Invisible Cities: Lewis Mumford, Thomas Adams, and the Invention of the Regional City, 1923-1929

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"Americans sense that something is wrong with the places where we live and work and go about our daily business." So begins a recent jeremiad by author Howard Kunstler on the "environmental calamity" we call the suburbs [Kunstler, 1996, p. 43]. Critics point to fundamental aspects of post-war planning, such as zoning, highway dependence, and decentralization, as the determinants of our current suburban landscape. But how did business come to the suburbs, and how did zoning create the "Edge Cities" we have come to both love and hate? Long before urban renewal, the interstate highway program, Levittown and Edge Cities, a coherent alternative to the "congested city" already dominated popular, professional, and political discourse. The new ideal of the "regional city" projected a rationally planned and zoned city which segregated residential, commercial, and industrial uses, as well as social classes. The new metropolis would be anchored by a concentrated central business district, connected by expressways to concentric, low-density residential and industrial suburban rings. Most importantly, the whole ensemble would be ordered according to a comprehensive *regional* plan. It was out of the debates over "regionalism" during the 1920s that this new urban vision emerged.

In March of 1923 critic Lewis Mumford, architect Clarence Stein and other like-minded reformers formed the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA), a loosely knit association of urban reformers. In July of the same year Thomas Adams became Director of Plans and Surveys for the Russell Sage Foundation's proposed Regional Survey of New York and its Environs, the forerunner of the RPNY.[1] As a result of these efforts, the

[1] The Regional Planning Association of America was a loosely knit association of like-minded individuals from a variety of disciplines. As a prominent critic and secretary of the organization, Lewis Mumford became the RPAA's chief theorist and polemicist. I have used him as the primary spokesperson. An excellent treatment of the collaborative nature of the RPAA is Kermit C. Parsons unpublished paper, "The Collaborative Genius of the Regional Planning Association of America," August, 1993. I would like to thank Professor Parsons for so generously sharing his encyclopedic knowledge of Stein and the RPAA. The Regional Plan of New York was itself a product of many hands. Adams became Director of Surveys in 1923, but his official role was as coordinator and synthesizer of the work of dozens of people in several committees. For the sake of simplicity I have used "RPNY" to stand for the organization that produced both the Survey and the Plan, as well as for the successor organization, the Regional Plan Association.

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"regional city" emerged during the late 1920s as *the* planned response to the problems of the American industrial metropolis. While the City Beautiful movement at the turn of the century had identified many of the same urban problems, the regionalists drew upon new understandings of city functioning, governmental activism, and the nature of advanced capitalism to propose a complete revision of spatial relations in metropolitan New York. The regionalists appropriated the nineteenth century critiques of "blight" and "congestion" but recast them in a rhetoric and ideology that proposed a radical restructuring of the city according to zoned functioning and "decentralization." Yet in 1929, upon the construction of the RPAA's project in Radburn, N.J., and the publication of the RPNY's ten-volume survey and plan, an apparent break occurred in the ranks of the regionalists over the fundamental questions: what exactly is "the region" and what are the true goals of regional planning?

The significant difference between the two groups was that the RPNY proceeded from an ideal of *metropolitanism* while the RPAA was grounded in a profoundly anti-metropolitan *communitarianism*. While Thomas Adams sought to rationalize, reinterpret, and reinforce the cultural and economic hegemony of New York City as a regional and national center, Lewis Mumford called for the dismemberment of the metropolitan "city of the dead" in favor of a web of small scale "satellite cities." The difference is summarized in the contrast of the RPNY's "diffuse recentralization" and the RPAA's "decentralization," typically opaque terms which, upon careful examination, reveal that the RPNY sought to sustain urban industry and contain dispersal, while the RPAA legitimized the flight from the core.

