been writing for Forum about how great various redevelopment plans were going to be. How delightful. How fine they would work. I believed this. Then I began to see some of these things built. They weren't delightful, they weren't fine, and they were obviously never going to work right. Harrison Plaza and Mill Creek in Philadelphia were great shocks to me. I began to get this very uneasy feeling that what sounded logical in planning theory and what looked splendid on paper was not logical in real life at all, or at least in city real life, and not splendid at all when in use (Jacobs letter to Grady Clay, March 1959; quoted in Laurence 2009, p. 195).

Her intellectual breakthrough in making sense of causal mechanisms in the complex urban order evolved out of her acquaintance with William Kirk, then head worker of Union Settlement in East Harlem.⁵⁴ As she acknowledged in the introduction to *Death and Life* (1961, pp. 15-16): “The basic idea, to try to begin understanding the intricate social and economic order under the seeming disorder of cities, was not my idea at all, but that of William Kirk, who, by showing me East Harlem, showed me a way of seeing other neighborhoods, and downtowns too.” From then on, she added, she “tried to test out what [she] saw or heard in one city or neighborhood against others, to find how relevant each city's or each place's lessons might be outside its own special case” (idem).



Figure 7: William Kirk (1909—2001).⁵⁵ Source: *Union Settlement: 75th Anniversary Brochure* annotated by Jane Jacobs. *Jane Jacobs Papers at Boston College*. Photo courtesy of Peter L. Laurence, used with permission.

During her *Architectural Forum* years she also developed a relationship with officials in charge of the Rockefeller Foundation's urban design research initiative who, in the wake of “Downtown,”⁵⁶ offered her a grant to write what would eventually become *Death and Life*. According to Laurence (2006; 2016), Jacobs benefitted greatly from her frequent interaction with the Foundation's then Associate Director for the Humanities, Chadbourne Gilpatric (1914-1989),⁵⁷ with whom she exchanged articles and manuscripts, introductions and invitations that further expanded her view of urban planning and acquaintance with important players. Jacobs, in turn, served as an advisor on relevant research projects and proposals, and contributed to the formation of the Foundation's Studies in Urban Design project in the early 1960s.

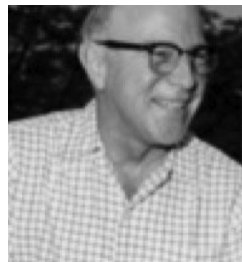


Figure 8: Chadbourne Gilpatric.

Source: Source <http://rockefeller100.org/biography/show/chadbourne-gilpatric>

There can also be no doubt that during her years as a New York-based writer, Jacobs met a number of interesting individuals and learned an assortment of useful facts and ideas from them.⁵⁸ The following excerpt from a speech she gave in Hamburg (Germany) in 1981 is illustrative in this respect:

A scholar who retired some years ago after a lifetime of work in the American Museum of Natural History told me he had been spending a good part of his new leisure exploring post-war housing projects and suburban tracts. What he saw appalled him. Consider, he said, the value that human beings throughout the ages and in all cultures have placed on visual diversity and elaboration. Man is the animal that decorates himself and all manner of things he makes and builds. If we were to find a trait so persistent and widespread in any other species, he went on, we would take it seriously. We would conjecture that so striking and universal a trait had some connections with the success of the animal. His own surmise was that our busy human brains demand a constant flow of extremely diverse impressions and information to develop in the first place, and thereafter must be fed with constant and

diverse flows or they are genuinely deprived. In sum, he said, boredom may be a healthy revulsion against sense and brain deprivation. Paradoxically, he went on, it is thus probably logical for us to behave illogically, even destructively, if that is what we must do to escape boredom (Jacobs 1981, p. 242).

