Der Umbau von New York unter Robert Moses und seine mediale Resonanz

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The transformation of New York under Robert Moses and its reflection in the media

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Abbreviations

CBD Central Business District
CPC City Planning Commission
CWA Civil Works Administration
LISPC Long Island State Park Commission
MCoSC Mayor’s Committee on Slum Clearance
NYCHA New York City Housing Authority
PNYA Port of New York Authority
PWA Public Works Administration
RCA Redevelopment Companies Act
RPA Regional Plan Association
RPoNYaIE Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs
ST Stuyvesant Town
TBTA Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority
WPA Works Progress Administration
Selected officials with terms of office

Table 1: New York City – Mayors

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<thead>
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Table 2: New York City – Governors

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1. Introduction

It is almost exactly ten years ago that the *September Eleven attacks* claimed the lives of thousands of people and irrecoverably obliterated the *World Trade Center*, the iconic landmark that had dominated the skyline of New York City for almost 30 years. Designed by the Japanese-American architect Minoru Yamasaki, the *Twin Towers* were – for a short time – the tallest buildings in the world. Soon after their erection, they were intrinsically tied to Manhattan, New York, and the United States of America. No matter if they were despised as symbols of American capitalism, or loved for representing America’s alleged economic preeminence, people around the world had those buildings in mind. Hated or loved, it seemed that they ineffaceably belonged to New York and this world, poised to stand in Manhattan for eternity.

The destruction of the *World Trade Center* has shown that even the most distinctive, well-known, and durable structures will likely not stand on this planet forever. Even the measureless life expectancy of a suspension bridge can be ended abruptly by a natural disaster such as an earthquake. The monumental inheritance of Robert Moses (1888-1981) poses no exception and will eventually vanish in the remote future. In fact, his well-known *Shea Stadium* and the *New York Coliseum* have already been replaced by the *Citi Field* and the *Time Warner Center*, respectively. Similarly, his expressways may be rendered obsolete someday when the automobile is replaced by other means of transportation. Nevertheless, Moses’ mark on New York’s cityscape will endure at least in the foreseeable future, and his legacy will be vital as long as people drive on his roads, dwell in his buildings and walk in his parks. Like Baron Haussmann of Paris and Sir Christopher Wren of London, great city planners and architects do not merely leave behind physical works, but a heritage that is used by millions of people in their everyday life.

Robert Moses’ impact on New York City has been the subject of a multitude of books, essays, conferences, exhibitions, articles and debates since he left power at the end of the 1960s. Over the years, his legacy has received diverging assessments. Shortly after the end of Moses’ career, Robert Caro’s Pulitzer Prize winning book *The Power Broker* (1974)\(^1\) initiated a debate that continues to this day. In his book, Caro not only portrayed Moses as an

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\(^1\) The *Power Broker’s* appearance coincided with the so-called “urban crisis”, which was caused, among other things, by high unemployment, rising distrust in the public sector, and the belief that the three postwar measures to alleviate the city’s problems, interstate highways, urban renewal, and public housing, actually exacerbated the crisis. Moreover, the book was published in the wake of the Watergate scandal. Moses’ reputation hit rock bottom at that time. See chapter 2.2.1 for more details on the urban crisis.
omnipotent, ingenious, and larger-than-life figure who amassed an unparalleled amount of power to shape New York in an unprecedented magnitude, but also depicted him as a villain that was solely responsible for the decline of the New York. Although the Power Broker generally received good reviews by the reading public and critics, it was also disapproved of for exaggerating Moses’ influence on American life, being historically imprecise, making Moses too much of an evil genius, and omitting crucial defeats.² Despite these critiques, Caro’s book was in many regards the last word on Moses for some time. Until the late 1980s, Moses was almost universally regarded as a “frightening specter haunting the metropolis which continued to suffer from his misdeeds”³, while Jane Jacobs became the city’s savior after she published The Death and Life of Great American Cities in 1961.

In 1988, one hundred years after Moses’ birth, Moses’ life and legacy was reassessed by journalists and scholars. The majority of the accounts were “revisionist histories”, which “sought to canonize the man and to immortalize his works.”⁴ Moses’ rising standing was reflected in books and essays published after 1974. While they also promoted a new, revisionist history, they did so in a more balanced and objective way, putting Moses into perspective and refuting many of Caro’s arguments.⁵ It was not until 2007, however, that a broad, fundamental academic reconsideration of Moses’ impact took place, led by Columbia University professors Hilary Ballon and Kenneth T. Jackson. By arranging an exhibition in New York, conducting a symposium with notable historians, and publishing a book of essays on Robert Moses,⁶ they spurred a large-scale reappraisal of Moses’ legacy, which led to the publication of a number of works on Moses and his impact on New York City.⁷ Apart from

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⁶ The exhibition, named Robert Moses and the Modern City, actually consisted of three different exhibitions at three New York museums. The book, which is eponymous of the exhibition, features a portfolio of Moses’ public works, seven essays, and a catalog of built work and projects of Moses.
⁷ It is no coincident that several books and essays on Moses and New York appeared between 2007 and 2011: Anthony Flint’s “Wrestling with Moses”, Nicholas Dagen Bloom’s “Public Housing That Worked”, Roberta
that, the involved agreed, by and large, that Robert Moses had a far more beneficial influence on the metropolis than Caro had suggested.

Regardless if one considers him a visionary or a villain, the story of Robert Moses is a vibrant example of how people and their achievements are evaluated over the years. Although all files have been opened, future generations will likely see and assess Moses differently, that is based on the circumstances of their distinctive time. Teaford succinctly describes this by stating that it is time to

“recognize that Moses’ fluctuating reputation is also a product of changing views of democracy and technology. Notions of right and wrong are not static, and the perceived virtues of one age can appear abhorrent to a later generation. Attitudes toward both democracy and technology shifted markedly during the twentieth century, and Robert Moses’ reputation was a casualty of this shift.”

Thirty years after his death, Robert Moses is as pertinent as ever. Limited city budgets, an altered process of city building, and political restraints prevent many much-needed large-scale public works from being put into practice. After a long period of neglecting the city’s infrastructure, a desire for somebody who can overcome the bureaucracy and negotiate the opposition is projected onto Moses. Ballon and Jackson point out that Moses has become a “symbolic figure in discourse about the future of the city, its capacity to think and build big.”

Urban history is a relative young field of history whose origins has several sources. Arthur M. Schlesinger’s seminal article “The City in American History” (1940), the “urban crisis”, and Stephen Thernstrom’s landmark piece “Poverty and Progress” (1964) are typically named as the groundbreaking, defining reasons for establishing urban history. “New urban history”, a term coined by Thernstrom in 1969, focuses on the “processes of urbanization, Brandes Gratz’s “The Battle for Gotham”, Jon C. Teaford’s “Caro versus Moses, Round Two”, Epperson Bruce’s “Reassessing the Life and Public Works of Robert Moses”, and Zipp’s “Manhattan Projects”. See the bibliography for complete titles. While each author’s notion about Moses resembles that of Ballon and Jackson, Gratz’s work sticks out. For instance, she advances some of Caro’s views that are presumed to be obsolete today, such as the reproach that Moses built his Long Island bridges too low. See chapter 2.3.2 for details on that accusation.

modernization, and social mobility\textsuperscript{11} and a comparative approach, in contrast to the descriptive “city biographies” of the “old” urban history. In the 1970s new urban history became increasingly unpopular and was progressively replaced by a focus on “grassroots history”.

This thesis attempts to assess the transformation of New York City under Robert Moses and its reflection in the media. What was Moses’ impact on the city in terms of physical construction? How did he proceed, and which consequences did his actions entail? What were the sources of his vast plans and which concepts did he avail himself of? Was he indispensable for the city developing the way it did? This paper focuses on the origins of Moses’ ventures, how he realized them and which implications they had. In doing so, I will not enlarge upon the projects he failed to put up. Furthermore, describing New York from a national perspective is not a focal point, but rather the interaction between Moses and different institutions. Apart from that, this thesis is not an attempt to give an account of Caro’s \textit{Power Broker} or to evaluate Moses by means of rebutting Caro’s theses. Likewise, its primary intention is not to criticize Caro, which has been done abundantly by other authors.\textsuperscript{12} Instead, some of Caro’s notions and those of his critics are compared to exemplify Moses’ impact, and to achieve my own appraisal of his legacy. Finally, this paper cannot be a thorough treatise of Moses’ works, for it would go beyond its scope. Although I have tried to take all crucial elements into account, only those aspects which aptly represent Moses’ manifold projects are highlighted.

Although chapter 2.1 is about Moses’ life and career, this thesis refrains from pursuing a biographical approach. Chapter 2.2 provides the parameter within which Moses operated: the historical context, developments and trends that influenced Moses’ works, and concepts that are elemental to understanding how and why Moses proceeded the way he did. Picking up on many such concepts depicted in chapter 2.2, chapter 2.3 enlarges upon several works of Moses by describing how they materialized and which effects their erection had on New York’s cityscape and people. Chapter 2.4 deals with Moses’ relationship with the press and the public, showing how he exploited the media for his purposes and how it affected his career. In the conclusions, I will recapitulate the cognizance. Lastly, the catalog in the appendix illustrates the amplitude of Moses’ work, and the juxtapositions and additional maps serve to further visualize the content of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{12} Virtually every scholar who writes about Moses and New York, it seems, tries to reinforce his arguments by pointing out that many of Caro’s points are invalid, even if it does not underscore what he is trying to convey.
2. The transformation of New York under Robert Moses

2.1 Life and career of Robert Moses

Born into an affluent German-Jewish family in 1888, Robert Moses grew up in New Haven, Connecticut. In 1897, he and his family moved to New York City. Equipped with a brilliant mind, he finished preparatory school at the age of sixteen and enrolled in Yale University, where he joined the swimming team and wrote poems and articles for the *Yale Courant*. After receiving his degree from the prestigious school in 1909, he went on to Oxford for two years. Following a term at the University of Berlin, he then earned his Ph.D. degree in political science from Columbia University in 1913 with a thesis on *The Civil Service of Great Britain*.

In the same year, Robert Moses entered public service when he got a job with the Training School for Public Service of the Bureau of Municipal Research, the “research and advisory arm for the nationwide progressive movement, which sought to rid local governments of patronage, corruption, and waste.” Before long though he grew impatient and frustrated because he felt that the Bureau wasn’t accomplishing as much as it could. In the midst of this unsatisfactory situation, he met his future wife, Mary Louise Sims, whom he married in 1915.

Illustration 1: Robert Moses, 1938

Source: Ballon et al. (2007), p. 64; section of original image shown.

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15 See Caro (1975), pp. 52-55.
16 Ibid. p. 55.
When John Purroy Mitchel became mayor in 1914, he sought to reform the city government and with it the civil service maladministration which benefited Tammany Hall.\textsuperscript{19} The chairman of the Municipal Service Commission, Henry Moskowitz, asked Moses for help in restructuring the city’s evaluation system for the city’s employees, which Moses gladly accepted. Proposing a merit-based system, he came up with a standardized system of salaries, promotion and efficiency rating. Yet, after three years of fighting for his plans, Mitchel’s successor, Tammany nominee John F. Hylan, dismissed Moses’ proposal.\textsuperscript{20}

In 1918, after brief employment at the government’s Emergency Fleet Corporation and a reluctant return to the Bureau of Municipal Research\textsuperscript{21}, Moses’ fortunes changed when he was given the offer to reorganize the state’s government under Belle Moskovitz, who worked for Alfred E. Smith, New York’s designated governor. Moses drew up a 419-page report, “heavily centralizing it [the government] and shifting considerable power from the legislature to the governor.”\textsuperscript{22}

Although Smith was not re-elected in 1920, he did win the next gubernatorial campaign two years later and took Moses with him to Albany, where he became his protégé and close aide.\textsuperscript{23} Impressed with his work, Smith put Moses in charge of New York’s parks. Moses’ vision was to create a vast state park system including beaches which he planned to make accessible to the public by means of parkways. He incorporated all of his ideas in the \textit{State Park Plan for New York}. Smith, endorsing Moses’ endeavor, pushed a 15 million dollar bond through legislation and created the Long Island State Park Commission. In 1924, he named Moses president, thereby setting off Moses’ New York career.\textsuperscript{24} After initial friction with the south shore townships and the north shore’s wealthy and influential residents as well as struggles to finance his projects, he managed to get most of his plans under way. In 1927, Smith appointed Moses Secretary of State\textsuperscript{25} and the first of his vast network of parkways, the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} See Flint (2009), p. 39.
\item \textsuperscript{20} See Caro (1975), pp. 71-86. Hylan was re-elected in 1917. At that point, progressivism in the city was dead.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid. pp. 86-87.
\item \textsuperscript{23} See Flint (2009), pp. 40-41.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Burns et al. (2002), pp. 406-08.
\item \textsuperscript{25} See Caro (1975), p. 256.
\end{itemize}
Southern State Parkway, opened. By the summer of 1928, there were fourteen state parks on Long Island, compared to one in 1924. One year later, Jones Beach opened to the public. Next, Moses embarked on projects which were no longer confined to Long Island. As chairman of the State Council of Parks, he was also able to shape the upstate parks based on his plans.

Smith failed to win the 1928 gubernatorial campaign and Franklin D. Roosevelt replaced him in Albany. As a result, Moses had to resign as Secretary of State but was able to keep his other two posts. The onset of the Great Depression caused friction over the park budget. Employing resignation threads, which were to become one of Moses’ most effective techniques, Roosevelt was compelled to compromise. Moreover, Moses often deliberately estimated the cost of his projects so low that he was likely to receive the required sum. Many times he could only complete a fraction of the project with that amount. When he asked the legislators for more money to finish the project, they had no choice but to allocate it.

At the Park Association’s annual dinner in 1930 the audience witnessed the scope of Moses’ ideas. Presenting a gigantic map of New York City, they saw that he envisioned a plan in which arteries and bridges would criss-cross through and around the city, connecting it with his numerous parks.

When Roosevelt became president in 1933, Herbert H. Lehman started his first term as governor of New York. The latter “appointed Moses chairman of the Emergency Public Works Commission and let him put men to work on big projects throughout the state.” While the Depression was still lingering, Fiorello La Guardia succeeded John P. O’Brien as mayor. Both he and Moses knew that it was essential to have plans and the necessary staff ready by the time money became available. Under these circumstances, La Guardia was willing to bestow a number of posts upon Moses, thus tremendously expanding Moses’ power. La Guardia not only consolidated all five separate park departments into one, but also made Moses its commissioner, thus putting Moses in charge of both parks and parkways. Moses also got to keep his state job and assumed control of the Marine Parkway Bridge.

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28 See ibid. pp. 255-56. He assumed that position in 1924 along with the presidency of the LISPC.
29 See ibid. pp. 218, 293, 296, 312-13. Caro calls the method to start building “stake driving”.
30 See ibid. pp. 341-43.
31 Flint (2009), p. 46. Those projects included, among others, a park and parkway plan for the Niagara Frontier and the international bridge to Canada. See Caro, p. 345.
Authority and, most importantly, the Triborough Bridge Authority.\(^{32}\) Moses immediately used his authority to start several hundred renovation projects across the city. Not only was the economy looking up by March 1934, but New York’s recreational landscape had been refurbished with the help of thousands of CWA workers.\(^{33}\)

Of Moses’ biggest failures, the earliest occurred in the year his influence substantially increased. In 1934, he accepted the nomination for the Republican Party to run for governor. It was the first and only time he campaigned for elected office. By offending Lehman, alienating the media and antagonizing voters, Moses contributed to the outcome: a landslide loss.\(^{34}\) That same year, Moses almost suffered a far more crushing blow, which instead turned into one of his most crucial victories. Roosevelt had always felt a strong antipathy toward Moses. Now that the former governor was President, he tried to get rid of him. By issuing an order, he intended to strip Moses’ Triborough Bridge Authority of the funds it needed to execute projects. In this battle, Moses employed another method that proved to be very effective: he let the press in on Roosevelt’s plans, thereby provoking fierce reactions that put tremendous pressure on the President. Eventually, Roosevelt had to refrain from trying to enforce the order.\(^{35}\)

In order to execute his public works, Moses hired many well-known architects, landscape architects and engineers. With them on board, many Moses projects of the thirties “set a standard of high-quality design”\(^{36}\). Moses’ next enterprise was a series of pools which were financed with New Deal money and opened in the summer of 1936.\(^{37}\) He was also responsible for hundreds of playgrounds built primarily in the 1930s.\(^{38}\)

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\(^{32}\) Like 1924, 1934 was a crucial year in Moses’ career. Having been in charge of two agencies before 1934 (the Long Island State Park Commission and the New York State Council of Parks), he was now, in a matter of months, controlling four times as many, namely eight, adding the Jones Beach State Park Authority, the Bethpage State Park Authority, the New York City Park Department, the Marine Parkway Authority, the Henry Hudson Bridge Authority, and the Triborough Bridge Authority to his repertoire. See Caro (1975), pp. 360, 362, 626; Doig, Jameson W.: Metropolitan Transportation Politics and the New York Region, New York and London 1966, p. 37.

