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GS 190

20 May 2011



the amount of open space around structures and implementing more parks in congested urban areas. This gives rise to the inherent paradox within the American environmentalist movement,

“The environmental movement is deeply stained with a sort of Malthusian current.

It is anti-urban, anti-industrial, agrarian, primitivist. Manhattan seems to be a supremely un-natural place because of all the concrete and glass and steel, but the paradox is that it is actually more harmonious and more benign, in terms of nature, than ostensibly greener human environments, which depend on huge energy inputs, mainly in the form of fossil fuels. In order to surround ourselves with nature, we get in cars and drive long distances, and then build silly pseudo-green houses in the middle of the woods—which are actually extremely disruptive and very, very wasteful” (Owen 20)

On an individual basis, New Yorkers pollute less than people in more rural areas. This means that the criticism coming from environmentalists tends to be biased. While the collective amount of pollution coming from Manhattan is larger than other areas of comparable size, New Yorkers on an individual basis have a significantly smaller carbon footprint than average residents of surrounding suburbs, small towns and farms. Due to the tighter spaces where New Yorkers live, they are obliged to live more efficiently and reduce the amount of wasteful consumption (Owen 8). The reason for New Yorkers' lifestyles is not necessarily that they are more environmentally conscious than suburbanites. Most New Yorkers live the way they do out of common sense and necessity.

The anti-urban sentiment has its roots in American environmentalism since the beginning of the movement in the nineteenth century. Henry David Thoreau established himself as one of the first American environmentalists between the years of 1845 and 1847 by living in a

cabin in the woods near Concord, Massachusetts. He was able to create an image of himself as a sensitive philosopher who lived in harmony with the environment, away from the toxins of urban life. The reality of the situation was that he was not in fact that fond of the outdoors, and his cabin was closer to Concord than many realized, but regardless of this, he became an American icon of literature and philosophy. After Thoreau's time, many precedents were set in American history which followed in the footsteps of Thoreau's ideal lifestyle. John Muir, who founded the Sierra Club in 1892, found urban life to be "toxic to both body and soul" (Owen 18). The National Park Service was established by Congress in 1916 as a means of transitioning away from urban life. American environmentalism is defined by some as a, "rural, agrarian ideology. It seeks to integrate man into nature in a very direct, simplistic way—scattering people along the squirrels and the trees and the deer" (Owen 19). It is inherently antagonistic towards urban life, and this attitude in combination with the prosperity of the United States following the conclusion of World War II facilitated the early beginnings of suburban development.

There are many benefits which are associated with suburban life that pro-urbanism advocates sometimes conveniently forget to acknowledge. Suburban communities often offer better quality public schools. Real estate costs are lower, because construction is cheaper and rural land values are lower than urban land values. This is why life in the suburbs is cheaper, and also why community taxes are almost always lower. With cheaper land values comes cheaper parking as well, since parking is one of the first factors to be planned when beginning development on a suburban building. However, the most important benefits are the psychological perceptions of living in this type of community. With the suburbs comes a perceived sense of safety and personal freedom (Leinberger 67). With a front and backyard, one has a piece of land to call one's own, and with this defined territory comes a sense of privacy.

Privacy is probably the most significant unintended positive consequence of suburban development, and from a historical perspective, the level of privacy which is achieved in suburban development is unprecedented in human history. In the eighteenth century, some US states passed laws which banned women from living alone, and most middle- and working- class people lived in cramped quarters in the pre-WWII era (Leinberger 66). Now, instead of living in small apartments with acquaintance roommates, a suburbanite most often lives with family or alone in a house.

today. The advent of the automobile served as a catalyst for the oil industry in the twentieth century. The oil industry has in turn spurred what Tom Friedman of the *New York Times* calls, “petrolism—or petroleum-based politics” (Leinberger 82). America’s addiction to oil has been fueled by America’s overwhelming dependence on the automobile as a means of transportation. Currently, the United States holds 2% of the world’s oil reserves, produces only 8% of the world’s oil reserves on an annual basis, has 5% of the world’s population, but consumes 25% of the world’s annual oil production (Leinberger 81). According to Michael O Hanlon of the Brookings Institution, the estimate is that 25% of the defense budget in the 2006 fiscal year was spent on, “the war in Iraq, protecting foreign governments’ oil infrastructure, defending Israel, and patrolling oil shipping lanes” (Leinberger 82). This dependence on foreign oil is severely undermining U.S. foreign policy and the “War on Terror” by funding authoritarian regimes in volatile parts of the world. With India and China becoming more developed societies, the demand from these two BRIC countries will only increase the pressure on oil-supplying nations. China has surpassed Japan as the world’s second largest oil consumer and is expected to pass the United States as the world’s top oil consumer in two decades. This could, however, be what in turn changes the behavior and mentality of normal citizens and real estate developers who refuse to acknowledge this dependence or deny that it is problematic. Currently, two thirds of oil imported into the United States is used for transportation (Leinberger 81) and for the time being, there is no realistic energy substitute which could replace it.