REFLECTIVE CONCLUSION: JACOBS' EARLY YEARS AND ON THE JOB LEARNING

Up to the middle of the 1950s Jane Jacobs was a keen observer of (real world) economic and urban life, a voracious and eclectic reader who probably remembered a number of facts and insights from her undergraduate courses, and a first rate column and short essay writer who interacted with many intellectuals and practitioners. What she was not, however, was a serious theorist. As such, upon beginning the manuscript of what would become *Death and Life*, she “expected merely to describe the civilizing and enjoyable services that good city street life casually provides—and to deplore planning fads and architectural fashions that were expunging these necessities and charms instead of helping to strengthen them.” But by “learning and thinking about city streets and the trickiness of city parks” she was launched “into an unexpected treasure hunt” and “quickly found out that the valuables in plain sight—streets and parks—were intimately mingled with clues and keys to other peculiarities of cities. Thus one discovery led to another, then another” (Jacobs 1993, n. p.).

In other words, while researching what would turn out to be her most famous book, Jane Jacobs became a theorist who championed a by then singular vision of the social order and developed an unorthodox inductive research method. Not surprisingly, her readability, heterodox approach, disrespect for academic conventions, and lack of formal education would often be held against her by academic critics.

Jacobs' intellectual outlook and research method will be discussed in more detail in the second part of this essay, but there can be no doubt her later literary output was shaped in large part by her professional life up to the late 1950s. As Creed Rowan (2011, p. 44) observed, she obviously “picked up her literary craft not from the other urban planners with whom she is so often compared but from city journalists, hard-boiled novelists, settlement-house writers, and others who wrote for the general public.” The publications she worked for, while often not steeped in academic theories and methodologies, provided an environment in which she

learnt much about various aspects of economic life. Indeed, through working in both the private and public sectors—often in managerial roles—she familiarized herself with a wide range of topics and interacted with a remarkably diverse group of individuals (from metallurgists and managers to architects and civil engineers) while visiting numerous industrial operations and urban redevelopment projects. In the process she acquired the type of knowledge and practical experiences many academics lack. In this sense, she was not an “amateur” about the practical workings of economic life. And while she appreciated the contribution of some professors, her lifelong resentment against much of academia—whose seeds were arguably sown during her undergraduate years at Columbia—meant she never felt compelled to abide by (and probably got some personal satisfaction in flaunting) traditional research norms in terms of both methods and exposition.

For reasons we will explore in more detail in part 2, for the remainder of her life Jane Jacobs would rely on direct observation and extremely broad reading to answer a few important questions, an approach that would paradoxically make her a radical thinker and a pioneer of modern inductive research methods. We will suggest that her methodological stance and overall philosophical outlook should be considered more seriously as they pre-dated the key late 20th century insights into the relationship between induction, deduction and the scientific method. Jacobs' philosophical outlook and methodology still, in fact, have much to contribute to our understanding of societal evolution.

NOTES

- 1 In an influential paper, Glaeser et al. (1992) distinguish between MAR (economists Alfred Marshall, Kenneth Arrow and Paul Romer), (management theorist Michael) Porter and (Jane) Jacobs spillovers. The first two describe know-how transfer within a sector (intra-industrial spillovers) and the importance of geographical economic specialization, whereas Jacobs spillovers occur between sectors (inter-industrial spillovers) and are therefore more abundant in a more diversified local economy. In addition, the MAR perspective favours local monopolies, whereas the other two see strong local competition (geographically concentrated clusters of smaller firms) as a better incubator of innovative behaviour. See, among others, Desrochers and Leppälä (2011) and van Oort (2004; 2015).