\(^{33}\) According to Caro, the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Public Works Administration (PWA) together allotted more than $1,150,000,000 for public works in New York City during La Guardia’s first five years. See Caro (1975), pp. 368-79, 465.

\(^{34}\) See Caro (1975), pp. 402-25.


\(^{36}\) Ballon, Hilary: Robert Moses and Urban Renewal, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 94-115, here: p. 66. Probably the most distinguished members of Moses’ staff were Aymar Embury II, architect, Gilmore Clark, landscape architect, and Othmar Ammann, engineer.


\(^{38}\) See Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 174-75.
A milestone in Moses’ achievements was the Triborough Bridge. Opened to traffic in 1936, it consisted of four bridges which linked four of New York’s five boroughs. Moses also expanded and rearranged Ward’s and Randall’s Islands, upon which the bridge was constructed, creating new parks, Downing Stadium and a new headquarter for his empire. Generating massive revenues, the bridge proved most valuable to Moses’ large-scale ambitions, especially after the New Deal programs had expired. The Triborough Bridge Authority became the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (henceforth TBTA) in 1946, after it was consolidated with the New York City Tunnel Authority. Upon the merger, the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel also became part of Moses’ empire. Yet in the course of the action Moses suffered his second major defeat after losing the gubernatorial campaign back in 1934. Instead of a tunnel, Robert Moses proposed to build a bridge. Despite staunch opposition, Moses nearly succeeded, only to have the Secretary of War stop the project because it lay seaward of the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

During the mid- and late 1930s, several parkways and bridges were completed, including the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, the Marine Parkway Bridge, the elevated Gowanus Parkway and the Henry Hudson Parkway, which was part of the extensive “West Side Improvement” in Manhattan. There, Moses transformed a run-down wasteland into six miles of park and recreational facilities. In the north, the Henry Hudson Bridge connected Manhattan with the Bronx.

In 1939 the first of two World Fairs during Moses’ career took place in New York City. He worked closely with La Guardia and the New York World’s Fair Corporation, clearing Flushing Meadows, an ash heap and site of the Fair, which later became a vast public park. One of the major attractions, General Motors’ Futurama, was a harbinger of the age of the automobile.

39 See Burns et al. (2002), pp. 439-44. In 2005, Downing Stadium was replaced by Icahn Stadium.
40 While constructing the Queens-Midtown Tunnel in 1938, the City Tunnel Authority ran out of money. Moses took over the project and completed the tunnel by 1940. The proposed Brooklyn-Battery Bridge aroused such ferocious opposition, because, among other reasons, it would have blocked the view on New York’s skyline from the harbor. It was widely believed that First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and her husband were the driving force behind the War Department’s decision, for the justification was illogical. Despite this setback, Moses was given responsibility for completion of the tunnel. During the war, construction was halted due to a material shortage, which worsened the already serious financial trouble of the Tunnel Authority. See Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 89, 235-37. The subsequent “Ford Clinton and Aquarium fight” resulted in the demolition of the latter and in preservation of the former. For Moses’ motivation and details, see Caro (1975), pp. 678-88.
41 See Burns et al. (2002), p. 432. Moses was able to raise the required sum - $109,000,000 - from a number of different sources. See Caro (1975), pp. 529-39.
With a tight grip on parks and parkways, Moses embarked on a new endeavor: housing. The Redevelopment Companies Act (RCA) of 1942 enabled the city to clear land employing eminent domain, facilitated slum clearance and provided partial tax exemption for the private developer, who was in charge of financing a housing project on the respective site. The first notable venture was Stuyvesant Town, built by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company on the East Side of Manhattan. A landmark in federal housing policy was the Housing Act of 1949 and its Title I program. An advancement of the Redevelopment Companies Act, Title I consisted of three elements: “large-scale clearance, replanning and private development”. Moses cemented his primacy in the housing field when he became member of the City Planning Commission (CPC), was appointed City Construction Coordinator, and assumed the chairmanship of the Mayor’s Committee on Slum Clearance (MCoSC), in 1942, 1946 and 1948, respectively.

As City Construction Coordinator, Moses was the “sole broker between the city and the governments on which the city was relying for […] funds.” It allowed him to run Title I from 1949, when it was enacted, to 1960. During this period, Moses engineered the nation’s largest urban renewal program, for which the city obtained by far the largest Title I allocation in the country. Moses also had a hold over the New York Housing Authority (henceforth NYCHA), which provided public housing for low- and moderate-income residents. The housing projects, however, particularly the low- and middle-income superblocks, were

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44 Ballon, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 94-115, here: p. 96. I will give a more detailed insight into the Housing Act and Title I, its motives and implications in chapters 2.2.8 and 2.3.4.


46 Caro (1975), p. 705. Allowing him to amend the City’s Administrative Code to create the position, Moses included a seemingly innocuous phrase which enabled him to “represent the city in its relations with cooperating state and federal agencies” (p. 705). Moses exploited this technique a number of times during his career which yielded significant benefits.

With his Construction Coordinator post, Moses also became City Arterial Highway Coordinator, a post he held from 1946 to 1966. When the office of Construction Coordinator was abolished in 1960, Moses convinced mayor Wagner to let him carry on the Coordinator’s job as the chairman of the TBTA. See Ballon et al. (2007), p. 213; Caro (1975), p. 1063.

47 See Ballon, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 194-115, here: p. 94. For detailed figures see chapters 2.2.8 and 2.3.4.

48 Ballon, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 94-115, here: p. 97. Starting in the 1940s, the NYCHA also provided middle-class housing.
criticized for lack of the artistic and architectural standards for which his previous projects were praised. Moreover, the private developers did not live up to the promise of relocating evicted tenants into adequate homes.49

The United Nations Headquarters and the Lincoln Center showed that urban renewal was not confined to housing. Confirming New York’s status as the cultural and political heart of America, the projects embraced “new cultural and civic institutions, universities, and commercial development.” 50 Other major projects of that period were the New York Coliseum in Manhattan and the Shea Stadium in Flushing Meadows.51

The year 1957 was a turning point in Moses’ control over housing. Revelations exposed corruption at several Title I projects, most notoriously at “Manhattantown”, which eventually made him resign as chairman of the MCoSC three years later.52 Retreating from the housing theater, Moses again focused on building roads. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 gave impetus to the construction of expressways in the whole country. Trying to implement his extensive plans provoked strong opposition, which was most visible in Greenwich Village, where Moses intended to extend Fifth Avenue through Washington Square Park. Led by Jane Jacobs and Shirley Hayes, the protestors launched a campaign which spoiled Moses’ plan in 1958. Encouraged by their victory, Jacobs helped kill another pivotal Moses project, the Lower Manhattan Expressway (LME), which was to link the Holland Tunnel to the Williamsburg Bridge and the Manhattan Bridge.53

49 See Flint (2009), pp. 54-55.

51 For the Coliseum see Zipp (2010), p. 169, for the stadium see Caro (1975), p. 727; Flint (2009), p. 57; Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 198-99. Moses refused to condemn land for a new home of the New York Dodgers as a replacement for their Brooklyn-based Ebbets Field, insisting on a venue in Flushing Meadows instead. Consequently, the Dodgers moved to Los Angeles after the 1957 season. Shea Stadium became the New York Mets’ ballpark until it was demolished and replaced by the Citi Field in 2008.


53 The 1956 act raised the federal portion to 90 percent of construction costs. Teaford, Jon C.: The Rough Road to Renaissance. Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985, Baltimore 1990, pp. 93-94. Aided by Lewis Mumford and the publicity of the neighborhood newspaper, the Village Voice, the Washington Square Park Committee not only managed to defeat Moses (in a Board of Estimate hearing), it also succeeded in
Another conflict Moses waged was his feud with the TBTA’s bi-state rival, the Port of New York Authority, over a bus terminal and the city’s airports. The Port Authority (PNYA) intended to construct a large-capacity bus terminal in mid-town Manhattan near the entrance of the Lincoln Tunnel in order to channel the large quantity of interstate buses entering the city from west of the Hudson, replacing the eight separate bus stations and therefore alleviating traffic in the district. In spite of initial support for the plan, Moses teamed up with the Greyhound Corporation, the nation’s largest bus company, in 1945, which sought to expand its terminal instead. After years of struggle, Moses finally abandoned Greyhound in 1953. The airport clash was carried out in the mid-1940s and resulted in the Port Authority’s control over all three of the region’s major airfields: La Guardia, Idlewild (now Kennedy airport) and Newark airport. In 1946, New York City’s airports were turned over to the newly created New York City Airport Authority. Carried by the press, the Port Authority launched a campaign calling for regionalization of the airport issue, and after the Airport Authority ran into trouble, O’Dwyer turned both New York airports over to the Port Authority.54

In both 1956 and 1959 Moses’ good reputation in the press and the public was tarnished by two incidents relating to Central Park. In the first conflict, “a group of influential mothers successfully resisted his plan to bulldoze a Central Park playground for a Tavern on...
the Green parking lot.” The second contention was about a popular Shakespeare festival in Central Park.

Regardless of these setbacks, Moses continued to implement his vast plans, even if it required cooperating with his bi-state rival, the Port Authority. Coming to terms with one another, the Port Authority and the TBTA announced a “Joint Study of Arterial Facilities” in 1955 that had far-reaching ramifications for the physical structure of the city. Not only did it allow for the construction of two major crossings, the Throgs Neck Bridge and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, it also initiated scores of expressway projects throughout the city.

Moses was New York’s 1964/1965 World’s Fair president, an office for which he resigned from all city jobs, namely as head of the MCoSC, as Park Commissioner, and as member of the CPC. The fair was a failure in many regards: the revenues were not nearly as high as the expenditures, attendance did not meet expectations, and many countries did not attend.

Mayor John V. Lindsay, who succeeded Wagner in 1966, tried to remove Moses from power in the same year by merging the TBTA with the newly created Transit Authority. Although his plan backfired, he was able to remove Moses from his post as City Arterial Highway Coordinator.

In 1959, when he was reappointed as State Power Authority chairman, Robert Moses had been at the height of his power. At that point in time, he held twelve different posts. Now, in 1966, he was down to one.

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56 In 1959 Moses threatened to put an end to Joseph Papp’s free plays unless he began to charge two dollars per ticket. After the ensuing battle in the press, Moses revoked Papp’s permit. Ruling against Moses, an appellate court called his actions “arbitrary, capricious and unreasonable”. This ultimately resulted in the erection of the Delacorte Theater in 1962. For the “Battles of Central Park” see Gratz (2010), pp. 41-42 and Zipp (2010), p. 213 (first incident); Caro (1975), pp. 984-1004, 1026-39 (second incident).
58 The city’s Code of Ethics stipulated that no paid official could simultaneously hold a paid job with a private corporation. He held the Fair’s post for seven years. Apart from the mentioned flaws, Moses alienated and agitated the press which led to negative coverage and revelations about bankruptcy. Most disappointing for Moses was the resulting inability to finish Flushing Meadows in the intended scale. The Fair, moreover, destroyed what was left of his popularity. See Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 89, 93, 198-99; Burns et al. (2002), pp. 518-19; Caro (1975), pp. 1059-63, 1082-1116; Gratz (2010), pp. 133-35; Zipp (2010), p. 358.
60 Moses was in charge of the construction of a series of power dams, parks and parkways both at the St. Lawrence and the Niagara river. See Caro (1975), pp. 8-9, 1023. In 1966, his only remaining post was the chairmanship of the TBTA. Four years earlier, he had lost three of his posts when his resignation thread had failed for the first time. Rockefeller simply accepted it and dismissed Moses from the chairmanship of the Power Authority, the presidency of the Long Island State Park Commission, and the chairmanship of the State Council of Parks. Especially the loss of the Power Authority was a severe blow to Moses’ power base, for the authority, with both Robert Moses power dams complete, generated the bulk of his revenues. By the time of the showdown with Rockefeller in 1966, Moses only had the TBTA post left after his presidency of the World’s Fair had expired and Lindsay had removed him as City Arterial Highway Coordinator.
Nelson Rockefeller served as governor of New York from 1959 to 1973. Not only did he belong to one of the most powerful families in the United States, he and his family also had considerable influence on New York politics. Like Moses, Rockefeller embarked on grand-scale building, which was exemplified in his 1966 plan for massive capital investment in mass transportation systems and highway arteries. Part of this endeavor was to consolidate the TBTA with the newly created Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). Promising Moses that he would still have power under the new circumstances, he persuaded him to approve the plan in 1967, which in turn helped him to get the bond issue and merger bills approved by both state legislature and voters. When the MTA came into being in 1968, all Robert Moses was offered was the insignificant role of a “consultant” to the TBTA. At the age of 79, after 44 years in command, power was removed from him at last.61

Before Moses died in 1981, aged 92, Co-op City was completed, a large housing development in the Bronx in which he had played a critical role. When the Rye-Oyster Bay Bridge project was cancelled in 1973, the last remaining vision was destroyed.62

2.2 New York City in the 20th century

The aim of this chapter is to provide a framework that illustrates various fundamentals and trends that influenced the way Moses transformed New York. In doing so, the examination of the following aspects is to provide a basis for chapter 2.3, which demonstrates and assesses their ramifications for Moses’ work and depicts how his planning strategies were affected by previous developments. The following articles are not in-depth accounts but mere outlines of the respective topics. I will only expand upon the information relevant to the theme of this thesis.63

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62 The bridge would have crossed the Long Island Sound, linking Long Island to the mainland. See Flint (2009), p. 178; Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 240-41. With 15,373 apartments Co-op City is one of the largest housing projects in the world. See Ballon et al. (2007), p. 306; Caro (1975), p. 1151.
63 Also, all information in this chapter refers specifically to the United States and New York.
2.2.1 A brief history of New York

Today, New York City is by far the United States’ largest city with a population of roughly 8,000,000. Its five boroughs, Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island, have a combined area of 322 square miles. The tri-state New York metropolitan region, stretching out over New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, accommodates approximately 20,000,000 people. The following summary outlines the city’s history in the 19th and 20th century with an emphasis on topics that relate to the other chapters.

In 1811, the state of New York decided to implement the “Commissioner’s Plan”, devised by DeWitt Clinton, whose grid would dictate Manhattan’s traffic and lot structure to this day. Fourteen years later, Clinton opened the Erie Canal, which, together with the exceptional shape and location of the city’s harbor, was a major reason for New York’s rising economical and financial status in the 19th century. New Yorkers pioneered the concept of regularly scheduled shipping services, and liberalism prevailed in the city. Reinforcing each other, the advantages helped New York become the commercial heart of the United States. In 1898, Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens were amalgamated with New York (Manhattan and the Bronx), thus creating “Greater New York”. Overnight, New York had become the second largest city in the world.

with more than 3,400,000 inhabitants. Six years later, in 1904, the first subway line was operating, and in the next few years the system was extended into Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx.

From 1890 to 1920, the city’s population increased from 1.5 to 5.6 million. During the same period, the first great wave of immigration brought more than 12,000,000 people to Ellis Island, with every fourth newcomer staying in New York. Together with the second wave after World War II, it transformed the city into one of the most ethnically diverse places in the world. At the beginning of the 20th century, New York had a manufacturing workforce that accounted for 15 percent of that of the entire nation, producing more than two thirds of all textiles in the country, figures that remained steady until the 1950s. By 1925 the city had surpassed London as the biggest city in the world, as its population had grown to over 6,000,000. With its stock exchange, Gotham became the world’s leading financial center. However, the stock market crashed in 1929 and caused a prolonged economic crisis. In the midst of the Great Depression, the Empire State Building was built, replacing the Chrysler Building as the tallest building in the world. The New Deal program permitted a series of public works projects, especially parks and parkways, which were carried out by Moses and La Guardia. About 900,000 New Yorker’s went to war from 1941 to 1945; 16,000 did not return. The city celebrated the end of World War II with parades on Broadway and Fifth Avenue, and New York now had a population of 7,500,000. In 1946, the United Nations decided to build their headquarters on the East Side of Manhattan, solidifying New York’s primacy as the political capital of the world.