The rhetoric and models these urban visionaries established and popularized created a new conception of the city which would dominate urban discourse for the next half century, and yet the cities they imagined have become invisible cities, obscured by misinterpretation and misapplication. By weilding the concepts of the region, congestion, zoning, and decentralization, the regionalisms of Adams and Mumford sought to create satellite suburbs integrating home and work, but to different ends. The Hackensack Plan from the RPNY and the Radburn Plan of the RPAA both employed the rhetoric of regional decentralization, but while the goal of the Hackensack plan was mixed-use recentralization in support of the metropolis, Radburn became a harbinger of the "dormitory suburb" and sprawl. This paper will explore the origins and transformation of suburban zoning in the plans and projects of the regional planners of the 1920s, specifically the proposals for two New Jersey suburbs of New York City, Hackensack Meadows, and Radburn. Like its present-day descendants, zoning, for the regionalists, was a tool for segregating and rationalizing uses, stabilizing real estate values, and facilitating the removal of certain activities from the inner city. Unlike its progeny, regional zoning was also meant to be a tool for increasing efficiency and integrating work and residence through the careful planning and creation of Garden Cities. While the ideas of the regionalists laid the basis for contemporary zoning, they also point

to possible solutions for today's suburban gridlock and battles over the environmental impact of suburban growth.

The Regional City

Mumford and Adams were only the most prominent among many reformers espousing regionalist principles during the early decades of the twentieth century. The period abounds with definitions of the region, from which both the RPAA and RPNY drew liberally. Although they would come to suppress their common descent, both groups could trace their genesis to the English Garden City movement of Ebenezer Howard. Howard's vision, set down in his *To-morrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898), and implemented in part through a series of projects around London, was of the removal of the working class from the congested quarters of industrial London to satellite towns that would combine the best attributes of both the town and country. These Garden Cities would be constructed through a combination of philanthropic land speculation and collective land ownership, include both residences and factories, and be limited to 32,000 residents. But it was as part of the regional cluster that the Garden City would truly marry town and country, so that "each inhabitant of the whole group, though in one sense living in a town of small size, would be in reality living in, and would enjoy the advantages of, a great and most beautiful city; and yet all the fresh delights of the country... would be within a very few minutes' ride or walk" [Howard, 1965, p. 142]. Howard's regional notion, often lost in his concern for Garden City financing and civics, was that of the "Social City" in which a Central City of 58,000 people would anchor the cluster of smaller Garden Cities, separated from each other by forests and green belts and connected by a rapid transit system. In combining physical, economic, and cultural arguments, Howard's Social City was the first complete blueprint for a region, and it held particular sway over the thought of the American regionalists.

The RPNY's definition of the region and of the role of regional planning synthesized Howard's Garden City view with the "ecological" urban analysis of the University of Chicago School of Sociology. Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, and Louis Wirth formed the core of a group of Chicago sociologists who pioneered the study of "human ecology," the scientific study of the "orderly and typical grouping of (the city's) population and institutions" according to natural laws of group behavior and urban growth [Park, 1925, pp. 1-2]. Park and his collaborators set out in the early 1920s to turn the profession of sociology from the study of society as a collection of individuals into an ameliorative science that saw the social group as an organic unit capable of being controlled through the benevolent manipulation of the urban environment.

Their investigations produced the Park-Burgess "dart-board" diagram, which sought to illustrate how the laws of group behavior inevitably produce a particular city form. This form, by creating a spatial hierarchy through land value, class, and ethnicity, in turn determined group behavior. Burgess

describes the growth of the city as "a process of distribution...which sifts and sorts and relocates individuals and groups by residence and occupation" [Park and Burgess, 1925, p.64]. The natural laws governing this growth produce a normative model, a "half moon and dart board," that rationalized the observable segregation of the city into five concentric zones: the central business district, home to both business activity and the homeless population; the "zone in transition" of ethnic slums and artist colonies; the zone of working class, second-generation immigrant homes; a residence zone of greater affluence, and finally the white collar commuter zone. Despite semantic differences, both the RPAA and RPNY would essentially embrace the Chicago School definition of the region, and both would focus primarily on the problem of "congestion" in the region.