- 2 Most prominently Brandes Gratz (2010), Flint (2009), Florida (2002; 2008), Goldsmith and Elizabeth (2010), Hirt (2012a), Jacobs (2008), Kanigel (2016), Lang and Wunsch (2009), Laurence (2016), Mennel et al. (2007), Page and Mennel (2011), Schubert (2014a) and Taylor (2013). Zipp and Storrington (2016) is a new compilation of Jacobs' short writings, some of them not previously published.
- 3 To our knowledge, the most significant discussions of Jacobs' approach can be found in Cichello (1989), Keeley (1989), Harris (2011) and, to a lesser extent, Taylor (2006), Laurence (2009), Barnett (2012), Hirt (2012b), Rowe (2014) and Zipp and Storrington (2016).
- 4 Of course, many scholars who bought into a top-down or class struggle-inspired school of thought typically dismissed all contributions that did not take these as given, independently of the methodology used.
- 5 In this paper Jacobs summarized the main outline of her theory of city growth, expanded more on the types of data needed for measuring economic development rates, and discussed in more detail the various barriers to local creativity. She also anticipated much of her later (1984) *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*' arguments on transactions of decline and the perils of standardized regulation.
- 6 We discuss these issues in more detail in Part 2.
- 7 Laurence (2009) is a detailed discussion of how she went about this for the built urban environment.
- 8 Desrochers and Hospers (2007) is a more detailed account of her economic work. See also Hill (1988), Lawrence (1989), Côté (1991), Ellerman (2004; 2005), Iammarino (2011), Ikeda (2012), Staley (1989) and Taylor (2013) for further summaries and discussions. Warsh (2006a; 2006b) provides more detail on her relationship with mainstream economists.
- 9 Slum clearance and urban renewal—or, in the words of writer James Baldwin, “negro removal”—destroyed approximately 500,000 more housing units than it created and typically made it impossible for the poorest citizens to move into new developments (Klemek, 2008).
- 10 See also Jacobs (2004b).
- 11 Although Jacobs used “growth” in this early formulation, in modern parlance she is referring to development (i.e., creating new things or making old things in new ways) as distinct from growth (i.e., doing more of the same). Jacobs (200, : 37) would later describe development as “qualitative change” and expansion (as a synonym for growth) as “quantitative change.”
- 12 Of course, not all economists at the time believed in the inherent superiority of large R&D facilities. See, among others, Rothbard (1959).
- 13 Leppälä and Desrochers (2010) discuss this issue in more detail.
- 14 As Rowe (2014, p. 23) observes, although the book “focuses on Quebec’s quest for national sovereignty and is, at face value, of interest only to a subset of Canadians,” it is “in fact a great primer of Jacobs’ understanding of the role of city in defining a society’s culture and economy and its need to be unfettered to ensure its own survival.”
- 15 The book is a dialogue on the moral foundations of commerce and politics.
- 16 More detailed biographical sketches of Jacobs’ life can be found in Jacobs (1961b), Allen (1997), Sparberg Alexiou (2006), Taylor (2006), Laurence (2006; 2007; 2009; 2011, 2016), Klemek (2007; 2008), Desrochers (2007), Flint (2009), Lang and Wunsch (2009), White (2011), Kanigel (2016), and Zipp and Storrington (2016).
- 17 Another important influence in this respect was New York Parks Commissioner Robert Moses’ characterization of some of his opponents as a “bunch of mothers” (see, among others, Turner 2009), but a few news media organizations also portrayed Jacobs this way during her activist period in New York City (Klemek, 2008, p. 314).
- 18 As Jacobs died in 2006, Schubert’s (2014b) attribution to Schubert (1998) is obviously mistaken.
- 19 Peter L. Laurence (2016, pp. 50-91) expands on Jacobs’ freelance writing work, as well as on her formative experiences at *The Iron Age*, the Office of War Information and at *Amerika*, in the chapter titled “The Education of a City Naturalist,” noting particularly how her work nourished her interest in “systems of thought” (Laurence 2016, p. 50) and allowed her to hone her writer’s craft between 1938 and 1952. Laurence’s following chapter “We Inaugurate Architectural Criticism” (2016, pp. 92-128) focuses on how Jacobs developed and refined her urban planning and design insights as a writer and editor for the *Architectural Forum* starting in 1952 when she joined the magazine to take up large scale urban architectural projects such as hospitals, shopping centers, and schools (Laurence 2016, p. 94).