After the war, the 1949 Housing Act and Title I spurred an urban redevelopment program that reshaped substantial portions of the city that were considered blighted. It comprised slum clearance and public housing projects, highways, and cultural and educational institutions. Starting back in the 1920s, the emergence of the automobile had led to the gradual replacement of the city’s elevated lines, the decline of the railroads, the demise of the downtown and its hegemony, as well as decentralization and suburbanization. The postwar expressway system, stimulated by the Highway Act of 1956, contributed significantly to this trend by making thousands of acres of new land easily accessible and therefore hastening the migration of the industry to the suburbs starting in the late 1950s. By the early 1970s, not only New York’s population had declined by 810,000, but manufacturing employment had dropped by 80 percent. Apart from that, New York’s port lost its dominant status as it was shifted to the New Jersey side of the bay, where modern piers provided more space and a direct railway link.
These long-term trends caused poverty, “depleted cities’ tax bases and left inadequate resources for servicing aged infrastructure and for responding to the social problems”\textsuperscript{65}. In addition to the race riots of the 1960s, these issues helped bring forth expressions such as “urban crisis” and “second ghetto”.\textsuperscript{66} In New York, the predicament was not much different from other cities. The Harlem riots in 1965 claimed one life and lasted for five days. During mayor Wagner’s and Lindsay’s tenures, the city had to cope with strikes and massive financial problems, and the government was not willing to bail out the city.\textsuperscript{67} Moreover, the crime rate skyrocketed, culminating in the murder of a young woman in broad daylight that came to embody the changing, negative attitude toward cities. By the 1960s, in New York as in the rest of the country, these tendencies coincided with a movement that considered the measures\textsuperscript{68}, which were “implemented as responses to urban problems such as congestion and “blight”, [...] as exacerbating these conditions.”\textsuperscript{69} More and more, people distrusted the urban project and began to question the prevailing rationales that underlay the urban fabric.

The victories over Moses’ LME and his proposed extension of Fifth Avenue through Washington Square Park propelled a notion opined by Jane Jacobs, who preferred preservation over clearance.\textsuperscript{70} Jacobs’ \textit{Death and Life of great American Cities}, published in 1961, called for “diverse neighborhoods […], the […] importance of public space […] and the wisdom of the citizens over and against the top-down expertise of the planner.”\textsuperscript{71} Gradually, Jacob’s vision asserted itself against Moses’ headstrong approach, a trend manifested in the defeat of “Westway”\textsuperscript{72}, the creation of the “Landmarks Preservation Commission” (1965) and the emergence of grassroots movements. On the national level, the Housing Act of 1954 “formally recognized the growing interest in rehabilitation and conservation”\textsuperscript{73}. Furthermore, a referendum was ushered in that conceded residents a right to a say in matters that were

\textsuperscript{66} Works that reflect New York’s decline were, among others, Marya Mannes’ “The New York I Know”, Richard J. Whalen’s “A City Destroying Itself”, Norman Mailer’s “Why Are We Not in New York?”, and Jason Epstein’s “The Last Days of New York”.
\textsuperscript{67} Washington’s reluctance was famously illustrated by the \textit{Daily News} headline “FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD” (October 30, 1975). See Burns et al. (2002), pp. 542-43.
\textsuperscript{68} Those measures consisted of the three postwar building programs: interstate highways, urban renewal, and public housing.
\textsuperscript{70} Other important advocates were Lewis Mumford, William H. Whyte, and Charles Abrams.
\textsuperscript{71} Furthermore, she pointed out the privileging of the pedestrian and mass transit over the automobile and the value of the traditional streetscape over the towers-in-the-park of urban renewal. Fishman, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 122-29, here: p. 124.
\textsuperscript{72} “Westway” was supposed to replace the West Side Highway with an underground road and waterfront park. It provoked fierce opposition in the 1970s and 1980s. See Ballon et al., in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 65-66.
\textsuperscript{73} Teaford (1990), p. 113.
affecting their neighborhoods. These trends are reflected in the New Urbanism movement, which promotes much of Jacob’s agenda.\textsuperscript{74}

After 1980, Gotham experienced a turnaround, as its population rose again thanks to new immigrants, the crime plummeted, allocation for mass transit and the subway’s ridership increased, a new generation of middle-class whites moved into older neighborhoods (a process called \textit{gentrification}), and the city was able to maintain its status as the (cultural) capital of the world.\textsuperscript{75}

\textbf{2.2.2 Progressivism\textsuperscript{76}}

The Progressive Era lasted from 1890 to 1920. During those thirty years, reformers, who called themselves Progressives, confronted a rapidly changing society that was shaped by urbanization and immigration, industrialization, and the appearance of big businesses. One of the reforms they undertook aimed at alleviating “urban problems through restructured municipal governments and settlement houses”\textsuperscript{77}. Other reforms concentrated authority in the mayor and entities such as the Board of Estimate\textsuperscript{78}. Progressives sought, moreover, to get rid of ward politics, underscored the importance of the broader public interest, and revolted against special-interest politics.\textsuperscript{79} These principles were vigorously promoted in New York and, in particular, at the Bureau of Municipal Research, where Robert Moses worked from 1913 to 1917. At this stage of his career, Moses was still an idealistic reformer. His report on reorganization of the government from 1919 captured and summed up the essence of Progressivism, and his proposal to vest the governor with more power was in keeping with the prevailing progressive ideas.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{75} Klemek, in: Goldfield (ed.) vol. 2 (2007), pp. 822-24, here: 824. These professionals were dubbed “Yuppies”, from the term \textit{young urban professionals}.
\textsuperscript{78} Schwartz (1993), p. 15. The Board of Estimate was in charge of budget and land-use decisions. It consisted of the mayor, the comptroller, the president of the city council and the five borough presidents. It was replaced by an enlarged city council in 1989.
\textsuperscript{80} See Caro (1975), pp. 59-60, 104. The Bureau, founded in 1906, was an offspring of the \textit{City Efficient movement}, which was the “product of […] phenomena of the Progressive Era: the municipal reform movement
It was during the Progressive Era that reformers recognized the need for inner-city redevelopment and established the conception of a city that had to be “physically renewed”; besides that, they called for gentrification and profitable use of the inner city.\textsuperscript{81} Years later, in the 1940s and 50s, Robert Moses adopted these principles when he reshaped New York with Title I. Another aspect of Progressivism that Moses picked up was the ideal of paternalist reform and its notion that recreation “ought to be organized for the public good” and not for “commercialization […] and entertainment”.\textsuperscript{82}

### 2.2.3 City Beautiful and Burnham’s Plan of Chicago\textsuperscript{83}

The functional and aesthetic flaws of industrialized cities in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century gave rise to a progressive reform movement called the City Beautiful. Reformers like Jacob Riis (“How the other Half lives”) were concerned about corruption, poverty, poor housing, overcrowding and other negative characteristics of cities. The chief advocates of the movement, Daniel Burnham, an architect from Chicago, and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., landscape architect, whose father co-designed Central Park, addressed the city’s failings by implementing beauty in the “urban environment through architectural principles such as proportion, symmetry, and scale”\textsuperscript{84}. Lasting from the 1890s to about 1920, the movement had a significant impact on public architecture and city design.

The World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893, which is considered as the birth of city planning, marked a growing interest in monumental architecture, or grand civic design. This approach stressed comprehensive urban planning, whose apparent qualities were ordered (grouped) arrangement of buildings, focal points and vistas, unity by color, scale, and stylistic homogeneity.\textsuperscript{85} These ‘virtues’ were applied by Burnham in his famous Plan of Chicago (1909), a milestone regarding scale, functionality and innovation. It had striking parallels to

\textsuperscript{81} Schwartz (1993), p. 297. They intended to reshape the cities with “government subsidy”.
\textsuperscript{82} Gutman, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 72-85, here: p. 73.
\textsuperscript{84} Morley, in: Golfield (2007), p. 150.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid. p. 151.
Baron Haussmann’s transformation of Paris, whose “diagonal streets that pierced the built-up grid”\(^{86}\) were adopted in the plan. In addition to these cross-town highways, the plan also included a few inner belts and a shoreline parkway. Another characteristic of the plan was the integration of railway terminals and rapid transit (underground and surface) for both passengers and freight.\(^{87}\) The banker Charles Norton, one of the principal officers of the plan, later helped duplicate the comprehensive plan in New York.

In spite of its influence on reforms and the thinking of planners, the City Beautiful’s principles were implemented in few urban renewal projects. Moreover, its conservative character primarily served the needs of urban elites while having little to offer for the urban masses. At the same time, it also failed to come up with any directives for capitalist activities in cities. Criticism was also voiced regarding the scale of public spending. By 1910, it was widely accepted that the movement alone was an inadequate concept. As a result, the city functional movement emerged, emphasizing efficiency, transportation, orderly development and zoning.\(^ {88}\)

### 2.2.4 Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne\(^ {89}\)

The Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne, or CIAM, which refers to both the organization and the series of congresses, was founded in Switzerland by a group of European architects at the first of those meetings in 1928. A vanguard party of modern architecture, its most significant theoretical approach was the “Functional City”. Some of the most prominent architects of the time such as Le Corbusier, Ernst May, Mart Stam, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and José Luis Sert were among its members. CIAM was a major force in creating a unified sense of the Modern Movement in architecture.

The concept of the “Functional City” was not new but reflected land planning based on zoning by function, which already was a major planning trait in the United States of the 1920s.\(^ {90}\) It had four basic components: dwelling, work, transportation, and recreation. It

\(^{87}\) http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/10537.html [last accessed 25.08.2011].  
\(^{90}\) Passed by the Board of Estimate in 1916, New York City adopted the “nation’s first comprehensive zoning ordinance” which authorized local authorities to “regulate the use, height, and bulk of all new buildings” (Fogelson (2001), p. 160). The aim was to separate industrial, business, and residential areas. Despite its lack of
stated that the high density of the toiling class’ districts and the problems it entailed were unnecessary. It was essential to align the particular housing type with its low-cost apartments so that it would be in best position for sunlight. Other aspects were industrialized building methods, simple and clear property divisions, and standardization, which demanded rational development methods. At the same time, a more “scientific” approach to urban planning would help determine the required amount of housing and transportation infrastructure. Moreover, it called for a more process orientated planning.  

The “Functional City” was the basis of CIAM’s Athens Charter of 1943. Just like Le Corbusier’s doctrine of the Ville Contemporaine (1922) and the Plan Voisin for Paris (1925), it held that “the typical urban fabric [...] was fundamentally obsolete, its narrow streets and dense dwellings a failing relic”\(^9\). In contrast to Lewis Mumford, who argued for decentralization of the central city, CIAM believed in a vast, spacious, geometric, modernist tower-in-the-park landscape with green corridors, linked by straight highways, thus rendering public transportation outdated. Moreover, it is important to note that the Athens Charter became an allegory for modern urban redevelopment that was adopted without the sociopolitical element in the USA. Since the country did not experience a war on its home soil, it did not need social changes. Clearing slums and the problems they caused was primarily an economic and political, not a social aim.

Regarding CIAM’s influence on modern urbanism in the United States, it has been suggested that there was a similarity between the goals of CIAM, capitalism, and the urban redevelopment activities (of the Rockefellers or Robert Moses). The exhibits “Futurama” and “Democracy” of the 1939 New York World’s Fair applied some CIAM ideas in a vision where “downtowns [are] served by highways [and] linked to commuter suburbs”. It was rather this vision that, despite considerable existing parallels to CIAM, would define modern urbanism in the United States.  

implementation, land planning based on zoning by function asserted itself in the whole country. In 1926, the Supreme Court issued an order, stating that local authorities are in charge of land planning based on zoning by function, a decision that empowered cities to employ eminent domain. Nonetheless, the outcome of planning processes depended on local political leverage. See Pries (2008), pp. 44-45. The Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs was similarly concerned with “promoting universal zoning by function” (Mumford (2000), p. 25). See the outline of the RPoNYaIE for more information.

\(^{91}\) Mumford (2000), pp. 5, 25, 59-61. It is widely accepted that CIAM’s ingredients were nowhere original. In fact, influences on CIAM can be traced back to ideas first put forward by Saint-Simon in the early 19\(^{th}\) century.

\(^{92}\) Fishman, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 122-29, here: p. 124. In the 1930s, Le Corbusier slightly changed his notion regarding the Ville Contemporaine, focusing more the Ville Radieuse (the radiant city).

\(^{93}\) Mumford (2000), pp. 142-43.
After 1945, several members rejected the four functions approach and the functionalist principle, promoting the *Charter of Habitat* instead. Meanwhile, disagreements among the members increased. Consequentially, CIAM’s postwar influence is much more elusive than before the war. Nevertheless, the functional city remained the dominating urban planning ideal after World War II. From the 1950s to the 1970s the concept became the basis for slum clearance and the construction of new housing projects. CIAM was officially disbanded in 1959.

### 2.2.5 The Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs

The *Regional Plan Association* (RPA) was established in 1929, the year it published its *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs*. Funded by the *Russell Sage Foundation*, it is an influential “private, nonprofit civic organization supported by business, government agencies, foundations, and private individuals” with the purpose to “promote the development of the tri-state New York metropolitan region.” The propositions of the 1929 Regional Plan were largely implemented, thus transforming the physical landscape of the city and leaving a significant and enduring mark on the New York region.

In 1921, a group of affluent and powerful New York men came together to create a comprehensive remodeling plan for the city. Among the RPA’s members were Frederic Delano (Franklin D. Roosevelt’s uncle), bankers, Long Island “barons” (including Robert De Forest), railroad men, Frederik Law Olmsted, Jr., George McAneny, and Charles Norton. The plan’s dimensions reflect the eight long years it took the RPA to finish it. Unprecedented in scope, its ten volumes encompassed three states, 22 counties, and 436 local and municipal governments. According to the plan, Manhattan, or more accurately, Manhattan’s Central Business District (CBD) would remain the center of the region. Shifting the port to the more advantageously situated Newark-Elizabeth area in New Jersey and decentralizing Manhattan’s industry would create a new CBD with ‘clean’ economies such as banks and insurance.

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companies, making Manhattan a modern, de-industrialized urban center in the first post-industrial metropolis. While the blue-collar classes should be encouraged to move to the periphery, the white-collar workers of the middle and upper middle classes should be stimulated to live in the center. The RPoNYaIE sought to hasten these changes by considerably improving both railway and road infrastructure.

Incorporating propositions of the Port of New York Authority’s rail plans, it firstly envisioned a complex, expanded, unified and efficient railway network that would link the different areas of the metropolis. The plan underscored the importance of both rail freight lines and public mass transit to the prosperity of the entire region. To improve the former, a railroad tunnel and a pair of railroad bridges were to connect Brooklyn to New Jersey, and cross the Hudson, respectively, in order to make up for New York’s missing direct rail freight connection to New Jersey. Secondly, an extensive highway system (see map 2) would knit together the pieces of the region. It comprised three circumferential arteries around the city with 630 miles in length, major thoroughfares, including four cross-Manhattan expressways, new grade-separated freeways, waterfront highways, parkways, tunnels, and bridges. Apart from that, the plan called for zoning ordinances, the creation of parks, and recreational developments on the city’s fringes.

Concerning implementation and impact of the plan, it can be said that the bulk of the mentioned proposals was put into practice. The major exception, however, was the railroad

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96 As a matter of fact, these tendencies had been visible for several decades, as new industrial areas sprouted in Brooklyn, Queens and New Jersey and the population shifted from the center to the periphery. It was, therefore, to a certain extent, the logical consequence of these transformations.
program, which was mostly abandoned due to federal funding formulas that overwhelmingly favored road building.\textsuperscript{97} Consequentially, both the tunnel and the bridge projects were not carried out. The lack of a suitable rail freight connection between New York City and the southern and western parts of the country had detrimental effects on the industry of the entire region.\textsuperscript{98} The proposed roads, on the other hand, largely materialized in the following decades under the auspices of Robert Moses and the Port of New York Authority. This imbalance made the region disproportionately reliant on the automobile. After the war, moreover, shipping traffic and industry migrated and the port was relocated to New Jersey. Also, the new high-rises and skyscrapers in the CBD were “located further apart to allow for better circulation and more light and air”\textsuperscript{99} which was in keeping with the plan. The proposed parks were largely implemented. Finally, it resulted in the creation of planning and zoning agencies as well as state programs which focused on regional development. Whether the Regional Plan actually brought about these changes, or if it merely predicted changes that would have occurred anyway, is subject to debate.

It is important to note that many elements were not wholly original. For instance, elements of the \textit{Plan of Chicago} were integrated by recommendation of Charles Norton.\textsuperscript{100} Nonetheless, the Regional Plan incorporated and presented them, thus making them “more widely known and accepted”\textsuperscript{101}. Criticism of the plan came most prominently from the \textit{Regional Planning Association of America} (RPAA). Devising more socially progressive ideas, Lewis Mumford and other members condemned the RPA’s “social and spatial

\textsuperscript{97} Another reason was the competition among the various rail companies and the resulting relatively low potential for politically effective action.

\textsuperscript{98} Up to this day, this crucial missing link in New York’s infrastructure has not materialized. Its absence hastened the gradual decline of New York’s port and its relocation to New Jersey. Then, as now, the only means to carry cargo from the New Jersey side of the Hudson River to the Manhattan side are trucks and rail barges. The two tubes from New Jersey to lower Manhattan were solely designed for commuter trains and terminated there, and the two trans-Hudson tunnels (1910) between New Jersey and midtown Manhattan were soon used to capacity and could not bear additional freight trains. Although there is a rail freight connection across the river, the Alfred H. Smith Memorial Bridge in Selkirk near Albany, it lies 140 miles north of New York, forcing freight trains to take a long detour. This name for this route in urban planners’ and railroad mens’ jargon is “Selkirk Hurdle”. Until 1974, freight trains were able to cross the Hudson via a railroad bridge at Poughkeepsie, 85 miles north of New York. Today there are plans for a rail freight connection in the New York harbor, most notably the “Cross-Harbor Rail Tunnel”. See Doig (1966), pp. 14, 254; Fitch (1993), pp. 75, 118.