The Congested City

> Look at the great city in its entirety: the turbid mass of traffic blocking the streets and avenues, the slow-moving crowd of people clambering into street-cars, elevateds, subways, their arms pinioned to their sides, pushed and packed like cattle in ill-smelling cars... Look at the dingy slums of the East Side, Long Island City, the stockyard neighborhoods.
>
> Why the great city? What are we putting in and what are we getting out? How long can we stand the strains and difficulties that are peculiar to our large congested centers? [Stein, 1976, p. 66]

The specter of "congestion" haunted the invisible cities of Adams and Mumford. But what exactly was it? The term, inherited from the housing reformers and patrician planners of an earlier day, had become by the time of its adoption by the regionalists conflated with the notions of "blight," "slums," "overcrowding," "concentration," "mobility," "density," and "traffic jams." The elasticity of the term permitted a great degree of ostensible concord between the RPNY and RPAA at the level of critique. Although neither Mumford nor Adams often felt the need to correct such rhetorical confusion, it is clear that their attacks on congestion actually contained two distinct concerns, one economic, the other social. The economic critique of congestion addressed a perceived crisis in the distribution of goods, and resulted in calls, grounded in Frederick Winslow Taylor's principles of scientific management, for more efficient location of industry, for reductions in building density, and for improvements in transportation. The social critique of "blight" and "slums" addressed population density, living conditions, health, and the negative social effects of real estate speculation. By synthesizing the urban critiques of housing reformers, patrician planners, and Taylorite managers under the aegis of regional planning expertise, both Adams and Mumford legitimized and popularized an elite discourse that would dominate the twentieth-century conception of the metropolis.

There was essential agreement between the RPNY and RPAA over the nature and impact of economic congestion. The concentration of both industry

and exchange on Manhattan produced a crisis in the distribution and movement of goods and workers. The grid street system, bequest of the Commissioners of 1811, could not absorb the increased automobile and truck traffic, and the public transit system would require vast expenditures to accommodate growing demands. As residence was pushed farther from the center by commerce and rising land costs, Manhattan's monopoly of commercial and productive activity required longer and longer commutes. These inefficiencies contributed to higher prices for goods and larger investments in public infrastructure. Both groups agreed that the solution would require the relocation of industry, reductions in building density, and improvements in transportation, although they would differ on the nature and extent of such "deconcentration."

In Volume I of the Regional Survey, Columbia University economist Robert Murray Haig based his critique of congestion in the region upon what he poetically termed the "friction of space" resulting from poorly arranged uses [Haig, 1927]. Haig's monograph established the economic focus of the project with lucid analysis and often elegant prose. His mandate was to answer two related questions: 1) what was the economic basis of urban concentration? and 2) where do things "belong" in urban areas? Drawing on an ecological model, he analyzed the "competitive struggle for urban sites," hoping in the process to "glimpse the outlines of an economically ideal pattern or plan." For the purpose of surveying the placement and movement of various industries, he broke up the region into three zones that corresponded roughly to the Chicago School model: 1) Manhattan south of 59th street, 2) a twenty-mile industrial zone, 3) the outlying area. His survey of the change in the number of employees in various industries in the three zones suggested to Haig that while the "advantages of centralized locus are undeniable for many of the functions carried on in the region," other activities could be more profitably conducted outside of the center. At the same time those industries that by virtue of their own idiosyncrasies truly benefited from a central location were often prevented from locating or expanding in the center. Thus over-concentration of all economic activity in the center was producing a drag on both the production and exchange of goods. This "friction of space" resulted in part from bad concentration (congestion) and in part from bad deconcentration (sprawl), and was manifested in increased commuting time, costs of transportation infrastructure, land prices, and traffic, all of which would eventually make the New York region an inefficient piece of "productive economic machinery" unable to compete with "other metropolitan machines."

The social aspect of the problem of congestion became a cornerstone of regionalist ideology. Speculation and population pressure may have engendered congestion and blight, but, in Park and Burgess' view, these forces had become part of the organic social structure of the city. For Burgess, the intensity of economic competition and social stimulation in the congested metropolis led to an increase in the destabilizing effects of what he termed "mobility" the "change of movement in response to a new stimulus or situation."

> The mobility of city life, with its increase in number and intensity of stimulation, tends inevitably to confuse and to demoralize the person. For an essential element in the mores and in personal morality is consistency, consistency of the type that is natural in the social control of the primary group. Where mobility is greatest, and where in consequence primary control breaks down completely, as in the zone of deterioration in the modern city, there develop areas of demoralization, of promiscuity, and vice [Burgess, 1926, p. 69].