Fossil fuels have revolutionized the way the world works and has changed the mentality of human civilization. Fossil fuels are the remains of dead plants and other organisms, which have been manifesting at the bottoms of swamps and oceans for hundreds of millions of years, and eventually become transformed into fossil fuels under an enormous amount of heat and

pressure (Owen 68). There are several reasons why change is so slow when it comes to reducing American dependence on fossil fuels, and it ultimately comes down to the convenience of coal, oil and natural gas. People will not be motivated to change their habits until they feel that there is a sense of urgency. The sharp increase in high gas prices during the summer of 2008 caused a noticeable change in behavior for many. More people began using public transportation and there was a renewed interest in renewable energy technologies. Overall, people became more conscious of reducing wasteful consumption and were forced to downsize in many ways, including the size of the car one chose to drive. The increase in oil prices became a hardship for many car-dependent commuters. This in turn caused an increase in the prices of food, clothing, medical care, and other modes of travel. Business closures and job layoffs also increased (Owen 58). The steadily increasing price of oil was one of the factors that triggered the global credit crisis. Politically and economically, fossil fuels dominate the world scene. During the summer of 2008, when anger over gas prices was at its highest from the past couple decades, the internet was the source of various rumors and attempts at civil disobedience, including the boycott of gasoline purchase from ExxonMobil, the largest oil company in the world. Rumor of this boycott was spread via e-mail, social-networking sites, and word-of-mouth, in hopes that oil companies would lower gas prices if enough people participated in the protest. Ultimately, of course, this boycott was unsuccessful at creating the change many hoped for, but motivated many people to pay attention and become active. There was a certain sense of urgency during the summer of 2008, and this caused a sort of tidal wave, “You feel that you are being swept along by forces beyond your influence, and you urgently want to do something [...] later, usually, the sense of crisis gradually dissipates, and old habits reassert themselves” (Owen 53). After oil prices declined following summer 2008, rates of oil consumption returned to what they

had been. What is critical for people to realize is that the dependence on fossil fuels is politically, economically and environmentally dangerous. To an extent, driveable suburbanism is a contributor to America's fossil fuel "addiction", and implementing more Smart Growth initiatives in these areas would alleviate this situation.

In a January 1957 episode of *I Love Lucy*, Lucy and Ricky Ricardo make the move from the New York City metropolis to the Connecticut suburbs. It highlighted the suburban development movement which was spreading across the United States following the conclusion of World War II. In the mid-1990s, when the revitalization efforts of transforming US downtowns into walkable urban areas started to be on the rise, *Seinfeld* was able to highlight the lifestyle which can be found in these areas. While sitcoms like *I Love Lucy* were able to depict the comfort and personal space that suburban life can provide, the adventures of Jerry, George, Elaine and Kramer in *Seinfeld* illustrated a vastly different, fast-paced lifestyle full of choices and serendipity. He highlights the premise that with walkable urbanism, more is better, "In walkable urban places, when more development and activities are added to the stew, more people are attracted to the street, thereby providing safety in numbers. The restaurants are more crowded, encouraging more restaurants and other retail, increasing rents, making buildings more valuable, raising property taxes, and on and on and on" (Leinberger 132). With the more-is-better premise, one of the most important benefits of the principle is the diversity of activities which take place in a walkable urban place. Walkable areas often are catalysts for cultural unity. Each street can have its own function and personality. While one street can be quiet and domestic, another can be designated as cultural and educational, while another can be full of urban entertainment and neon lights until the early morning hours. Washington, D.C. is a great example of this phenomenon:



“In downtown Washington, there is the grandeur of the Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue with the monuments, the Smithsonian museums, the U.S. Capitol, and the White House adjacent to the revitalized urban entertainment streets with the new arena, restaurants, and nightlife adjacent to the solid downtown office buildings for lawyers, banks and lobbyists” (Leinberger 134).

Washington, D.C. is perhaps the best model for the future of metropolitan growth for American cities because there has been significant development completed not only in downtown Washington D.C. but also in some of the surrounding suburbs and communities in Virginia and Maryland. One of the ways that D.C. has been transformed is through the construction of its Metro system. The D.C. Metro system had been in construction since the 1970s. Even during its construction, it became evident that the Metro would revolutionize the city. Since its completion, it has been seen as a greater success than initially anticipated. This is because of several reasons. The stations, which were built with elegant architecture, and metro cars are generally kept very clean. It is a safe mode of transportation, and therefore the general public feels quite comfortable in making use of it. It has made great use of the “high-density walkable development potential” in the city (Leinberger 135), and made it easier for people living in suburban communities in Maryland and Virginia to commute into the city. Because of the Metro, Downtown Washington D.C. has become the second most compact

walkable urban places, there may be a

(Leinberger 132). There are even a few examples in which private corporations and real estate investors have coordinated reform for public school systems, something that local governments often struggle with. In Chattanooga, Tennessee, for instance, the private sector financed and built two new magnet elementary schools located in downtown neighborhoods, which simultaneously enhanced downtown development and

land is more limited in cities. This is becoming a bigger concern for residents of middle- and low- income communities such as Silver Spring and Takoma Park, Maryland, Venice Beach in Los Angeles, California, Harlem in Manhattan, and several university towns such as Boulder, Colorado and Ann Arbor, Michigan (Leinberger 139). Many developers argue that expanding walkable urbanism across the United States cannot strictly be left to the private sector.

Leinberger argues that in order to properly address the issue of affordable housing, new housing production must be at least partially subsidized. Because of an increase in demand from India and China on construction materials, in addition to the dramatic increase in land prices driven by the demand for smart growth development, developers are being faced with higher construction costs than in the past. If real estate developers are not given incentives or regulations which they need to abide by, they will not be able or willing to provide more affordable housing in metropolitan areas. (Leinberger 141).

Another concern when areas are becoming more urban is the impact that it will have on small businesses. In an increasingly globalized economy, what often ends up happening when revitalizing walkable urban areas is that national and international retailers end up coming in and monopolizing business in downtowns and downtown-adjacent areas. This happens frequently in strip malls within suburban areas as well, but wealthy corporations are also more likely able to afford the higher rents of downtown buildings than smaller private businesses. The ones who lead the revitalization efforts are oftentimes local businesses, who often strive to preserve the area

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