\textsuperscript{100} The emphasis on passenger and freight rail and the bypasses and circumferential highways that sliced through the grid stand out. Another example is the plan to gentrify the Lower East Side, dating from the Progressive Era, which was the basis for the “more scientific blueprints of the Regional Plan of New York to remove the working class for more desired residents.” Schwartz (1993), p. 297.

conservatism”. Thirty-nine years after the first Regional Plan, the association came up with The Second Regional Plan, which underlined decentralization and a balanced transportation system of highway and railroad development. Paul Windels and other RPA members abandoned old principles and became advocates of “centering” the region. In 1996, the RPA completed a third regional plan. Today, the RPA continues to be a think tank that tries to shape the city, which was evident when it helped create a process for the rebuilding of “Ground Zero” after the September 11 attacks.

2.2.6 The rise of the highway and the decline of the railroad

Thanks to the efficiency of the assembly line system, Henry Ford’s Model T soon became affordable to the majority of Americans. The 1908 revolution helped multiply the number of automobiles in America. As one can see in table 3, in 1905 only 8,000 automobiles were registered in the United States. Ten years later, there were 292 times as many, and by 1925, that number had risen by 750 percent. Between 1925 and 1935, the Depression slowed the rise down. The duplication of cars in the decade after the war is partly due to the increase of wages of blue-collar workers.

Providing the steeply rising number of automobiles with adequate roads required a substantial investment. As early as the fin-de-siècle, urban and rural advocates began to campaign for highways. By the 1920s, an alliance of different interest groups began to systematically lobby for new streets and a national highway program.

Table 3: Automobile and truck registration in the United States at five year intervals, 1905-1975

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Automobiles</th>
<th>Trucks</th>
<th>Ratio/Trucks to Cars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1 to 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>2,332,426</td>
<td>158,506</td>
<td>1 to 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>17,481,001</td>
<td>2,569,734</td>
<td>1 to 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>22,567,827</td>
<td>3,919,305</td>
<td>1 to 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>25,793,493</td>
<td>5,079,802</td>
<td>1 to 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>52,135,583</td>
<td>10,302,987</td>
<td>1 to 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>106,713,000</td>
<td>25,755,700</td>
<td>1 to 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jackson (1985), p. 162; section of original image shown.

104 Members of the road coalition and their closely associated members (over time) included the state highway departments, the federal Bureau of Public Roads, the Port of New York Authority and the TBTA, bus companies, tire manufacturers, parts suppliers, oil companies, road builders, and others. This special-interest alliance has been in frequent conflict with the rail coalition, as their interests often clashed. Due to its strong financial standing and autonomy, the road coalition mostly had the upper hand over its adversary. See also Leavitt (1970), pp. 28-30 on the road coalition and its members.
pressure, city planners and officials adapted to this new thinking. The Federal Road Acts of 1916 and 1921 provided financial support for states with highway departments, and allowed for the federal government to carry fifty percent of the cost for 200,000 eligible miles of road, respectively. The second act also set up a “Bureau of Public Roads” to plan a highway network to connect all cities of 50,000 or more inhabitants.” Introducing gasoline taxes enabled the government to devise comprehensive road-building programs. Despite the Great Depression and the Second World War, state and federal funds were allocated for the construction of roads, for workers could remain in employment and planning roads quickly was easy. Soon, private transportation was thriving thanks to generous subsidies. People also gradually developed a positive attitude toward the street, thus contributing to the trend that considered the road a public good.

Before the outbreak of World War I, the automobile was a means for adventure. As reliability and convenience rose, it turned more into an instrument of pleasure. It was not until after the 1930s, however, that a vast number of commuters used the car as means of transport. When traffic congestion slowly began to jam the streets at the beginning of the 20th century, cities presently pressed for “express” streets without crossings or stop lights. Those early highways were named parkways. The expressway, an advanced parkway, was first methodically implemented in the United States. William K. Vanderbilt’s Long Island Motor Parkway (1906-1911) was the first thoroughfare that was not only built exclusively for the automobile, but was also particularly designed for its needs. Like all the new roads, the Bronx River Parkway (1906-1923), the first of its kind, stimulated suburban growth, and the George Washington Bridge (1933), which linked Manhattan to New Jersey, “increased the demand for feeder highways.”

Between 1930 and 1950, the number of people entering New York City by car every year rose from 24 million to 94 million. As more and more highways were built to accommodate mounting automobile, bus, and truck traffic, more traffic was generated, which led to the construction of even more highways, which in turn stimulated still more traffic. As congestions worsened, particularly downtown, city and state funds were no longer sufficient to finance the ever-increasing demand for highways. It was not until 1956, however,

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105 Jackson (1985), p. 167. The role of the Bureau of Public Roads is now performed by the Federal Highway Administration.
106 See ibid. pp. 167-68.
107 Ibid. p. 166.
108 Doig (1966), pp. 17-18. 50 percent of the increase took place in the five years from 1945 to 1950 alone. Between 1944 and 1955, three billion dollars were allocated by state and federal government for highways in urban areas (p. 257).
that the Federal-Aid Highway Act allowed for the allocation of significant sums by the
government. The first steps taken in that direction before the 1956 act, had been, as instanced
above, the Federal Acts of 1916 and 1921, through which money for rural roads was
provided. The New Deal programs and later the national defense efforts provided subsidies
for urban highways. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 represented the next mark, raising
the federal portion of construction costs to up to 50 percent.¹⁰⁹ Two years later, federal funds
started to increase rapidly, culminating in the government carrying 90 percent of the
construction costs thanks to the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956.¹¹⁰ The act, however, also
enforced “strict design standards and a ban on toll roads.”¹¹¹ The key to its scale was the fact
that the revenues from gasoline taxes, which flowed into a separate “Highway Trust Fund”,
could not be diverted. In other words, they had to be spent on highways, making the fund a
potentially inexhaustible source for the construction of roads. Needless to say, the 1956 act
dramatically strengthened the automotive infrastructure while contributing to the further
decline of the railroad. The fact that “75 percent of government expenditures for
transportation in the United States […] went for highways as opposed to 1 percent for urban
mass transit”¹¹² exemplifies the blatantly uneven distribution of federal funds for
transportation.

While the road was prospering, mass transportation declined steadily, beginning with
the streetcars in the 1920s. Rail and bus services were traditionally financed by private
entrepreneurs. Unable to raise the common five-cent fare due to franchise agreements, street
railways found it harder and harder to cope with rising operating and maintenance
expenditures. As ridership plummeted and service was cut down on, more and more
companies declared bankruptcy, and by 1925 streetcars were successively replaced by buses
in suburbs. Measures to alleviate the fiscal problems, namely increasing traffic volume,
attaining public subsidy, and increasing fares, were either unsuccessful or unfeasible. The
demise of the streetcar was hastened by the automobile industry, which, in the shape of
General Motors, bought up nearly bankrupt “streetcar operations” from 1926 to 1956 and
“replaced them with GM-manufactured buses”.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ See Teaford (1990), p. 93. According to Ballon, “urban extensions” were made eligible by the 1944 act,
whereas Jackson states that financial federal support for highways within cities was not forthcoming until the
1930s (p. 356). At this point, it can neither be determined if both statements are referring to the same
circumstance, nor if they are correct.
¹¹¹ Ibid.
¹¹³ Jackson (1985), p. 168-70. In 1919, New York’s five boroughs possessed 1,344 miles of trolley track,
carrying more passengers than the subway and elevated lines. By 1939, however, General Motors, together with
Protests were few and most people opined that the automobile was the future means of travel and transportation, whereas the trolley was regarded as an obsolete relic. With limited transit options, the suburbs grew disproportionately dependent on the automobile. As Jackson notes, in 1940 roughly 13 million people that lived in suburbs were “beyond the reach of public transportation.”\textsuperscript{114} In 1948, about one fourth of the streetcars from 1917 were left; 40 years later only a few lines were remaining.\textsuperscript{115}

The elevated railway lines, the predecessor of the subway, succumbed to much the same fate as their street-level counterparts. After a period of popularity and expansion, opposition grew fiercer at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, as urban dwellers, businessmen, property owners, and public officials believed that the demolition of the shabby and loud structures would spur trade and the economy, raise property values, ease traffic, and beautify the city. Moreover, many people thought that subways were superior to elevated lines. Like the streetcars, the elevated railway was soon considered an old-fashioned obstacle to progress. Starting with the East Forty-second Street elevated line in 1923, New York’s elevated railways were torn down one by one. In Sunset Park, Brooklyn, Robert Moses’ elevated Gowanus Parkway (later Gowanus Expressway) replaced the BMT Third Avenue elevated line. Everywhere in the city, elevated railways with a capacity of 40,000 persons per hour were swapped for elevated highways with a capacity of 6,000 persons per hour.\textsuperscript{116}

Meanwhile, the steam and electric passenger railroad was – for a long time – far better off than the trolleys and elevated lines. The first quarter of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century saw the completion of the main rail facilities of the New York region, and after the 1920s, there were few major additions. Its main flaw, as mentioned before, was the “inconvenience of travel from New Jersey to Manhattan”\textsuperscript{117}. In the next decades, several attempts to improve the region’s rail network and create balanced transportation system widely failed. Doig points out that public authorities like the PNYA and the TBTA were reluctant to take responsibility in spite of available financial resources. Both agencies were urged to meet the rail problems numerous times, and were criticized and pressured for refusing to do so.\textsuperscript{118} While vehicular
traffic was rising, the railroad’s patronage was declining. Various reasons led to the railroad’s eventual downfall in the 1960s and early 1970s, when a “policy that subsidized air and automotive travel and [...] taxed the railroads” resulted in “bankruptcy and deteriorating service.”

Virtually every major rail carrier in the New York region became insolvent during that time. Despite their crucial role, especially during rush hours, a prevailing indifference accompanied their decline. Yet, the area’s railroad commuting system and the city’s subway obviously continued to operate, thanks in large to government aide and public funds. Being absolutely indispensable for the functioning of the New York’s infrastructure, one can see that this effort by the government to rescue the regions’ mass transportation network was a late but in fact crucial measure. Although it ended its decline, New York’s public transportation system was static and stagnant afterwards.

As was the case with the commuter railroads, New York’s subway system saw its last major expansion in the 1920s, when several IRT lines were constructed. Over the years, plans to extend the subway network faced numerous obstacles. In spite of mass rapid transit’s fairly high position on the downtown’s business interests’ agenda in the 1930s and 1940s, prerequisites for new subway lines were unpropitious due to the Depression, the collapsing transit industry, little support and strong opposition, disfavor, the fact that accessibility was no longer synonymous with mass transit, the decline of ridership, and the trend to use the car.

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119 From 1930 to 1952, the automobile registration in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut rose by 104 percent on average, while the railroad commuter traffic dropped by 25 to 60 percent. Danielson et al. (1982), p. 213.

120 Jackson (1985), p. 171.

121 See Doig (1966), pp. 14-20; Danielson et al. (1982), pp. 206-15. Other obstacles to improve the region’s rail system were the interstate character of the region, the fragmentation of government authority in the region, a passive government, no coherent set of constituency demands, lack of a counterpart to the integrating efforts of Robert Moses and the PNYA, the Depression, World War II, the absence of public funds for mass transit, and the combined competition of automobile and bus.

122 According to Danielson, 150,000 daily commuters would have had to rely on the road instead of the region’s rail carriers, with detrimental long-term effects. After World War II, public action focused on slowing down the general decline of existing rail and bus service, stabilizing mass transit during commuting hours, and replacing worn equipment. Other measures included a new transit authority taking over operation of bus and rail services, and the state aiding the Long Island Rail Road. Beginning in the early 1960s, the mass transit problem slowly moved higher on the government agenda. Efforts by mayor Lindsay, transportation adviser William Ronan and governor Nelson Rockefeller culminated in the creation of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in 1968, which was, then, as now, responsible for public transportation in the entire state. Danielson et al. (1982), pp. 205-08, 214, 226-31.

123 In some other areas, such as San Francisco-Oakland, that had not experienced a similar early construction boom, the transit system was enlarged in the decades after World War II. In the late 1920s, New York City had by far the largest commuter transit system (subways and elevated lines) in the country with roughly two-thirds of the nation’s rapid transit lines. Fogelson (2001), pp. 108-09.
Although “rapid transit was by far the most efficient form of transportation in big cities”, it often depended on the municipal treasury to meet its expenses, as was the case in New York City. It soon became apparent that no additional lines could be constructed without support from the state and the federal government. Unfortunately, only a little PWA money benefited New York’s subways in the 1930s, for vigorous resistance and the PWA’s policy to allocate money only to self-supporting facilities severely hampered all projects. In the 1930s and 1940s, engineers and urban planners proposed to incorporate mass rapid transit into the freeway system. After miles and miles of New York roads were built without transit lines, however, this golden opportunity was squandered as well, and after the highway boom, building new mass rapid transit lines was prohibitively expensive. In 1953, the New York City Transit Authority took over New York’s subway system, which had previously been operated by the city.

In the 1970s, the urban crisis brought about a new thinking among city planners that preferred mass transit and existing, lively neighborhoods over highways and urban redevelopment. Opposition and resistance to highways arose everywhere, and often it was successful in bringing down those large-scale enterprises. This trend was reflected in a number of government acts, the first one being the Mass Transportation Act of 1964, which provided grants for the construction of mass transportation projects. The Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act of 1970 was an advancement of its 1964 predecessor as it significantly raised the amount of allocations. The Federal Highway Act of 1973, however, had the greatest impact on transit, because it enabled cities to “trade earmarked interstate highway construction money for an equal amount of mass transit funds”. Basically, it reversed the 1956 Federal-Aid Highway Act, liberating federal money from its confinement to highway projects, thus allowing each city to spend its share according to its needs.

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124. Fogelson (2001), pp. 250-52, 309. As a matter of fact, New York was the only city with rising ridership in the 1920s, when it went up by 15 percent (Fogelson (2001), p. 250). Nonetheless, the number of passengers fell from a high of 2,620 million in 1947 to 1,733 million in 1958. Teaford (1990), p. 105.
125. Ibid. p. 309. It was also much more expensive than other forms of transportation.
126. See ibid. pp. 308-14. Building freeways with rapid transit in the middle had several advantages, including the relatively cheap obtainment of additional right-of-way, and the multiplication of the freeway’s efficiency. Yet, there were also difficulties, for the cities’ outlying districts generally opposed the plans, especially due to fiscal reasons. Indeed, Chicago was the only city in the country that incorporated rapid transit into the freeway system. Fogelson, (2001), 312-14.
127. Walsh, Anmarrie Hauck: Public Authorities and the Shape of Decision Making, in: Bellush et al. (1990), pp. 188-219, here: p. 188. The New York City Transit Authority is now part of the MTA.
128. See chapter 2.2.1, p. 17.
130. Ibid. pp. 135-36. The Transportation Act of 1958 was part of this process, but in a different way. It enabled the railroads to cease their commuter rail service. Constantly threatening to take advantage of the new
York’s public transit system has not only survived but experienced, in the national context, an increase in total ridership since the beginning of the 20th century.\textsuperscript{131}

2.2.7 Suburbanization and decentralization

It is widely accepted that suburbanization began long before the automobile spurred large-scale movement to the periphery. Danielson states that “trolleys and railroads lines fostered […] suburbanization” in a finger-shaped pattern in the 19th century and first 20 years of the 20th century. The fast link to the central city permitted the working classes to look for a dwelling that was farther away from their factory. Urban growth generally concentrated on higher-density areas around rail stations, which were usually within walking distance. As Danielson observes, the transit system had a decentralizing and a centralizing impact, for it promoted “residential locations in the suburbs” and drew “businesses firms to […] downtown areas”, respectively.\textsuperscript{132}

One of the principal aims of the \textit{Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs} had been the decentralization of the industry and the blue-collar classes outward from Manhattan. Indeed, by the late 1930s, many of the island’s factories had made room for office towers and recreational facilities. At the same time, however, decentralization had not brought about higher real estate values, while many ‘desirable’ people had left, and too many ‘wrong’ people had stayed (the middle and upper middle classes and the blue-collar classes, respectively). The CBD was in a sorry state. The materialization of the RPoNYaIE’s highway network produced an enormous amount of new land on New York’s rim which was contending with land in the city’s hub. For the well-to-do white-collar families, it was easy to decide which part of the city was their preference.\textsuperscript{133}

According to Jackson, the new automobile-generated suburbs differed from their mass transit related predecessors in four major respects: the overall pattern of settlement, the length and the direction of the journey-to-work, the deconcentration of employment and new forms of low-density, residential architecture. Car owners no longer depended on a transit line to

\textsuperscript{131} One hundred years ago, “fewer than 20 percent of the nation’s transit riders were in the New York region; in 2006, between 35 and 40 percent of America’s bus, subway, and commuter rail passengers are in the same area.” Jackson, Kenneth T.: Robert Moses and the rise of New York. The Power Broker in perspective, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 67-71, here: p. 69.