In creating a prescription for combating the social aspects of blight, RPNY social planner Clarence Perry translated the Chicago School analysis into a radical urban corrective, the "Neighborhood Unit," which guided the community planning strategies of both the RPNY and RPAA.Park had pointed to increased dependence on the automobile as a cause of the traditional neighborhood collapse [Park, 1934, pp. 21-39]. It was the most vivid, and literal, example of the mobility both decried and praised by the Chicago sociologists. Perry's major innovation was a strict separation of through traffic from local traffic. The social and psychological mobility identified by Burgess became in Perry's model a purely physical automobility and was to be constrained by segregating regional, local, and neighborhood car traffic. In the diagram of "Neighborhood Unit Principles," the highways and arterial streets create boundaries to reinforce, rather that diffuse, the introspective character of the neighborhood. The neighborhood is penetrated by a few larger roads, but these too are interrupted. In the internal street system Perry sought to segregate traffic so as to defy the centripetal force of automobile. The cul-de-sacs, interior parks and T-intersections were devices designed to protect the residents' moral well-being from automobility and from the concomitant social ills of urban congestion.

It was but a small step from Perry's RPNY proposals to the RPAA's actual designs. Even though Perry did not become an active contributor to the RPAA until 1928, just before construction on Radburn began, Mumford and Stein acknowledged the close affinities between the "Radburn Idea" and Perry's neighborhood unit concept in the RPNY [Mumford, 1989, p. 15; Stein, 1989, p. 150]. At Radburn, Stein and Wright synthesized the interior parks and cul-de-sacs of Perry's plan to produce a system of overlapping yet distinct networks of automobile and pedestrian circulation. The functional segregation was made complete by underpasses that enabled pedestrians to walk the entire development without having to cross traffic at street level. By adopting a superblock strategy, consolidating building lots onto large blocks while minimizing the area devoted to streets, Stein and Wright were able to create a community green space on the interior of the blocks for the residents' exclusive use. This internal "private park," essentially an inversion of the Garden City's external "greenbelt," was shielded from car traffic by houses arranged on cul-de-sac

streets. Both Perry and Adams heaped praise upon Radburn, suggesting that it should be *the* model for new development outside of the central city.

The Taylorized City

> The metropolis...is essentially a piece of productive economic machinery competing with other metropolitan machines... The area of New York and its environs may be likened to the floor space of a factory. Regional Planning designates the best use of this floor space... Unduly congested streets should be no more tolerated than the aisles of a factory impassably jammed by goods in process; factories scattered helter skelter should be no more tolerated than departments of a factory scattered helter skelter [Haig , 1927, p. 18].

Today zoning is often equated with planning, but it was not always so. For many of its early promoters, zoning, the legal restriction of the height, density and use of buildings, was seen as merely a means, and a rather clumsy means at that, to the more ambitious end of comprehensive city and regional planning. Both Adams and Mumford agreed that zoning was a blunt instrument: Adams insisted that zoning was merely a "preliminary step in planning." Mumford saw zoning as a last resort, and often as an impediment to good planning. Yet in the final analysis both regionalists embraced the principle of functional segregation that lay behind zoning. Indeed, their reliance upon this principle was their most enduring and omnipresent contribution to later planning practice. Although Adams would warn that "The 1916 zoning law was really a temporary measure based on compromise" and Mumford would second such concerns, both shared a desire to *segregate functions* in the search for safety, efficiency, and community. It is in the segregation of functions that the two regionalist movements achieved their highest level of consensus. They promoted the ordering of uses at all levels of planning: at the scale of the region, the city, and the neighborhood [Adams, 1929, p. 165].

The RPNY sought to establish functional zones based in human ecology to reify the Chicago School diagram, turning Park and Burgess' description into a prescription. Zone I, the "loop," would include Wall Street and Midtown Manhattan. Zone II, the zone of "transition" or "deterioration," would include the Lower East Side and Harlem. The zone of workingmen's homes would include the outer boroughs and northern New Jersey from Newark to Fort Lee, and so on. Both the reality of existing settlement patterns, and, as we shall see in the next section, their own philosophy concerning decentralization, would prevent the RPNY planners from imposing this ideal without modification, but it exercised a profound influence upon the Plan.