- 20 Jacobs' outlook became bleaker in her last years (Jacobs 2004a). It is also worth noting she couldn't stand the English class system (Kunstler 2001).
- 21 She further observed upon completing an introduction to Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* how "he was trying to...tell readers what they might see if they looked with their own eyes. He inveighed at great length against guidebooks and people who believed the guidebooks instead of what they were seeing. So this is an old problem. I suppose it comes from people wanting to be correct and not trusting themselves, fearing they'll seem like uneducated country bumpkins in his day, if they told what they saw and how it struck them. I don't remember ever being forced to wear those sorts of blinders when I was a child. Children do report what they see. If they're not pooh-poohed and are listened to respectfully, grown-ups usually hear something interesting. That's a way of encouraging people to look with their own eyes." (Wachtel 2002)
- 22 Betty's training is discussed in Jacobs (1961b) and Kunstler (2001). She worked in the home furnishing department of Abraham and Strauss in Brooklyn when her younger sister first joined her in New York City. Her interest in esperanto is described by a friend on the following webpage https://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=AUeuQT6t7kg&lc=ydBdAMG-jNx-Avb8hgHrdnY9NhfTm-Nqr4lIqEJnk2Ps and during a conversation with Jim Jacobs, one of Jane's sons, we had with him on March 12, 2016.
- 23 See his obituary at <http://www.wellsfuneralhome.com/obituary/James-Jim-Butzner/Waynesville-NC/669019>
- 24 Perhaps what had attracted the most public attention to John Decker Butzner Jr. during his career was serving on the three-judge panel that appointed Kenneth W. Starr as independent counsel investigating US President Bill Clinton. A Wikipedia page devoted to his life and work can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_D._Butzner_Jr. His archives are preserved at the University of Virginia.
- 25 In 1920, the collection of what is now the Everhart Museum of Natural History, Science and Art contained more than 2,300 bird specimens, 50 fish, 400 mammals, 150 reptiles, 35 amphibians, 2,100 botanical specimens, 25,000 shells, 300 fossils, and 800 minerals. <http://everhart-museum.org/collections/natural-history-collection/>
- 26 Laurence (2009, p. 27) describes her duties as working as "assistant society editor and general reporter, initially covering society items, civic meetings, and arts reviews, and laying-out the Society page, but later developing her own feature stories for the City Desk." Jim Jacobs, during our interview with him on March 12, 2016, recalled that the young Jane Butzner was told to write the entire Letters to the Editor section of this Scranton paper as no one ever sent anything in. She composed letters for weeks. When she mentioned this at home, her father suggested she write a letter complaining about dogs. Jane puzzled over that: What about dogs? The publication deadlines were very tight: She did not have a lot of time to elaborate on her assignment. Apparently, once her letter complaining about dogs appeared in print, public opinion had been so effectively reawakened Jane did not have to write another letter again. Jim also told us a story about another early assignment Jane Butzner was given: creating recipes. At this point in her life Jane could not cook and had no idea what a recipe would look like, much less what to do in order to test and compile a successful recipe. She got together something along the lines of a Normandy Apple Cake, having known there were apples in Normandy. Apparently, the recipe could not possibly work out the way it was written and this upset her mother. Mrs. Butzner told Jane her mistake was having caused others to waste precious ingredients like eggs, butter and sugar. Jane, however, seemed philosophical about her failure, believing people would simply assume there was a printing error in the recipe, or, better yet, read the recipe and, trusting their personal experience, not attempt it. This is an interesting example of Jacobs' civic-minded upbringing, and her early pragmatic stance of trust in the common sense and intelligence of people.
- 27 Jacobs (1984) contains a more detailed account of the fate of this town (under the fictitious name of Henry) and its people.
- 28 To our knowledge, Kunstler (2001) contains the most personal remarks of Jacobs on this issue. Jim Jacobs, Jane's son, also recounted these stories to us during the March 12, 2016 conversation.
- 29 The flower and diamond articles were republished in Allen (1997, 35-36) and Zipp and Storrington (2016, pp. 10-21).
- 30 The program became the School of General Studies in 1947 <https://gs.columbia.edu/gs-history>