\textsuperscript{132} Danielson et al. (1982), pp. 206-07. The quotations are on page 206 and page 207, respectively.

\textsuperscript{133} Fitch (1993), pp. 86-88.
travel downtown, thus being able to move to areas that lay laterally to rail lines and far away from a transit station. At the same time, the automobile permitted wage-earners to seek employment at urban edges, where much of the old center-city industry and businesses had settled down. As more areas were made accessible, the number of suburbs that did not require a mass transit link grew.\textsuperscript{134}

By the middle of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, it was widely believed that two main issues had caused the decay of the urban core: decentralization and blight. As a result, the chief aim was to save and maintain the CBD’s supremacy through recentralization and, where necessary, urban renewal. One of the key measures to achieve that aim was the construction of highways running from the outlying neighborhoods to the CBD, therefore making downtowns more accessible and more attractive, just as the streetcars, elevated lines, and the subway had done in earlier decades.\textsuperscript{135} Apart from that, the downtown business interests believed that “private enterprise […] could not by itself curb decentralization.” And they were correct, for decentralization was mainly the product of “market forces”, which were responsible for the relocation of the industry and businesses to the outlying districts.\textsuperscript{136} Danielson points out that the road coalition was far from being omnipotent. In fact, its influence was only marginal, and certainly not the sole reason for triggering off urban sprawl. He argues that a “growing interest in mobility and suburbanization” already existed.\textsuperscript{137} In the end, one of the measures to curb decentralization, the construction of highways, had unintended consequences: it fostered decentralization, expanded cities, caused metropolitan fragmentation, eroded old distinctions between the city and the country, and sparked an unprecedented wave of suburbanization and urban sprawl by encouraging city residents to move to the urban rim.\textsuperscript{138}

At the close of the 1950s, as Teaford observes,

“… it was becoming clear that the chief beneficiaries of the freeway and airports would be the suburbs rather than the central cities. Outer belts designed to bypass the commercial hub were themselves to become magnets for manufacturers, retailers, and office developers. The freeway system would not dam the flow of capital and jobs from the central city to the

\textsuperscript{135} See Teaford (1990), p. 42.
\textsuperscript{136} The outlying business districts had several advantages over their center-city counterparts. To name a few: businesses and factories had to pay less property taxes, there was much more space available, factories were better connected to their environs, and trucks not only allowed firms to be further away from suppliers and retailers, but the vehicles could also operate more efficiently outside the city than in its congested center.
\textsuperscript{137} Danielson et al. (1982), p. 183. His notion strongly contradicts Caro’s version in \textit{The Power Broker}.
\textsuperscript{138} Fogelson (2001), p. 248. Another influence that encouraged suburbanization was the policies of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), particularly its long-term, low-interest mortgage. See Jackson (1985), p. 229.
suburbs; instead, they would channel the decentralization of population and commerce along outlying corridors.”

Downtown business interests, however, still believed that building more highways would cure all ills. As cores became more and more congested, planners suggested freeways that would go through the CBD instead of ending at its rim. They hoped it would anchor the CBD and foster recentralization. In some cities like Boston and Houston, whose CBD is sliced by freeways, such roads were built, but most cities did not have big enough fiscal means to put them into practice or, in other cases, resistance prevented them from being built. The better accessible downtown became, thanks to more freeways and more parking facilities, the more it was eviscerated. Nevertheless, downtown business interests saw no substitute for highways and parking space to decelerate decentralization. Fogelson argues that even if they had been aware of the true effects, they still would have been in favor of highways.

2.2.8 Urban renewal and housing policies in 20th century New York

Closely connected to the efforts to foster recentralization through highways was the aim to draw the middle and upper middle classes back to the core. The emigration of the well-to-do could only be stopped if the so-called “blighted areas”, or slums, which were the reason that residential dispersal had occurred in the first place, were eradicated, and modern apartments were erected in their place, thus establishing safe, healthy, and attractive quarters. To execute this venture, the downtown business interests bonded with the slum clearance movement. This movement was made up of housing reformers, including Lewis Mumford, city politicians, urban planners, and downtown business interests, and each group had different approaches and divergent aspirations. Yet they all considered tenements in their grid pattern as relics that created unhealthy living conditions and damaged population density. Successively, they agreed that slum clearance was a means to alleviate inner-city problems. Their idea rooted in the Progressive Era, where the need to “physically renew” cities was first endorsed. Besides the promoters of slum clearance and urban redevelopment, there were the

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139 Teaford (1990), p. 105.
141 Ibid. p. 316.
142 Ibid. pp. 318-20. According to Fogelson, the slum clearance program had emerged in the late 1920s and early 1930s as an alternative to tenement house reform.
advocates of modern housing, who had similar ambitions. Influenced by the ideals of CIAM, they sought to bring humanity and nature into balance.\footnote{Zipp (2010), pp. 13-14. See chapters 2.2.2 and 2.2.4 for the goals of Progressivism and CIAM, respectively}

The fusion of slum clearance and modern housing traditions was most notable in New York City by means of the New York City Housing Authority, where modernism “in housing and planning” was combined with the supposed advantages of federal slum clearance. The “superblock” was to guarantee success of urban redevelopment:

“By taking large tracts through eminent domain, closing streets, and putting up modern, tower-block housing on cleared green space, new superblock housing projects would ensure their own economic survival, offer the ideal environment for proper family and community life, disrupt the old speculative street grid, and return light, air, and open space to city-dwellers.”\footnote{Ibid. p. 15.}

The “superblock” concept, which became official doctrine of Title I, had been promoted by Le Corbusier and CIAM since the 1920s. Their ideal of a tower-in-the-park landscape clearly influenced modern housing in New York and elsewhere in North America. In fact, this style had such an impact that it was labeled “Neocorbusianism”.\footnote{See Pries (2008), pp. 48, 139. Stuyvesant Town on Manhattan’s East Side was certainly the most prominent example of “Neocorbusianism”.} Furthermore, Burnham’s \textit{Plan of Chicago} also bears resemblance to the NYCHA’s plans.\footnote{Zipp (2010), pp. 14-15. See chapters 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 on The Plan of Chicago and CIAM, respectively.}

Naturally, urban redevelopment in densely populated urban areas required vast expenditures, which the cities could not carry on their own. It was not until during and after the Depression that, thanks to the New Deal, sufficient funds were available to realize the aforementioned undertaking.\footnote{Pries (2008), pp. 45-47. Le Corbusiers’ ideas became the paradigm of urban redevelopment and modern city planning.} Prior to the 1930s the federal government was absent from the housing theatre with few exceptions,\footnote{Two of the few measures were the creation of two programs for housing war workers: the Emergency Fleet Corporation and the United States Housing Corporation. For more details see Jackson (1985), p. 192.} and the prevailing mind-set was that that was the right thing for it to do.\footnote{Jackson (1985), pp. 191-95.}

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) left a significant imprint on housing policies and the housing market. It came into being in 1934 with the enactment of the National Housing Act and was intended to “stimulate building without government spending” and “rely on private enterprise”.\footnote{Ibid. p. 203.}

\footnote{Ibid. p. 203.}
population. Moreover, the FHA “helped to turn the building industry against the minority and inner-city housing market”\textsuperscript{151}. It was not until 1966 that the FHA changed its guidelines and made more mortgage insurance available for inner-city neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{152} Although it was supposed to espouse the construction of housing, the FHA regularly shied away from financing risky projects. In 1954 the 1949 Housing Act was amended through lobbying by Robert Moses. Not till then were mortgages raised to up to 90 percent of construction costs, and the FHA consented to insure urban redevelopment enterprises.\textsuperscript{153}

The NYCHA was established in the same year as the FHA with the mandate to “build, manage, and own housing for low-income city residents.”\textsuperscript{154} Prior to 1937, the authority was not very active, building ‘only’ 2,330 units in the city. In general, the 1930s were not the most productive decade. The city used some New Deal capital to build some public housing, but private builders were hesitant to invest money without significant government support. The federal Housing Act of 1937\textsuperscript{155} created the United States Housing Authority (USHA), and made slum clearance national policy. One unpleasant effect of the act was the fact that most low-income housing was not built on the inexpensive, vacant land of the suburbs but in the city’s core. Presumably, this meant that less low-income housing could be built, and rents in existing units could only be as low as construction costs permitted.\textsuperscript{156} With the 1937 law, the city of New York was now able to call on three separate programs: the city’s NYCHA, the Housing Act, and the USHA. However, implementing the three-headed support was not easy and entailed tensions among the NYCHA, the mayor and Robert Moses. In New York, unlike other cities, the dispute about implementation did not undercut the common belief that “public

\textsuperscript{151} Jackson (1985), p. 213. FHA insurance was allocated to new suburban developments and neglected the inner city (p. 203).
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid. pp. 203-15.
\textsuperscript{155} The Housing Act of 1937, or Wagner-Steagall Act, introduced a long-term housing program that was intended to alleviate “the acute shortage of decent, safe, and unsanitary dwellings” for low income families. The USHA was authorized to lend up to 90 percent of the costs to local housing authorities and to provide subsidies so that they could clear slums and build low-cost housing. Jackson states that the actual object of the act was to mitigate “present and recurring unemployment”. Fogelson (2001), p. 340; Jackson (1985), pp. 223-24.
\textsuperscript{156} Since federal subsidies required an existing housing agency, and local participation was necessary, it was up to every suburb if it wanted to create a housing agency, and, with it, have low-income housing. In other words, because need and site selection were determined by local housing agencies, public housing was all but erected in ‘blighted areas’. Intended to bring about the opposite, the Housing Acts “further concentrated the poor in the central cities” and strengthened the image of suburbia as a refuge from the inner city. This policy was broadened by the 1949 Housing Act. Jackson (1985), pp. 225, 227. This, admittedly, was not the case with projects that did not need federal subsidies. The NYCHA did construct low-income housing on vacant land on the periphery of New York.
housing was a positive and potentially transformative force." 157 Altogether, the NYCHA constructed 17,048 units during the La Guardia years (1935-1942). 158

In 1940 the City Planning Commission drew up a plan that was inspired by these developments. It designated blighted areas for clearance but did not specify exactly how the individual parcels should be reused. Despite calling for “low rent housing”, the master plan also was to “include housing developments for many different income groups.” 159 Therefore, it equally promoted low-income public housing and redevelopment by private enterprise. Although it was neither formally ratified nor officially adopted, the plan would come to serve as a blueprint for postwar planners like Robert Moses. 160

A series of state laws endorsed construction of moderate- and middle income dwellings in the 1940s and 1950s, most importantly the Redevelopment Companies Act in 1942. It facilitated investments for “banks and life insurance companies” in housing companies and empowered tax exemptions and eminent domain by the government. Furthermore, in 1955, the New York State Limited-Profit Housing Companies Law produced the Mitchell-Lama program, which confined “private and nonprofit developers’ profits and rent levels”. 161

During the war, housing construction plummeted in the city, but the NYCHA, La Guardia and Moses were far from being idle. Together they drew up a plan of immense scope, ensuring that, once the war was over, everything would be in place to obtain as much state and federal grants as possible. State and city-sponsored projects indeed got started after 1945, but federal projects, which made up approximately half of the city’s plan, were not endorsed yet. 162 That changed with the enactment of the Housing Act of 1949, which reinforced the aforementioned elements of the 1937 act. Each of its three main elements, Title I, II, and III, had a different purpose. Regarding implications, Title I 163 was by far the most important one,

158 Schwartz (1993), p. 59. Of the 14 projects, seven were funded by the USHA, two each by the PWA and the Lanham Act, and one each by the WPA, the city and New York State.
159 Commissioners, in their accompanying report, quoted in Zipp (2010), p. 17.
160 Zipp (2010), pp. 16-18. According to Zipp, Moses was the reason the plan was never officially adopted. See maps 10 and 11 in chapter 4.2 for a comparison between the CPC’s sites and where housing was actually built.
162 See Bloom (2008), pp. 111-12.
163 To fully grasp Title I and how it worked, a more detailed explanation is necessary. The following description is taken from Fogelson (2001), pp. 376-77.

“Title I authorized the federal government to help the cities acquire and clear slum and blighted property in designated redevelopments areas and sell or lease it to private developers (or public agencies) at below market value. [...] the Housing and Home Finance Agency [...] was empowered to make $1 billion in long-term loans
for it conceded federal subsidies for slum clearance programs linked to urban renewal\textsuperscript{164} projects. It is important to note that Title I left a wide margin for the proceeding of private enterprises and the local redevelopment agencies. In short, it left “virtually everything in the hands of the redevelopment agencies”, which were receptive to requests from downtown business interests and officials.\textsuperscript{165} It has been suggested that the real rational behind Title I was not to get rid of slums, but to invigorate the CBD and mitigate the city’s financial issues by curtailing decentralization, the same purpose of the construction of highways. In order to achieve their goals, they did whatever was required, even if it meant the eviction of thousands of tenants. Downtown business interests had not only joined the slum clearance movement but transformed it into urban renewal to rescue the city’s core. They no longer needed the reformers, who had also promoted slum clearance.\textsuperscript{166} Title II stepped up authorization for FHA’s mortgage insurance, and Title III permitted subsidies for public housing, which was directly executed by the NYCHA.\textsuperscript{167}

By the late 1960s, urban renewal and public housing in America was widely criticized, most notably by Martin Anderson’s \textit{The Federal Bulldozer} and Oscar Newman’s \textit{Defensible Space}. It caused the “concentration of the poor in the central city and the dispersal of the affluent to the suburbs.”\textsuperscript{168} Ensuing measures to correct the flaws of urban renewal included the amended Highway Act of 1968, which made substantial funds for the relocation of tenants available, while the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was intended to tackle ethnic

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{} The 1949 act refers to urban redevelopment, which is, technically, the correct term to describe Moses’ work, as Ballon points out. The 1954 amendment of the law adopted the term urban renewal “to indicate a broader range of planning options, including rehabilitation as well as clearance.” Ballon, in Ballon (2007), pp. 94-115, here: p. 114. As of now, I will only refer to \textit{urban renewal}.
\bibitem{} Title I did not, for example, require to build low-cost housing. In fact, the construction of parking lots and other non-housing projects were possible. Regarding the relocation of tenants, the specifications were seldom enforced. Finally, Title I did not indicate exactly which quarters were blighted, leaving the decision to the local redevelopment agency. Fogelson (2001), p. 378.
\bibitem{} As I have pointed out, the vague nature of both Title I and the CPC’s master plan left great leeway for city planners and officials. In chapter 2.3.4 I will illustrate how Robert Moses and the NYCHA took advantage of this freedom and implemented projects according to their plans. See also maps 10 and 11 on page 96.
\bibitem{} and $500 million in capital grants to local redevelopment agencies. The agencies would use the money to write down the value of the property to the point where it would attract the interest of developers. The federal grants could cover up to two-thirds of net project cost; the redevelopment agency would have to come up with one-third. [...] Title I limited federal aid to slums and blighted areas that were “predominantly residential” or would be redeveloped for predominantly residential use. [...] the areas would have to be rebuilt in line with the city’s master plan. [...] Title I also stipulated that the families displaced by urban redevelopment would have to be rehoused in “decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings” that were reasonably priced and conveniently located.”
\end{thebibliography}
discrimination, urban poverty and urban development. It was an effort by the government to support deprived social classes and intervene in city politics.\textsuperscript{169} This and other measures against discrimination were part of a national fair housing movement, which was activated by biased housing policy employed at Stuyvesant Town. In 1949, the New York State Committee against Discrimination in Housing came into being and helped create laws prohibiting racial discriminations in Title I projects (1950) and private housing (1963). The movement resulted in the federal Fair Housing Act of 1968.\textsuperscript{170}

2.3 How did Robert Moses transform New York?

In this chapter, I will demonstrate how Robert Moses transformed New York’s cityscape and assess the ramifications. The analysis is confined to city and Long Island projects and makes no claim to be complete. It focuses on a few important projects like Jones Beach and Stuyvesant Town that highlight Moses’ influence and proceeding. For a more detailed list of Moses’ works see the chapter 4.1.

2.3.1 Parks and beaches

The original purpose of Moses’ parkways was to help the city’s middle classes reach his recreational areas.\textsuperscript{171} In 1921, there existed 53,071 acres of park in the New York region. From 1924 to 1928, Moses added to this figure no less than 9,500 additional acres on Long Island, an increase of roughly 18 percent.\textsuperscript{172} Within the city, he created almost 20,000 acres. Although most of the early parks emanated from Moses’ mind, his later ventures, especially his shore and waterside parks, were heavily influenced by the Athens Charter\textsuperscript{173} and based on the RPoNYaIE. All state parks were only accessible by car.