To make room for the commercial central city, Adams proposed removing some heavy manufacturing from the central business district to an industrial belt, basing his arguments directly upon Haig's Taylorite calls for

reducing the friction of space to increase productive efficiency. This "zoning out" of industry has led some recent critics to blame the Regional Plan for New York's job loss through deindustrialization.

The RPAA also segregated uses and, in the end, excluded industry from their proposed satellite cities. Although Stein and Wright sought to separate functions through the *plan* of Radburn, as opposed to using zoning legislation, business and industry were still carefully excluded from the residential zone, which comprised most of the plan. As Stein would admit later, while paying lip service to the notion of Garden City-style integration of work and residence, the RPAA planners knew early on that Radburn would essentially be a bedroom suburb.

Stein expressed a desire for functional separation that would become a staple of planning discourse. Indeed Radburn represented an attempt to go beyond legislated zoning – which after all could be changed with the stroke of a pen – to build functional segregation into the very plan itself. The roads, lanes, and cul-de-sacs of Radburn could serve no other purpose than that for which they were designed. Neither the novelty nor import of this innovation were lost on Stein:

> Specialized Highways were in their infancy in the U.S.A. at the time that Radburn was conceived... To plan or build roads for a particular use and no other use required a predetermined decision to make specialized use permanent... That was contrary to the fundamentals of American real-estate gambling... None of the realtors, and few of the city planners who accepted zoning as their practical religion, seemed to have faith enough in the permanency of purely residential use to plan streets to serve solely that use [Stein, 1989, p. 47].

The arguments for this compartmentalization of the public realm were based in communitarian values. The RPAA planners sought the most complete segregation of circulation in an attempt to defend an introspective and cooperative community against the ravages not only of mobility, but of industrial capital and the commodification of the land. In this sense the Radburn plan represented the most intriguing convergence of the RPAA and RPNY: it borrowed from Perry's neighborhood unit the equation of through traffic with disruptive mobility and the desire to specialize the road system to reinforce neighborhood sentiment and local social control.

During the Renaissance Leonardo DaVinci had proposed a similar rationalization of urban chaos in a sketch he drew for a second-story sidewalk for Florence. However, these twentieth century proposals represent the greatest challenge to traditional urbanism proposed by regionalists: the separation of function at every scale, the fundamental dismemberment of the public realm in service of two dramatically different agendas. It is by now easy to recognize the parts of the invisible regional city that were realized. The critique of congestion and call for segregation of uses became staples of postwar planning, as expressed

in urban renewal and suburbanization. The removal of industry from the center, the limited-access highway, slum clearance, and the cul-de-sac were all ingredients in the recipe of sprawl and the postindustrial "edge city." This was the concrete legacy of the regionalists – the projects and ideas that became part of the mainstream conception of the city. But an investigation of the RPNY's plan for Hackensack Meadows shows that the legacy of decentralization as we now know it was but one of many roads proposed by the regionalists.

Hackensack Meadows, Radburn, and the Decentralized City

> As a matter of fact, the [Regional] Plan involves two contradictory sets of proposals. One is for the building of large neighborhood units and even garden cities in the suburban parts of the metropolitan region. The other is for the concentration of traffic and transportation and high buildings in the central district below Fifty-ninth Street in Manhattan, and the filling up of the open areas in the metropolitan district...to continue the congestion and to preserve the land values that have been founded upon this congestion [Mumford, 1929, p. 242].

Conventional histories of regionalism, following Mumford's lead, mistakenly argue that the RPNY favored sprawl to satisfy suburban land speculators and the deindustrialization of Manhattan to serve downtown real-estate interests, and that Adams' use of the term "decentralization" was merely a polite coverup for a desire to drive blue-collar jobs out of New York. Mumford saw the RPNY distinction between good commercial concentration and bad residential congestion as a double standard serving the RPNY's financial masters. What he, and many observers since, failed to see was that the Regional Plan contained a clear and consistent model, obscured only by the scope and collaborative nature of the project and the distaste of its director for reductive paradigms. That model, of a *re*-industrialized region of *compact* mixed-use communities anchored by New York City, was a radical alternative to the sprawl and deindustrialization already apparent on the horizon. The difference between the regional models of the RPNY and RPAA can be summed up in the juxtaposition of the unfortunately opaque terms "diffuse reconcentration" and "decentralization."