- 31 Flint (2009, p. 9) summarizes Jacobs' final stance as viewing the Constitution as "a flexible framework that would evolve over time, rather than a rigid set of rules."
- 32 Laurence (2009; 2011; 2016, pp. 54-55) discusses the manner in which the courses Jacobs took at Columbia fit best under the umbrella of geography.
- 33 The UMI Dissertations Publishing database classifies it as a work of economics and lists the degree date as 1941 (Otte 1941), one year (or at least a few months) after the book's publication (Otte 1940). Assuming this information is correct, Otte probably elected to complete his degree under the umbrella of one of the top—if not the best - economics department in the United States at the time rather than in its much lower ranked geography counterpart. Be that as it may, our assumption that instructors tend to discuss the content of their doctoral dissertation is based on years of personal observation... In her review of the book, Douglas (1941, p. 231) highlights the author's "disparaging attitude towards the Authority." Jacobs (1984) later wrote at length and very critically about the TVA.
- 34 Here is how Jacobs (2004a, pp. 177-178) referred to him in her last book: "Henri Pirenne (1862-1935), with his pathbreaking books on the early economic, political, and social development of the cities of medieval western Europe, laid the foundations for modern understanding of cities. He recognized cities as the engines of economic life and explained why they are. In his *Medieval Cities...* he correlates the deepening poverty of Europe through the tenth century with atrophy of city trade in the Mediterranean world (owing to Christian prohibitions against trading with infidels), and the revival of western and northern Europe with revival of intercity trade and, indirectly through Venice, trade with the more advanced Middle East and Asia. An obtuse foreword by Lewis Mumford to a Princeton paperback edition criticizes Pirenne for his emphasis on cities as economic entities. This is of historical interest in showing how far in advance of the conventional thinking of his day Pirenne's work was, and indeed how far in advance it still is from popular and political—and much academic—understanding of cities, trade, and economic development. Foreign-aid donors and recipients of our time would do well to take to heart Pirenne's lessons on the processes of economic revival and development. His is a basic text for understanding how the world's economic networks operate and how they fail."
- 35 Laurence describes Columbia as one of the most prominent geography department in the United States at the time, but DeBres (1989) and Martin (2015) offer conflicting accounts. Suffice it to say that although Columbia counted a number of well-established faculty in the discipline, they were scattered over a number of administrative units such as Columbia College, Barnard College (for women), Teachers College, Summer Session, University Extension and the School of Business. The productivity of the department as measured by both publications and number of PhD students was also well below that of institutions such as Clark University, the University of Wisconsin and the University of Chicago. This being said, the geography program that emerged at Columbia in the mid-1920s did indeed include a range of undergraduate course options in disciplines such as "economics, history, government, botany, zoology, anthropology or other fields" (DeBres 1989, p. 396).
- 36 Biographies of Renner can be found in Percy (1958), DeBres (1986; 1989) and Velikonja (1994).
- 37 In short, Renner published in a 1942 edition of *Collier's* an article in which he suggested redrawing the world map along cultural lines, including a huge "German-Magyar" state that would absorb Switzerland. The article drew numerous criticisms and was viewed as either offensive or an embarrassment by most geographers.
- 38 At the University of Washington Renner taught courses ranging from "Weather and Climate" to "Problems in Political Geography" (Velikonja 1994).
- 39 Desrochers and Leppälä (2010) is a more detailed discussion of the concept.
- 40 Interview with Jim Jacobs, March 12 2016. Jim said: "She could memorize two hours worth of text and then recite it perfectly. She remembered everything. Her memory was amazing: She just never forgot a thing." Page 3 of 9 of interview notes verified by Jim Jacobs on March 26 2016.
- 41 Taylor (1937) is a survey of the main American economic geography textbooks of the mid 1930s.
- 42 The American Institutional School was also to a significant extent an offshoot of German Historicism. Zimmermann belonged to both the American Economic Association and the Association of American Geographers (Barnett n.d.), but his magnum opus proved much more influential among economic geographers (subsequent editions of his main book were often mandatory readings in graduate geography