Moses’ conception of a park had little in common with the prevailing park ideal of the time. Parks were usually kept in their natural state and were to serve as so-called breathing spaces for city dwellers. In his State Park Plan for New York Moses demanded a $15,000,000

\textsuperscript{169} Haumann (2011), pp. 84, 132.
\textsuperscript{171} Ballon et al. (2007), p. 158.
\textsuperscript{172} Jackson et al. (2002), p. 557. Overall, he was responsible for 40,000 acres on Long Island.
\textsuperscript{173} According to Pries, Moses implemented articles 61, 64, 80, 81, 83, and 95. Pries (2008), p. 139.
bond issue to create new parks and transform them by combining conservation with recreation. Moses knew that the 15 million dollars were nowhere close to realize his huge Long Island park endeavor. Consequently, Moses spent most of the money to acquire land and at least begin developing some of the parks. He built wooden bathhouses, hiking trails, picnic tables and fireplaces, and floats, diving boards, sliding ponds and rowboats on lakes.¹⁷⁴

Beaches
Moses was in charge of all New York City beaches through his presidency of the Long Island State Parks Commission (LISPC) and later, after the LISPC had been incorporated into the New York City Department of Parks (NYCDP) in 1934, as Commissioner of the NYCDP. He transformed New York’s range of beaches by upgrading existing seashores and creating new ones. He enabled millions of New Yorkers to escape the strains of the city and spend their leisure time on world-class beaches that offered everything they could ask for. Moses’ intentions were in keeping with those of the RPA. The organization stated in 1928:

“If the magnificent beaches on the south shore of Long Island are to be made available for public use, cities, townships, counties, and the State of New York must arrive at some plan of cooperative action for securing and developing these great stretches of them and safeguarding them against pollution.”¹⁷⁵

Of all Moses’ beaches, Jones Beach State Park¹⁷⁶ (see illustration 2) was his central achievement. Built from 1927 to 1929, it became the “model and justification for transforming beaches within the city”¹⁷⁷. Moses managed to acquire a portions of Jones Beach from the townships of Hempstead and Babylon.¹⁷⁸ Since the small but lengthy island on Long Island’s south shore was only two feet above mean sea level, floating dredges pumped tens millions of cubic yards to fix, expand, and raise the beach to a mean height of 14 feet. Innumerable bundles of beach grass were planted by thousands of workers to prevent the new dunes from moving. After the landfill, Jones Beach encompassed more than 2,200 acres of land, which stretched out 5.5 miles along the Atlantic Ocean. In spite of limited financial

¹⁷⁵ Ballon et al. (2007), p. 158.
¹⁷⁶ My sources on Jones Beach are Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 158-60; Burns et al. (2002), pp. 408-13; Caro (1975), pp. 224-25, 231-33, 308-11, 819.
¹⁷⁷ Ballon et al. (2007), p. 158.
¹⁷⁸ The townships of Hempstead and Babylon in Suffolk County, Long Island refused to hand over land Moses needed for a section of Jones Beach. Thanks to the influence of Wilbur G. Doughty and a trick Moses employed, he won referendums at Hempstead and Babylon, and the two townships were forced to cede their portion. See Caro (1975), pp. 147-48, 204-05, 210, 234-36.
resources, Moses refused to utilize cheap materials, insisting on Barbizon brick and Ohio sandstone for his bathhouses. About one mile apart, they blended in nicely with the beach and the water. The prominent, 200 feet tall water tower became the symbol of Moses’ enterprise. It was visible from far away for people heading to the beach on the Meadowbrook State Parkway or the Wantagh State Parkway. Moses not only built swimming pools and wading pools, but a boardwalk, which connected the bathhouses, and restaurants, play areas and music pavilions. Paying great attention to intimate design details, Moses and his men were remarkably creative and imaginative.

As was the case with his swimming pools, Moses intended to provide the city’s people with a looked after, recreative, and noncommercial environment. The “Jones Beach Marine Stadium”, an amphitheater that was added the list of amenities in the early 1950s, posed a rare exception to that rule. Moses was widely praised, even by Lewis Mumford, who attested Jones Beach “rational purpose, intelligible design, and esthetic form”. Despite its huge success (it attracted 1.5 million people in 1929 alone), Jones Beach also received criticism. In

179 It was at Jones Beach that Moses first employed his “stake driving” method. Initially, Moses received only $150,000 for his bathhouses. Knowing that the sum was nowhere near the required amount, he used it to build the foundation for one of the bathhouses. After the taxpayer’s money had been spent, the State Finance Committee was compelled to let governor Smith collect the rest of the money from other state departments.

his *Power Broker*, Caro blames Moses for omitting mass transit access to Jones Beach, thus purposely hindering African Americans to get to his beaches. Furthermore, Moses allegedly discouraged blacks from using the popular beaches by employing almost exclusively white lifeguards. Apart from that people complained about the quarter Moses charged for parking at Jones Beach, as Caro ascertains.\(^\text{181}\)

Creating Orchard Beach\(^\text{182}\) was pioneering work. Before Moses’ alterations, it was a small stretch of sand that was occupied by several hundred privately owned bungalows. One of his first missions as parks commissioners was to reclaim the beach for the public and tear the bungalows down. Despite resolute attempts by the campers to save their summer homes, the bungalows were bulldozed in the summer of 1934. He then set out to expand Orchard Beach (see maps 3 and 4), which was part of Pelham Bay Park, by dumping ashes\(^\text{183}\) on a shallow sound between Rodman’s Neck and Hunter Island. Additional landfill enlarged the

\textbf{Map 3: Orchard Beach before alterations}  \hspace{1cm}  \textbf{Map 4: Orchard Beach after alterations}

Since most African Americans could not afford a car, they had to rely on busses, which needed permits to enter state parks. According to Caro, for them these permits were “very difficult to obtain”. The few black lifeguards were all stationed at “distant beaches”. Caro also alleges that the water in Moses’ Jones Beach pools were “deliberately icy”, because “Negroes did not like cold water”. See Caro (1975), pp. 318-19.

\(^\text{181}\) My information on Orchard Beach is based on Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 161-64; Caro (1975), pp. 365-67.

\(^\text{182}\) This peculiarity was due to insufficient funds. Not being able to afford sand, Moses used this unorthodox material instead, which he received from the sanitation department. Although it delayed the opening of beach by one year, Moses’ pragmatism helped him complete the project without exceeding his budget.

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area and connected Twin Island to the mainland, thus creating a crescent beach.

The beach finally opened to the public in 1936. Two years later, after the finishing touches had been added, the beach measured one mile in length and 200 feet in width. Moses’ alterations accounted for eight million dollars and included, besides the beach, a “monumental bathhouse complex”\textsuperscript{184}, a wide promenade, hundreds of parking spaces, adding 115 acres to Pelham Bay Park through landfill, the restoration of Pelham Golf Course, Split Rock Golf Course, and a clubhouse that served both golf courses. As we have and will see in this thesis, Moses’ ideal was neither an unspoilt landscape nor commercial amusement à la Coney Island, but an environment for “exercise and healthy outdoor recreation”. He lived up to that standard at Orchard Beach, building a multitude of tennis courts, baseball diamonds, playgrounds, and picnic grounds along the beach.

As an excellent recreational public facility, Orchard Beach set a very high standard for similar projects. It is not only a “landmark of generous, well-planned, exquisitely crafted civic design”, but also a “testament to Moses’ ability to carry out marvelously cohesive large-scale projects and his commitment to hiring designers capable of producing exceptional public spaces.”\textsuperscript{185}

\subsection{Parkways, bridges, and expressways}

First and foremost, the purpose of Moses’ early roads was to provide access to his parks, hence their name parkways. Since his presidency of the Long Island State Parks Commission (LISPC) did not allow him to build regular highways, he made sure that his posts permitted him to “build recreational routes and access roads within parks”\textsuperscript{186}. By means of those “recreational routes”, Robert Moses not only linked his growing number of parks, but also connected them with the city, thus permitting thousands of New York car owners to enjoy his leisure time facilities. Construction, expansion, and maintenance, which were funded by the state of New York, continued under Moses’ direction for the entire duration of his career. His bold venture began with the Southern State Parkway in 1925 and did not end until 1959, when

\begin{footnotes}
\item[184] Designed by Aymar Embury II, the bathhouse complex included a 90,000-square-foot pavilion, a central terrace, which was framed by two wings, and large locker rooms.
\item[185] Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 161-64, here: p. 164.
\item[186] Gutfreund, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 86-93, here: p. 86. This feat is another example of Moses’ ability to creatively evade restrictions in order to achieve what he wants.
\end{footnotes}
the Heckscher State Parkway opened. 35 years of parkway construction brought about a dense web of no less than 27 parkways in the New York region\textsuperscript{187}, totaling 416 miles.\textsuperscript{188}

As I have shown in chapter 2.2.6, the first parkway came into existence before Moses started building his. Considered America’s first modern parkway, the Bronx River Parkway (1906-1923) was designed and executed by Gilmore Clark and featured complete elimination of crossing traffic.\textsuperscript{189} From its inception, the parkway was “praised as a glimpse of a future where automobiles would enable the urban masses to drive through the countryside and escape the overcrowded city.”\textsuperscript{190} Moses, displaying pragmatism, opportunism and observing

\textsuperscript{187} This is no official figure but an estimate based on different sources, primarily Ballon et al. (2007) and Caro (1975).

\textsuperscript{188} Burns et al. (2002), p. 407.

\textsuperscript{189} According to Wallock, Moses’ Northern and Southern State Parkways were modeled directly on the Bronx River Parkway. Moses only “major innovation” for which he “deserves credit” is Long Island’s Meadowbrook State Parkway (1934), the “first fully divided, limited access highway in the world.” Wallock, in: Journal or Urban History (1991), pp. 339-362, here: p. 345.

skills, hired Clark as a consultant and adopted the parkway concept as a means to span the region.

At the beginning of his parkway endeavor, which was set in motion by the Southern State Parkway in 1927, followed by the Wantagh State Parkway, Moses encountered friction with the north shore’s wealthy and influential residents, when he attempted to direct the route for his Northern State Parkway through their estates. His first set of Long Island parkways was completed when the Meadowbrook State Parkway opened in 1934. He may not have invented the parkway, but he took the construction of parkway to a whole new level: altogether, Moses built 124 miles of parkways on Long Island, making the network of roads the first highway system in the world.

The reason parkways received their name was because “the land on either side […] was typically part of a park and […] parkways followed the natural topography of the land.” Building standard, attention to detail, and materials of Moses’ parkways were exceptional. To eliminate crossings, Moses built roughly 200 stone bridges that took intersecting roads over the sinuous parkways. These bridges were subject to a controversial debate, which was triggered off by Caro’s *Power Broker*. Similar to the reproaches regarding Jones Beach, Caro argued that Moses premeditatedly built his bridges so low that no bus was able to pass under it, thus intentionally depriving African Americans, who depended on public transportation, of access to his parks.

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191 Among Long Island’s barons, who lived on the north shore, were some of America’s most affluent and powerful citizens, like the Morgans, Vanderbilts and Kahns. According to Caro, they regarded Long Island their own, thus trying everything to prevent the public from intruding into their realm by means of Moses’ parkways. In the “Taylor Estate fight”, however, Moses succeeded in obtaining right-of-way for his Northern State Parkway through eminent domain and turned the estate into Heckscher State Park (1929). See Caro (1975), pp. 148-53, 182-217.

Fitch has a different notion regarding the intention of the land owners. For him, the “struggle was more about who would structure the development of suburban land.” He shows that Robert De Forest, who owned the biggest estate in the area, and other land owners were advocating highways as members of the RPA and wanted to profit from their land. In the end, Moses had to alter the route of his Northern State Parkway to spare the estates of the wealthy barons. See Fitch (1993), pp. 68-69.


194 According to Caro, the buses had to switch to local roads, which made the trip considerably longer. In 1980, Langdon Winner published an influential essay by the name of “Do Artifacts have Politics?”, in which he confirmed Caro’s version. Today, this standpoint is presumed to be rebutted due to lack of evidence. Bernward Joerges argues convincingly that Long Island had had decent infrastructure before Moses built his parkways. In the United States, moreover, commercial traffic is prohibited from all parkways. Therefore, Moses was not permitted to let buses drive on his roads, even if he had wanted to. The only recent book that agrees with Caro and Winner is Gratz’s “The Battle for Gotham”. See Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 70, 91; Caro (1975), pp. 318, 546-7, 951-4; Gratz (2010), p. 123; Joerges, Bernward: Die Brücken des Robert Moses oder: Do Politics Have Artifacts? Zur Konstruktion von Stadtraum und Stadtgesellschaft in technik- und planungssoziologischen
Next, Moses engaged in the realization of the West Side Improvement, which he had been envisioning since the beginning of his career. An integral part of this project was the Henry Hudson Parkway, which ran along Manhattan’s western shore from West 72nd Street all the way up to Spuyten Duyvil Creek, where the Henry Hudson Bridge linked Manhattan to the Bronx. The concept of a shoreline parkway was not new: Daniel Burnham had incorporated a waterfront road in his 1909 Plan of Chicago\textsuperscript{195}, and two decades later, such a parkway was part of the RPoNYaIE (see chapter 2.2.5). Therefore, Moses ‘only’ adopted the idea. Yet he was the one who put the idea of a waterfront parkway into practice. Moreover, Moses did not merely duplicate the concept but left his own mark on the shoreline road by modifying its design and adapting it to modern standards. In this regard, the Henry Hudson Parkway, which opened in 1938, represents many of Moses’ enterprises, as Gutfreund succinctly describes: “He was not the only to imagine such a highway, […] but in the end he was the person who took the idea, shaped it […], and carried it through to completion.”\textsuperscript{196}

The Henry Hudson Parkway was also the first component of the Manhattan Loop\textsuperscript{197}, which would later encircle the entire island. Instead of leaving space between the river and the road, Moses’ parkways ran adjacent to the shoreline, thus isolating the waterside from the city and severely limiting possibilities for active use of it, for instance through boardwalks or parks. Moreover, people had to cross the parkways via bridges to get to the water, and by ‘framing’ parts of Manhattan, Moses’ riverside parkways helped accelerate the decentralization of the island’s industry.\textsuperscript{198}

During the mid-1930s, Moses embarked on the construction of a series of parkways which connected Manhattan with the Bronx and upstate New York. This batch of roads, which included the Saw Mill River Parkway and the Hutchinson River Parkway, were mainly the result of New Deal funds, which Moses combined with his park budget. The money from the federal work-relief programs certainly became available at a convenient time, for Moses’ financial resources, although already considerable, were not nearly big enough for his vast endeavors. During the mid- and late 1930s, Moses expanded his road network on Long Island

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\textsuperscript{195} Burnham had also included a shoreline parkway in his plans for San Francisco, and John Nolen had proposed a harborfront drive for San Diego. Gutfreund, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 86-93, here: p. 87.
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\textsuperscript{196} Gutfreund, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 86-93, here: p. 87.
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\textsuperscript{197} Apart from the Henry Hudson Parkway, Moses contributed the Harlem River Drive and the East River Drive to the Manhattan Loop, which had also been proposed in the RPoNYaIE. Another example is a stretch of the Belt (Shore) Parkway in Brooklyn. Moses’ shoreline parkways were later adopted by other cities. One example is the Shore Drive in Chicago.
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\textsuperscript{198} See Pries (2008), pp. 138-40.
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with the construction of the Interborough Parkway (now Jackie Robinson Parkway), the Grand Central Parkway, the Marine Parkway and Bridge, the Triborough Bridge, the Bronx Whitestone Bridge, the Belt Parkway, and the Cross Island Parkway.\footnote{Gutfreund, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 86-93, here: pp. 87-89. Not only was Moses more insistent than officials in other cities, but New York had, thanks to the RPA, another advantage over its rivals: when the Depression set in, a detailed blueprint was already in hand, namely the RPoNYaIE. Combined with Moses’ aggressive tactics it was a major reason for the above-average sum the New York City received. Apart from that, it diminishes Moses’ role in preparing the plans to some extent. See Netzer, Dick: The Economy and the Governing of the City, in: Bellush et al. (1990), pp. 27-59, here: p. 54.}