In Volume II of the Regional Plan, "Building the City," Adams urged that "the terms 'centralization' and 'decentralization' should be avoided as they lead to confusion of thought." The real concern of the Plan was the "friction of space," identified in Haig's economic analysis, which Adams expanded to encompass both the negative social consequences of mobility and the economic inefficiencies of unplanned decentralization. Just as congestion had positive and negative consequences – social fragmentation and liberation – so too did decentralization. Adams, in a quiet dig at Mumford, decried those "social philosophers whose gospel is 'decentralization,' no matter how unplanned or

haphazard" [Adams, 1929a, p. 34]. For Adams, decentralization could relieve the social infirmities and economic inefficiencies produced by congestion, but it could also create new problems of its own. The friction of space represented "a greater degree of separation measured in terms of time, cost, discomfort and fatigue...between homes and places of work, which is injurious to both living conditions and business" [Adams, 1929b, p. 310]. Inefficient or impractical decentralization was just as dangerous as unplanned concentration. The closest Adams ever came to concisely stating the Plan's basic strategy to combat this friction came in what appears to be a critique of Mumford's imprecise prose:

> The term "decentralization" is a misnomer unless the intent behind it is to entirely break up compact communities, however well planned and arranged... An indiscriminate process of so-called "decentralization" will be of little benefit. What appears to be wanted is:
> *First* – Diffused re-centralization of industry with the objects of lessening the density of congested centers and of creating new centers.
> *Second* – Diffusion of residence into compact residential neighborhoods throughout the whole urban region integrated with the industrial sections so as to reduce distances between homes and places of work.
> *Third* – Sub-centralization of business so arranged as to provide the maximum of convenience for residents [Adams, 1929a, pp. 149-150].

Contrary to the picture of indiscriminate expulsion of industry painted by his critics, Adams' vision for the Regional Plan was of highly selective and carefully considered industrial relocation. Adams was skeptical concerning the benefits of manufacturing dispersion, unless it addressed the "friction of space" by integrating new industrial centers with residences, transportation, and recreation. And contrary to the Plan's illustrations, rendered by Harvey Wiley Corbett's architecture committee, Adams argued against a total removal of manufacturing from the core. The rezoning he did encourage was directed to establishing an industrial "half moon" in what would be Zone III of the Park-Burgess diagram, the area of workers' homes, as a means of overcoming the combined problems of high Manhattan land costs, the transport hurdle of the Hudson River, and the "friction" of working-class commuting. Rather than a blind reification of the Chicago School bull's-eye, Adams vision was a complex composition of industrial, residential, and recreational "wedges" that cut across the concentric zones, and engendered the "inter-penetration of all parts of the Region that brings the population in convenient contact with employment and education centers and recreational opportunities" [Adams, 1929a, p. 151].

Unlike later critics, Mumford was in general accord with Adams on the desirability of moving some industry out of Manhattan. His general complaint was that the Regional Plan neither decentralized industry enough nor called for

a concomitant decentralization of commercial businesses and residences. For the RPAA, industrial decentralization was not a means of reducing the "friction of space" but rather only one strategy for implementing an "industrial counter revolution...to spread the real income of industry by decentralizing industry." By removing the high cost of advertising, ground rents, overhead (and, as Stein would admit, of union labor itself), less profit would go toward the "paper value" of an industry, and more to the worker, whose wages would otherwise stagnate while capital values soared. These arguments can be traced back to Chase and his call for local production and consumption of goods. Absent a Marxist critique, indignation over the concentration of wealth in a *class* was displaced onto the concentration of wealth in *space*. Without attacking the class structure that produced such inequities, the RPAA sought to rectify the situation environmentally. Physical decentralization would engender more even distribution of wealth and power [Mumford, 1976b, pp. 92-93].