- programs until the late 1960s) and was classified in North American academic libraries as a work of economic geography rather than resource economics.
- 43 The fact that neither discipline was heavily mathematized at the time obviously facilitated communication between the two groups, but it was also probably the case that many economists were dismissive of the “maps and facts” nature of much of economic geography research. For instance, Predöhl (1928) chided much of the work done by economic geographers for its apparent lack of theoretical underpinning.
- 44 A brief professional biography of Keir can be found in Martin (2015). Although trained in economic geography, he eventually found his way into the economics department. Several of Keir’s books are freely available at <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupname?key=Keir%2C%20Malcolm%2C%201887->
- 45 One of these was *The Iron Age* that would soon prove crucial in Jacobs’ career as a writer.
- 46 Date obtained from the Rauner Library Special Collections reference service on April 21, 2015: “Malcom Keir passed away on Dec. 18th, 1964 in Natick, MA.”
- 47 Jacobs later told this story somewhat tongue-in-cheek, but she also observed in *Death and Life* that numerous firms had relocated from the financial district to midtown Manhattan because, “as one real estate broker put it, otherwise their personnel department can’t get or keep people who can spell ‘molybdenum’” (Jacobs 1961, p. 155)
- 48 In its heyday, the Chilton Company was a leading publisher of trade and consumer magazines, professional automotive manuals, and craft and hobby books whose main office was located on Park Avenue and 42nd Street. *The Iron Age* was the company’ first and for a long time flagship publication.
- 49 In short, Jacobs’ editor accused her of being a difficult employee (including the fact she was caught smoking a pipe in her office) and of spending too much time peddling freelance stories to other media—mostly the *Sunday Herald Tribune*—based on the work she did for him, although a case can apparently be made that these were mostly the “human interest” side of the technical reports published in the magazine in which he had no interest. Jacobs accused him of being a chauvinist who would not recognize her title and the value of her work by refusing to pay her the same salary a man in her position would command (Jacobs 1961b; Laurence 2009; 2016).
- 50 Her new workplace was located on Columbus Circle, about 2 miles away from her former employer.
- 51 Jacobs also contributed to the agency’s pamphlet division (Jacobs 1961b).
- 52 Union activities were another concern of her investigators. Jacobs was further influenced by Saul Alinsky to the point of thanking him in the acknowledgements of *Death and Life*, although it is unclear what role he played in her thinking and actions in the late 1940s as opposed to her later activism. See also Flint (2009, p. 16).
- 53 As told by Jim Jacobs. Interview of Jim Jacobs and Margie Zeidler by Desrochers, Ikeda and Szurmak, March 12, 2016.
- 54 Saxon (2001) is an obituary of Kirk.
- 55 Kirk’s date of birth is from <http://www.beecherandbennett.com/obituary/The-Reverend-William-Henry-Kirk/Hamden-CT/216624>
- 56 Because she lacked a formal academic affiliation Jacobs worked out an arrangement with the New School for Social Research.
- 57 A biography of Gilpatric is available on the website *100 Years: The Rockefeller Foundation* <http://rockefeller100.org/biography/show/chadbourne-gilpatric> Gilpatric’s support of Jacobs seems to have been one the highlights of his career.
- 58 This being said, she told Kunstler (2001) she did not hang out with “Greenwich Village Bohemians” that would now be the subject of much attention on the part of creative class theorists. She did, however, get to know Bob Dylan before he became a celebrity (As told by Jim Jacobs during a conversation with Desrochers and Szurmak on May 8 2016 during the “Jane at Home” exhibit).

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