The Triborough Bridge, first proposed in the RPoNYaIE, was one of the crucial links in the RPA’s proposed infrastructural network for New York. It consisted of four bridges of 3.5 miles overall length with almost two miles of viaduct on Wards and Randall’s Island, linking Queens to the Bronx and Manhattan. Its 14 miles of approach roads carried the bridge’s traffic straight to the new major arteries in the three boroughs. Situated in the heart of the city, the bridge significantly improved interborough automotive traffic, especially from Long Island to upstate New York and vice versa. The bridge was not initiated by Moses but by the New York City Department of Plant and Structures, which commenced construction as early as 1929. Due to the city’s dire financial situation in the Depression, work on the structure was halted three years later. The newly created TBTA and Moses, in typical opportunistic fashion, came to the project’s rescue when they were authorized to finish the task in 1933. In 1937, its first full year of operation, 11,043,000 vehicles crossed the bridge.\footnote{The expenses, which amounted to $60 million, were born by the city, the TBTA and the PWA. The TBTA was authorized to issue bonds, secured by tolls, to repay the PWA loan. In spite of eliminating a missing link in New York’s highway network, the Triborough Bridge did not alleviate traffic congestion on other bridges. In}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{triborough_bridge_complex.png}
\caption{Map 6: The Triborough Bridge complex}
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\footnotetext{[199]}{Gutfreund, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 86-93, here: pp. 87-89. Not only was Moses more insistent than officials in other cities, but New York had, thanks to the RPA, another advantage over its rivals: when the Depression set in, a detailed blueprint was already in hand, namely the RPoNYaIE. Combined with Moses’ aggressive tactics it was a major reason for the above-average sum the New York City received. Apart from that, it diminishes Moses’ role in preparing the plans to some extent. See Netzer, Dick: The Economy and the Governing of the City, in: Bellush et al. (1990), pp. 27-59, here: p. 54.}

\footnotetext{[200]}{The expenses, which amounted to $60 million, were born by the city, the TBTA and the PWA. The TBTA was authorized to issue bonds, secured by tolls, to repay the PWA loan. In spite of eliminating a missing link in New York’s highway network, the Triborough Bridge did not alleviate traffic congestion on other bridges. In}
opened three years after Triborough, was the second bridge built by the TBTA. It too had been proposed in the RPoNYaIE. Erected in less than two years, it provided a quicker link from the eastern sections of Queens to the Bronx, and vice versa. Its plain and unadorned style was widely praised. As had been the case with Triborough, Moses built a network of approach roads, including the Cross Island Parkway and the Whitestone Expressway in Queens. Furthermore, he established one park at each end of the bridge. The RPA urged Moses to equip the Bronx Whitestone Bridge with provision for railroad tracks in addition to its deck for automotive traffic, but Moses refused to do so.201

Once more, the available funds were insufficient. New Deal money was about to expire, and the state and city budgets were especially tight during the Depression. This time, Moses found a source that would not exhaust until the end of his career. As I have indicated in chapter 2.1, Moses was appointed chairman of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority in 1934. Ideas and concepts of the TBTA did not emanate from Moses’ mind but were based upon a structure innovated by others: the Port of New York Authority202. Like the Port

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201 Throughout his *Power Broker*, Caro makes it sound as though Moses did everything he could to prevent rail transit from being embedded in his bridges and roads. In fact, he conveys the notion that Moses and the road coalition were more or less exclusively responsible for the city’s failure to build mass transit. As I have stated in chapter 2.2.7, however, their influence was rather small. On page 519, Caro states that building the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge without a “rapid transit link” would “condemn Long Island forever to be linked to the north only through roads”. A railroad connection had, however, already been established back in 1917, when the “New York Connecting Railroad” linked Long Island to upstate New York, i.e. the mainland, via the Hell Gate Bridge between Queens and Wards and Randall’s Islands. Apart from that, as I will show later, the urban vision was already inseparably tied to the automobile at that time.

202 The Port Authority’s “design and experience were crucial influences on Robert Moses [...]. Its strategy for financial independence – issuing revenue bonds – was adopted by major public works agencies”. This principle turned “them into independent authorities in fact if not in name.” Doig (2001), p. 2. The Port of New York Authority, which had its roots in the era of railroads and rail freight, came into being in 1921 with Julius Henry Cohen as its first Counsel. The first of its kind and the first governmental agency that was called “authority”, it was established as an interstate agency between the states of New York and New Jersey. After years of struggling to meet the region’s inadequate rail infrastructure, the Port Authority embarked on the construction of bridges and roads under the auspices of governor Al Smith. By 1931, the authority had erected three bridges on Staten Island and the George Washington Bridge. Other projects of the 1930s were the Holland Tunnel and the Lincoln Tunnel, which generated massive revenues, in contrast to the three Staten Island bridges. From 1942 to 1971, Austin Tobin served as Executive Director of the Agency. During his tenure, the authority engaged in a number of projects, including the “Joint Study” with Moses in 1955. See Doig, Jameson
Authority, the TBTA collected revenues from its numerous toll booths\textsuperscript{203}. The public authority\textsuperscript{204}, or public benefit corporation, was capable of conducting projects much quicker and in a less bureaucratic fashion than the city. Pragmatic and flexible, agencies like the PNYA and the TBTA could take on large-scale public works and carry them out with speed. The model was very attractive to mayors and governors like La Guardia and Nelson Rockefeller, who wanted to see major facilities get built and operate without draining taxes. Although city and state officials were concerned about the authorities’ independence, they first and foremost saw the corporations as means to get things done without straining their own budget.\textsuperscript{205}

Robert Moses fused the highly autonomous TBTA and his other authorities\textsuperscript{206} into a “power base, and […] exercised substantial influence on the region’s development.”\textsuperscript{207}

Throughout his career, Moses was able to produce results despite obstacles that limited his options and made proceeding difficult. He always seemed to come up with a solution, even if it meant that he had to compromise. In Doig’s words, he “demonstrated a unique capacity to

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Starting with the Triborough Bridge in 1936, the number of the TBTA’s toll-producing structures grew gradually larger. Over the years, the following bridges and tunnels were successively added to the authority’s inventory (in chronological order): the Henry Hudson Bridge, the Marine Parkway Bridge, the Cross Bay Bridge, the Queens-Midtown Tunnel, the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, the Throgs-Neck Bridge, and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge (1964). Seven years after its inception, according to Caro, the authority collected $8,000,000 in annual toll revenues. By 1951, that number had risen to $26 million. Eleven years later, the turnover added up to $43 million, and in 1967, Moses had $75 million at his disposal. Caro (1975), p. 715.
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At that time the public authority was a relatively new concept in the United States. There were a range of different types of those functional organizations, with the PNYA and the TBTBA being highly autonomous kinds. It was empowered to issue revenue bonds at a fixed interest rate to finance a given project. Once the project was finished, the revenue from the tolls was pooled with the revenues from all other facilities to pay off the debt including the interest and support each facility. The turnover was also used to help fund other projects. The public authority had a relatively high degree of independence in formal structure and in the allocation of financial resources, which allowed for a comprehensive construction program. According to Doig, a public authority “would succeed, and be accountable, primarily through the speed with which it could develop far-seeing plans […], the quality of those plans […], and its ability […] to carry out agreed-upon plans efficiently; and by the quality of its results” (Doig (2001), p. 22). Appointment of top-level administrators by elected executives and the review and approval of annual budgets by governors were excluded. The public authority is scrutinized most by the state: the state comptroller controls the authority’s budget, audits its finances and performance, reviews the borrowing proposals, and examines the program-related approvals. Although not identical, the TBTA had a very similar structure to the PNYA. See Walsh, in: Bellush et al. (1990), pp. 188-219, here: pp. 201, 218; Danielson et al. (1982), pp. 178, 190-191; Doig (1966), pp. 38-40, 187, 265; Doig (2001), p. 22.
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His other authorities were the Jones Beach State Park Authority, the Bethpage State Park Authority, the Henry Hudson Parkway Authority, the Marine Parkway Authority, the Nassau County Bridge Authority, the New York State Power Authority, and the Niagara Frontier Bridge Authority.
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Danielson et al. (1982), p. 159.
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overcome bureaucratic complexity and inertia and to produce major achievements.”  

The independence of the TBTA and the abundance of the generated revenues not only expanded Moses’ power base significantly, but also enabled him to avoid cumbersome processes and limitations. Furthermore, he no longer depended on federal funds and did not have to oblige to the constraints they enforced any more.

In contrast to the PNYA, the TBTA did not run the risk of being forced to help the ailing railroad. As I have pointed out in chapter 2.2.6, the TBTA and the PNYA were pressed to chip in with their copious financial resources. Not only was Triborough’s sphere of influence restricted to New York City, but their “contracts with current bondholders appear to prohibit it from using its borrowing authority to undertake rail transit responsibilities.” Besides, the TBTA did not have to fear the governor’s veto power that could force the Port Authority to allot assets to alleviate the rail crisis.

On pages 30 and 47 I have cited Robert Moses’ refusal to build and integrate mass transit into his highway network, a strategy for which he was strongly condemned. In hindsight it is obvious that building more highways while simultaneously neglecting mass transit was not an adequate solution, for it caused more traffic and contributed to the decline of the railroad. Yet, every critic of those policies must remember that the prevailing view of that time was that the automobile was regarded as the conveyance of the future, whereas rail transit was generally considered a remnant of a bygone era. Federal policies not only promoted this view, but also contributed significantly to the dominant status of the automobile, especially through the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (see chapter 2.2.6). The public widely shared this notion. Apart from that, Gutfreund argues that there is “little evidence […] that anyone at the time was effectively advocating a transit-based alternative.”

Admittedly, there was no comparable push by people and organizations for an alternative to Moses’ transport plans. However, voices that called for more mass transit and

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209 Ibid. p. 40. According to Doig, the “bond resolutions under which TBTA bonds were sold authorized it to pledge its revenues only for vehicular projects [...]. Therefore, any attempt to issue bonds for rapid transit projects would appear to subject existing bondholders to risks they could not have foreseen and thus would violate state and federal constitutional provisions against impairing the obligation of contracts. Complete refinancing [...] would probably be required before tolls from TBTA projects could be allocated to rail transit.” Doig (1966), p. 265. This shows that even if Moses had wanted to support the railroad, he presumably would have not been able to do so, proving once more, as I have stated in chapters 2.2.6 and 2.2.7 and on 47 page of this chapter, that Moses was not the reason for the decline of the railroad. The governor’s formal powers with the TBTA were more indirect than with PNYA, partly because Moses was a formidable battler for TBTA autonomy. See Doig (2001), p. 381.
fewer highways existed nonetheless. Given the prerequisites, however, there was little chance of success. As I have pointed out in chapter 2.2.6, Chicago was the only city in the country that incorporated mass transit into its highway network. The development pattern in New York and other metropolitan regions were akin. Therefore, Moses’ lopsided approach was not a unique exception but by and large a reflection of the established norm. Gutfreund legitimately characterizes Moses as “the most visibly effective instrument of these government policies and the related cultural preferences.”

With traffic volume rising, Moses’ parkways slowly evolved from roads designed for ‘pleasure driving’ to mere means of handling as much automotive traffic as possible. This development was the result of several factors. First of all, since Moses did not depend on park money any more, his roads no longer needed to be parkways. Second of all, the growing number of trucks could not use parkways since commercial traffic was prohibited on them. Finally, as vehicular traffic enlarged (see table 3 on page 25), an increasing number of people used their cars for regular activities like the journey to work. The Meadowbrook Parkway (1934) was the first to “divide traffic in opposite directions along the entire route, either by a center barrier or by splitting the parkway into two separate roadways”. More and wider lanes and the construction of shoulders permitted higher velocity and larger traffic volume, resulting in the loss of the “parkway aesthetic” by the 1950s. Although he was building parkways until the end of his career, Moses’ focus fell on the construction of highways by the time World War II was over, which not only entailed a shift in his staff from landscape architects to engineers, but also led to the discard of the remaining parkway features in favor of a functional and plain highway design.

In chapter 2.2.6 I have illustrated how the highway acts, predominantly the Federal-Aid Highway Act, spurred highway construction in New York City. Moses made sure that his projects were eligible and lost no time moving ahead. One of the first expressways that benefited from the new funds was the Van Wyck Expressway, which ran northbound from Idlewild airport through Brooklyn and Queens, and others soon followed. The Joint Study of Arterial Facilities of 1955 with the PNYA enabled Moses to materialize his last set of plans.

211 Apart from the rail coalition, the most prominent champion of a balanced transportation system was certainly the RPA. For more examples of the promotion of mass transit see Caro (1975), pp. 519, 903-08, 918-19, 944-49; Danielson et al. (1982), pp. 215, 221; Doig (1966), pp. 110-14; Gratz (2010), p. 136.
214 The joint study anticipated the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, which required interstate coordination. The Throgs Neck Bridge and the Verrazano Narrows Bridge opened in 1961 and 1964, respectively. The Joint Army-Navy-Air Force Board decided that the Narrows Bridge could be erected despite its position seaward of the
for an arterial expansion (see map 7). It led to the construction of the Throgs Neck Bridge and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, and also initiated scores of expressway projects throughout the city.

While his early projects lay primarily at the city’s rim, Moses’ expressways gradually moved toward the center, where the population density was much higher. Consequently, Moses uprooted more people and disturbed lively neighborhoods. Altogether, 250,000 persons were relocated for Moses’ highways.\textsuperscript{215} He was unwilling to listen to criticism of his expressways and “displayed little sympathy for those who were displaced.”

Brooklyn Navy Yard, reversing the War Department’s ruling of 1939 that had prevented the Brooklyn-Battery Bridge from being built. Constructed by the PNYA but operated by the TBTA, the bridge cost $320,126,000 and is slightly longer than the Golden Gate Bridge. As the first and only direct vehicular access to Staten Island from the other four New York boroughs, it stimulated enormous growth in population on the island. Among the expressways were portions of the Bruckner Expressway, the Sheridan Expressway, and the Cross-Bronx-Expressway. For construction of the latter, which was driven through a densely populated area, close to 4,000 households were displaced. In addition, a lower deck on the George-Washington Bridge was built. Caro states that Moses had the vision and all he needed Tobin and the PNYA for was to fund his projects. Doig, on the other hand, argues that most of the program was brought forward by the Port Authority. It is true that the TBTA did not have enough spending power to realize the projects on its own. In the end, the PNYA would finance and construct the projects, and the TBTA would operate and maintain, and later buy them (except the second deck).


\textsuperscript{215} Caro (1975), pp. 19-20.
Moreover, the utilitarian style of his expressways had an appalling effect on most people. As I have shown in chapter 2.2.1, resistance rose and contributed to his eventual downfall.216

In 1930 Moses had announced his vast plans for parks and parkways at the annual dinner of the Park Association, just one year after the RPA had published its RPoNYaIE. The Regional Plan was the conceptual blueprint for many of the routes that Moses would eventually build. The proposed network strongly resembles the road system as it was actually carried out.217 Moses implemented many of the arteries proposed by the RPA. In other words, just about every highway and bridge built by Moses was conceived and put forward by the RPA. As early as 1933, four years after the RPoNYaIE had been announced, 555 miles of arteries – one fifth of its proposals – were either finished or under way.218 Executing substantial portions of the Regional Plan between the 1930s and the 1960s, Moses was the main force in applying the RPA’s vision on New York’s cityscape. This shows that Moses was first and foremost responsible for implementation and not design, which is especially true concerning his highways. Besides this, although he did leave his own imprint on his roads, he neither originated the concept of the parkway nor the highway network. Altogether, Moses had 15 expressways built which totaled 130 miles. The overall cost of the roads he built within the city after the Second World War was more than two billion dollars.219

2.3.3 Swimming pools and playgrounds

Robert Moses led the nations’ largest urban park and playground construction program in the United States during the New Deal. He was responsible for the construction of hundreds of play spaces, provided the city with eleven giant pools and added four beaches to New York’s then short list of recreational venues.

Swimming pools

After a decade of engaging in parks and parkways, Moses was appointed Park Commissioner by La Guardia in January of 1934. In the ensuing months, thousands of CWA workers executed 1,700 renovation projects across the city.220 In the 1930s, Moses utilized “planning

217 See maps 2 and 7 in chapter 4.2.
218 Burns et al. (2002), p. 442.
220 According to Caro, they, among other things, repaved thirty-eight miles of walks, refurbished 284 statues and repaired 687 drinking fountains. For details see Caro (1975), p. 372.
strategies rooted in the reform urbanism of the Progressive Era\textsuperscript{221} to add playgrounds, pools, and beaches to an already existing network of parks, schools and playgrounds. Thanks to Moses and La Guardia, New York received one-seventh of all disbursements made by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935 and 1936, by far the largest amount of all cities. Moses funneled the lion’s share to his Department of Parks, expending roughly $113 million on parks and recreation.\textsuperscript{222} Moses’ intentions were also rooted in the Progressive Era, on the ideal of “paternalist reform” to be exact. Moses maintained that “recreation ought to be organized for the public good, especially for children”. At the same time, he adamantly opposed the “commercialization of recreation and entertainment”. Apart from that, Moses was eager to provide recreational facilities for people of all ages.\textsuperscript{223} Although Moses was obviously not the first person that recognized the need for recreation and leisure activities of the city’s masses,\textsuperscript{224} he certainly was a forerunner in this field.