At first glance the RPNY General Plan might appear to be a prescription for sprawl, with its undifferentiated gray mass of residential use. It *was* zoned into business, industrial, residential, and recreational areas, but the zones produced fingers that stretch into other zones. It was not a mere reification of the Chicago School bull's-eye but a combination of "wedges, belts, and nodes" that sought to synthesize the best attributes of congestion – efficiency, urbanity, convenience – with those of diffusion: economy, space, and access to nature. Whereas the RPAA promoted decentralization as a means of eviscerating the central city, which they disparaged as the "dinosaur city," or "necropolis," RPNY planners saw regional "re-centralization" as a means of sustaining the industrial metropolis and restructuring the region to support it. These differences are most apparent in fundamental divergences on the nature of satellite cities, as exemplified by Hackensack Meadows and Radburn and regional transportation.

If the "Satellite City" was the fruit of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City, then both Mumford's and Adams' versions represent something of a fall from grace. Even while retaining the rhetoric of the Garden City, the RPAA "decentrists" had from the beginning chosen a path to reform that contradicted Howard's vision in significant respects. While Howard's "Social City" required a large central city, the RPAA region did not. The RPAA planners tolerated larger cities only as an imperfect step on the way to true decentralization. Within the Social City network the satellite garden city was to house and employ 32,000 working class residents and encompass residence, industry, and civic functions that were zoned but integral to the whole. The RPAA/Radburn model, based upon the automobile and obsessive segregation of uses, projected a middle-class population of up to 100,000 and exiled industry to adjacent "employment centers." Civic functions were also suppressed in favor of an internalization of Howard's surrounding green belt. The RPAA satellite was essentially a complete inversion of Howard's idea. Defenders of the RPAA's position as that of naive utopians point to the onset of the Great Depression as the explanation for Radburn's white collar, middle-class suburban character: the

economic collapse prevented the CHC from attracting industry and workers and from purchasing land for a greenbelt. But, as Stein candidly admits, Radburn would never have been affordable for the working-class and was planned from the start to be predominantly, if not exclusively, residential. As Mumford himself noted, "without an industrial base the garden city is only a fancy name for a suburb" [Mumford, 1932a, p. 242].

Adams' RPNY proposals for satellite cities were closer to Howard's Social City ideal in several important respects. The Hackensack Meadows, today the location of a sports complex and an "edge city" of highways, offices, warehouses and isolated condominia, was the last large parcel of undeveloped land near Manhattan. It was the only instance where Adams permitted his designers the luxury of working on virgin land (or virgin wetland), and their proposal for an industrial community is a glimpse of the RPNY's unfulfilled ideal. The plan called for the creation of "a community where industrial, residential and recreational areas are distributed in well balanced proportions" [Adams, 1929a, pp. 546-547]. Of a total of over 30,000 acres, over 22,000 would be reserved for residential use, almost 4,000 for new industrial areas, 4,400 for parks, and 550 for business. A plan and a series of fascinating thumbnail sketches illustrated an integrated satellite city of neighborhood units, businesses, parks, and industries connected by overlapping systems of parkways, canals, and walking paths [Adams, 1929a, p. 327; c, p. 569]. The neighborhoods were based on the Radburn principle but were easily accessible to adjacent offices and factories by public transportation. Although Adams was reluctant to publish specific proposals for satellite cities, as speculators could drive up prices before land assembly could begin, he overcame this reluctance and vigorously promoted the Hackensack plan, for it was a plan that expressed the core of his thinking about recentralization:

> New York...[is] growing too much in the direction of having separate districts devoted to industry, business and residence. *A good zoning plan aims at the segregation of these three uses, but not to the degree that interferes with the convenient relation of one to the other...* What is called a well balanced community is one in which these functions are so related as to produce the highest efficiency, the most wholesome living conditions, and the greatest economy in work and travel [italics added] [Adams, 1929a, pp. 340-341].

Adams saw the well-planned region as an assembly of "belts," "wedges," and "nerve centers." Wedges would balance circumferential and radial development to permit what we would today call "mixed-use communities" that could provide for the employment and recreational needs of a residential population. This system would be complemented by an array of "nerve centers" in which a certain amount of nodal concentration would permit "the industries, the residences and the cultural and recreational facilities of a [satellite] city [to] be interspersed with one another." The major exception was to be in the realm of finance and entertainment, which were to be the exclusive purview of

Manhattan. Such a scheme sought to balance the efficiencies of functional segregation with those of integration, while reserving certain activities for a regional center in the central city. It was essentially a metropolitanized version of Howard's Social City.

The RPNY's Hackensack plan was not a mere reification of real-estate interests; rather it offered a means of sustaining the concentration that supported urban culture while mitigating its worst attributes, a radical alternative to what would become the dominant paradigm of post-war sprawl. The RPAA vision of a web of functionally segregated satellite cities sought the dismemberment of urbanity itself, in favor of a romantic rural utopia. Each challenged the market as it existed, but for differing reasons that may be traced to the contrasting agendas of professional legitimization and cultural regeneration. The forces driving the transformation of New York would borrow the RPAA's anti-metropolitan rhetoric of dispersal and the RPNY's visions of a city of towers to produce a "city of tomorrow" driven by downtown office and suburban residential speculation. Generally it is Adams' RPNY, as a result of its grandiose misapplication in the hands of Robert Moses, that has been deemed more successful and therefore receives the credit and criticism for the regional city that resulted. While borrowing selectively from both, the new vision that would emerge was closer at heart to that of Mumford, Stein, and the RPAA. As Jane Jacobs astutely pointed out, the RPAA planners were aptly labeled the "Decentrists" for their desire to define all that was urban as bad and to thin out the great cities at all costs [Jacobs, 1961, pp. 19-21]. Not only did the RPAA contribute specific decentralizing devices to the planning profession, such as the superblock, cul-de-sac, the functional separation of traffic and use, and the townless highway, but most importantly it popularized the anti-metropolitan mantra of decentralization.

Conclusion: City of Tomorrow

In 1939 designer Norman Bel Geddes concocted a fanciful model of the "City of Tomorrow" for the New York World's Fair which imagined cities of towers set in a landscape of highways and suburbs. The model drew upon the regionalist ideas that had percolated through the *zeitgeist* since the publication of the Regional Plan and the construction of Radburn. Yet to the extent that it was realized after World War II, the City of Tomorrow would not be the vision of either interwar regionalisms, but rather the application of regionalist ideas in the service of other agendas. The proposals of the regionalists were static. They were ideal cities, whether imagined by cultural critics or pragmatic professionals, requiring the engines of speculation or governmental activism to make them part of New York's reality, in which they would appear in forms that would not be recognizable to their creators. Adams' regional decentralization without the integration of uses would become sprawl. The RPAA's anti-metropolitanism shorn of its socio-economic radicalism would legitimize "white flight." The fatalism of the Chicago School's organic model stripped of the desire for

amelioration undergirds the presumed inevitability of today's "gatehouse suburbs." The dominance of "congestion" and "blight" in planning and housing discourse would drive unprecedented federal interventions in road building, slum clearance, and urban renewal. Hypertrophic central business districts, bedroom suburbs, and cul-de-sacs would all be born of an increasing reliance on functional zoning without a recognition of its limitations. The most intriguing omission, in both postwar planning practice and planning history, is the RPNY's call for re-centralization.

The RPNY's "diffuse re-centralization" was a potentially prophetic alternative to sprawl and deindustrialization, a balance between local segregation and regional integration of uses, between zoning and planning, if you will, in which the bull's-eye of the Chicago School was mitigated by Adams' "wedges" to overcome the "friction of space" that would result from either excessive decentralization or concentration. It was a prescription to sustain the metropolis while mediating the growing spatial conflicts engendered by corporate capital, speculation, and technological change. In this sense the RPAA was most "successful" in the eventual dominance of its anti-metropolitan rhetoric and its interpretation of the region as a crucible for radical diffusion. Before this split was explicit, it appeared that the well-connected regionalists were poised to realize their crystal cities, but a depression, world war, and unprecedented changes in America's political economy would place their dreams on hold. Perhaps a clearer understanding of the alternatives latent in regional planning, and a government more willing and able to apply it, might have produced a city closer to Adams' or Mumford's vision. As we look out upon the contemporary landscape of homelessness, suburban gridlock, chronic urban fiscal crisis, and a disappearing rural environment it is tempting to wonder. In order to address these contemporary concerns it is necessary to understand that they are not the inevitable result of natural forces, but the product of human will, of choices made under the influence of historically constrained ideas.

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