In 1934, Moses announced the construction of eleven giant swimming pools. They were badly needed: the city’s recreational facilities – parks, pools, and beaches – were in “deplorable condition”. Moses set out to modernize New York’s aquatic landscape by cleansing its polluted waters and equipping the city with world-class pools and beaches. He coordinated it with beach improvements and the construction of modern sewage treatment plans. Implementing the NRA’s model, he insisted that the pools had to be “self-sustaining” and charged admission fees.\textsuperscript{225} In the summer of 1936, he opened eleven swimming pools, ten new ones and one existing one that was fully renovated.\textsuperscript{226} He erected four outdoor pools in Manhattan, one in the Bronx, two in Queens, another four in Brooklyn and one on Staten Island. Moses, his architects, and his planners set a “new standard for swimming pool construction”\textsuperscript{227}. Pragmatically, he chose existing facilities – nine of the ten new pools were

\begin{itemize}
  \item Ibid. p. 73. With this money, Moses brought into being 11 swimming pools, eleven bathhouses, 73 wading pools, 255 new playgrounds, two zoos and three beaches. See chapter 4.1 for details.
  \item Ibid. p. 72.
  \item In the 1920s, the sports boom gained momentum and people began raising the awareness of public health and cleanliness. At the same time, the National Recreation Association (NRA) promoted facilities for “adult recreation as well as for children’s active play”. Gutman, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 72-85, here: p. 73.
  \item The fees were 20 cents for adults and ten cents for children after 1.00 p.m. Gutman, in: Ballon (200), pp. 72-85, here: p. 76.
  \item According to Caro, Moses obtained a special WPA grant of $10,000,000 for his pools. Caro (1975), p. 513. From 1938 to 1943, he initiated a second phase of pool-building which resulted in municipal bathhouses pools in Manhattan and the Flushing Meadow Pool in Queens. See chapter 4.1 for details.
  \item Caro (1975), pp. 456, 513. Their innovations included underwater lighting, which enabled working people to swim at night, improved pool bottoms, an enhanced type of scum gutter, and small basins leading to the pool in which swimmers could cleanse their feet. The latter was one reason that the hygiene in public swimming pools saw significant improvements.
\end{itemize}
built in parks – over slum clearance, and selected sites in “working-class neighborhoods and close to playgrounds and other existing recreational and civic facilities”. Gutman points out that many of Moses’ site decisions were based on suggestions made by the RPoNYaIE, which had identified spots that ought to be upgraded. Moses’ nexus of “new recreational facilities to existing infrastructure” again derives from the Progressive Era.²²⁸

Moses drove his men to work as fast as possible, because he was afraid that the New Deal well might run dry any day. Among his talented staff were the architect Aymar Embury II, the landscape architect Gilmore Clark and the engineer W. Earle Andrews. In order to get results quickly, they had to perform a balancing act: use a limited array of materials, used by many inexperienced, previously unemployed workers, and still come up with world-class pools. The product was widely acclaimed, even by Lewis Mumford, one of Moses’ biggest critics. Not only could the pools be used year-round, they were also equipped with state-of-the-art filtration and aeration systems. Map 8 shows a typical Moses pool. It was symmetrical, had two big bathhouses, and three pools: one large pool for “informal swimming and

²²⁸ Gutman, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 72-85, here: pp. 77-78. Reformers prompted the concept that small parks, playgrounds, public schools and settlement houses should be located near each other. Moses promoted this “school-park plan” and pursued it in his site selection. According to Gutman six of his pools were erected “close to public schools and near playgrounds opened during the Progressive Era.”
organized races”, a smaller pond for diving, and a wading pool. Moreover, there were fountains, bleachers, and terraces. Many times, baseball diamonds, handball courts, playgrounds, and other recreational opportunities lay adjacent to pool compounds.\textsuperscript{229}

In spite of the widespread praise for Moses’ pools, the reception was not exclusively positive. Protesters doubted the benefits of pools, tried to halt construction, and disapproved of admission fees. In addition to this, the site selection was subject to charges of race prejudice. It is true that, for example, at Betsy Head Pool, it was an “unwritten rule” that African Americans were only allowed to swim in the late afternoon. By and large, white and black people did not use the same pool. Occasionally, however, New Yorkers did bathe in the same public pools. Given the prevailing social norms of the 1930s and 1940s, this was by no means extraordinary.\textsuperscript{230}

In \textit{The Power Broker}, Robert Caro, not taking the established prejudices into account, accuses Moses of purposely depriving non-white communities of recreational facilities, hiring white lifeguards to deter African Americans and Puerto Ricans from swimming in Jefferson Pool in East Harlem, and filling the pools with cold water, because African Americans allegedly dislike it.\textsuperscript{231} Gutman persuasively invalidates Caro’s arguments. As to his first reproach, she counters that Moses did use public money to provide recreational facilities for black quarters. In fact, the number of recreational facilities in Harlem and other African-American communities was augmented during the New Deal era. As Davidson and other historians have stated, it is likely that black neighborhoods would not have been provided with those amenities without Moses. Furthermore, the Department of Parks employed black people as park workers. Concerning Caro’s second and third reproach, it is all but impossible to determine whether those ‘measures’ were tacitly acquiesced or even authorized by Moses. Although it is true that de facto racial segregation existed at Jefferson Pool, it is also true that all of Moses’ swimming pools were constructed in such a way that heating was very much possible.\textsuperscript{232}

Keeping in mind that racial bias was common during that time, it is not hard to see the “considerable achievements of the New Deal pool-building project”, which includes “occasional tolerance of racial integration.” Altogether, Moses certainly deserves credit for multiplying the number of swimming pools in a city that possessed few recreational

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid. pp. 81-82.
\textsuperscript{231} Caro also brings up charges regarding playgrounds, beaches, parks, parkways, and the West Side Improvement. For Caro’s criticism of Moses see Caro (1975), pp. 491-93, 509-12, 513-14, 558-60. See Gutman, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 72-85, here: pp. 81-83.
\textsuperscript{232} Gutman, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 72-85, here: pp. 82-83.
opportunities and needed them badly. At this early stage of his career, it seemed that Moses was eager to provide the urban masses with places that made their spare time worthwhile. He greatly enhanced New York’s aquatic landscape regarding both quality and quantity and made people feel comfortable in his aquatic amenities through “remarkable, technically sophisticated architecture”. Finally, Moses made recreation accessible to the ordinary people.\textsuperscript{233}

\textit{Playgrounds}

Both the extremely small number of preexisting playgrounds and the amount Robert Moses built were astonishing. At the beginning of his career as Parks Commissioner in 1934, New York City possessed 119 of those play spaces. By the end of his tenure in 1960, that number had risen to 779, meaning that Moses was responsible for the construction of astounding 660 playgrounds in 26 years.\textsuperscript{234}

Moses did not conceive neighborhood playgrounds but adopted a concept that was established in the Progressive Era by “social reformers and playground advocates”. Implementing traits of Seward Park\textsuperscript{235}, Moses’ playground consisted of

“separate spaces for small children, adolescent girls, adolescent boys, and adults; simple iron or steel tubular jungle gyms; restrooms with showers; a stage and space for indoor activities; running track; and courts for handball and basketball that could also be used for roller-skating.”\textsuperscript{236}

In contrast to his pools, which were carefully designed by Moses and his staff, playgrounds in New York and America do not owe Moses such design standards. Concerning playgrounds, Moses’ merit was doubtlessly their number and linking them with “schools, housing projects, and highways.”\textsuperscript{237} During the six years from 1934 to 1939, the heyday of playground

\textsuperscript{233} Moses even used New Deal funds to organize “play schools and day camps and to offer swimming lessons at the pool complexes.” Gutman, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 72-85, here: pp. 81, 83.

\textsuperscript{234} These are not official numbers, but come from Moses himself. It is virtually impossible to determine the exact number of playgrounds he built in New York for the following reasons: firstly, press releases, one of the few sources, were written by Moses and did not always distinguish refurbished playgrounds from new ones. Besides this, they often omitted name and location. Secondly, defining a playground is all but impossible, for they not only differed in size, but also in use. Moreover, counting is problematic where there are multiple playgrounds within a single park. For the same reasons, it cannot be verified exactly where Moses built his playgrounds. See Ballon et al. (2007), p. 183.

\textsuperscript{235} Seward Park, opened in 1903, was not only the nation’s first municipally financed public playground, but also the city’s earliest endeavor to make active recreation available to the public.

\textsuperscript{236} Ballon et al. (2007), p. 174.

\textsuperscript{237} Ibid.
construction in New York, 255 units or 39 percent of Moses’ playgrounds were built.\textsuperscript{238} He used the same WPA fund that enabled him to build his eleven pools. Workers and material were provided by the CWA. As a result, playgrounds cost the New York City Department of Parks almost nothing.

No matter what Moses did in his career, laud never came without criticism (excluding his parks maybe). Playgrounds were no exception. In this case, the critics were urban planners, academics, and social commentators, including Jane Jacobs. The “banal repetitive design” and the fact that playgrounds drew “drug dealers, gang members and the homeless” were due to Moses’ disinclination to diversify the Progressive Era notion of playground design. In spite of these drawbacks, his playgrounds gave children an alternative to playing on the street, which was certainly more dangerous. In \textit{The Power Broker} Caro blamed Moses for unequally distributing his playgrounds, claiming that he deliberately neglected neighborhoods like Harlem, where he built only one of his play spaces.\textsuperscript{239} Rachel Iannacone, however, not only disputes Caro’s view, but also widely confutes his arguments by stating that Moses’ site selections and land acquisitions were largely opportunistic and “based on the availability of property already owned by the city.”\textsuperscript{240} Moses excelled in acquiring playground sites, using his boundless creativity, as Caro vividly describes.\textsuperscript{241} Iannacone admits that obtaining sites in a tightly populated city posed a “challenge” and attests to him “ingenuity in meeting this challenge”. According to her, Moses made use of different techniques: “reassignment, rehabilitation, landfill, condemnation, and gifts.”\textsuperscript{242}

Notwithstanding that we cannot tell exactly how many playgrounds Robert Moses brought into being, he unquestionably multiplied their number, providing the city with much needed recreational facilities for young and old. Thanks to his restless ambition, he was remarkably good at obtaining funds, persuading philanthropists to donate money, and at detecting possible sites. Besides, he deserves recognition for pairing up his playgrounds with projects of the NYCHA and the Board of Education, adjacent to public housing and schools, respectively.

\textsuperscript{238} Caro (1975), p. 509.
\textsuperscript{239} See ibid. pp. 509-12. These reproaches can be countered with arguments that are similar to the ones in the chapter about pools.
\textsuperscript{240} Ballon et al. (2007), p. 175.
\textsuperscript{241} See Caro (1975), pp. 377-78.
\textsuperscript{242} Ballon et al. (2007), p. 175.
2.3.4 Public housing and urban renewal

Robert Moses was able to shape New York’s urban renewal program through his influence on public housing and Title I. From 1942 until his removal from all housing-related posts in 1959, he used the NYCHA along with city, state, and federal funds to apply his agenda to the metropolis. This chapter not only examines how Moses gained control and exerted it, but also assesses the impact of his actions. It is divided into two parts that reflect the course of Moses’ career in housing. The first section takes a look at the years 1942 to 1949, Moses’ beginnings with public housing, while the second part deals with the inception of Title I in 1949 to his departure from housing in 1959. Projects like Stuyvesant Town and Lincoln Square exemplify his proceeding and the implications.

Moses’ first attempt to seize control of New York housing policy was his public housing program for the city. In 1938, after a state amendment had granted $3 million to local municipal authorities in the context of the 1937 Housing Act, Moses delivered a speech at the Museum of Natural History in front of civic leaders and businessmen. In this speech, he presented a $245 million housing program that included ten slum-clearance and rehousing projects. Moreover, he put forward a new board with him as a member that would gain control over the NYCHA. Moses’ endeavor failed as La Guardia saw to it that Moses’ plan did not draw too much attention and effectively cut him out of the housing picture. By the end of 1941, thirteen public housing projects had been erected without Moses’ involvement.243

Not too long after this setback though, Moses was taken onboard by La Guardia in 1942, when he was appointed to the City Planning Commission. From there, Moses completed his takeover of municipal housing. Urged by the RPA, La Guardia established a committee with Moses as its head which was to conceive a massive reconstruction agenda for the “Post War Works Program”. Moses immediately went to work. He managed to get the public housing law revised so that he could build on sites even if they did not follow the master plan, and thought about ways to reduce slum clearance costs.244

In his effort to involve private capital in slum clearance, Moses participated in the enactment of the Redevelopment Companies Act (RCA) by the New York State Legislature in 1942 (see chapters 2.1 and 2.2.8). Moses was responsible for the private enterprises’

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244 See Schwartz (1993), pp. 84-89. He and La Guardia had the idea to collect “slum rents”, i.e. rents collected from site tenants while demolition was already on the way.
obligation to build “interior streets and parks”. After he found that most companies were still reluctant to engage in slum clearance projects, he turned to Frederick Ecker of the New York Life Insurance Company (Met Life), who had similar dispositions toward housing. Moses assisted Ecker and Met Life in assembling the sites for slum clearance-redevelopment projects. As Ecker was still cautious, Moses set out to amend the RCA which loosened the requirements for the company. The amendment to the RCA was a crucial moment for urban renewal, for as of now, private companies were permitted to “clear land and redevelop it on their own terms”. Even from the viewpoint of this early stage, it is obvious that Moses was primarily interested in slum clearance, i.e. city rebuilding. Of the three projects undertaken by Met Life under the Redevelopment Companies Act, the first one was Stuyvesant Town.

Stuyvesant Town

Stuyvesant Town (ST) was a large-scale middle-income housing project in Manhattan’s Lower East Side that comprised 8,775 apartments in 35 buildings with a total population of 24,000. Not only did it replace 18 blocks of 19th century cityscape, but it also provided an economical, social and cultural blueprint for many similar interventions in the Manhattan grid to come in the age of urban renewal.

Naturally, Stuyvesant Town would not be built on vacant land, but in a densely populated quarter, the so-called “gas house district”. Its 24 blocks contained tenements with some 11,000 people, stores, warehouses, small manufactories and gas works. Like the slaughterhouse district that would be replaced by the United Nations, the residents were the

245 He hoped that the enhanced conditions would encourage private enterprises to engage in the housing market, for only “great reservoirs of private capital”, supported by federal subsidies, could carry out large clearance and building projects and stop the diffusion of blighted areas. Moses thought that private enterprises like Met Life could clear slums “in the most economically efficient manner.” According to Zipp, their arrangement changed the ethics of city rebuilding by providing “mass housing for the middle class rather than the so-called worthy poor served by public housing”; it would, however, still look like “benevolent intervention”. Zipp (2010), pp. 79-80.

246 According to Zipp, this “set the stage for the rise of private-led rebuilding efforts that would eventually eclipse public housing authorities as primary coordinators of replanning efforts and rewrite city-rebuilding ethic as the policy of urban redevelopment.” Zipp (2010), p. 82.

247 Met Life received tax waivers for 25-year.

only people who thought highly of it. Met Life mandated that James Felt\textsuperscript{249} assemble the land and run the relocation program, although the RCA did not require the company to do so. It turned out that of the district’s 3,000 families, only three percent could afford Stuyvesant Town’s rents, and roughly 22 percent were eligible for public housing. Consequentially, about 2,250 families had an income that was not only too low for Stuyvesant Town, but also too high for public housing. Regarding relocation, ST was by no means an ordinary case. When the removals had ended in late 1945, Felt’s expenditures added up to a mere $172,000, partly because he had only relocated 33 tenants. More importantly, most of the tenants had moved themselves. This seemingly easy process reinforced the belief of the involved that quick and orderly removals were possible. For instance, Moses denied predictions that there would be a shortage of relocation housing. The extremely low success rate was a harbinger of future relocation issues. At the same time though, specialty firms were willing to take care of relocations and newly built public housing by the NYCHA would shelter some of the uprooted residents.\textsuperscript{250}

ST was designed by a group of architects under the direction of Gilmore Clark, Moses’ man responsible for large-scale landscape design for the Department of Parks. Moses insisted

\textsuperscript{249} In contrast to Moses, Felt pursued a more gradated view toward slums and relocation.

on height variations: the buildings were taller in the middle and became gradually lower toward the rim. ST’s dimensions were staggering: 18 blocks, which comprised 60 acres, were turned into one giant superblock with 35 thirteen-story buildings that covered 25 percent of the land (compared to 69.3 percent in the gas house district), and left the rest for lawns, pathways, and playgrounds. As one can see in map 9, the buildings around the oval and on the edges were arranged radially and in rectangular units, respectively. Designed for maximum security, pedestrian and vehicular traffic could enter the site through eight entry points that were inserted in the brick walls. ST was America’s first unambiguous version of CIAM’s and Le Corbusier’s tower-in-the-park concept. According to Pries, ST implemented numerous articles of CIAM’s Athens Charter. Due to its sheer size, construction work had begun with some tenants still living on the site. The first families moved in August 1947, and roughly two years later, ST was finished and fully occupied.

Met Life and Robert Moses were criticized by Lewis Mumford, Charles Abrams, and other adversaries for ST’s extent and monotony, its impact on the urban fabric and its isolated location in the cityscape. They also disapproved of the high rents: tenants were charged $14 per room per month. According to Plunz, public housing projects, such as the East River Houses, boasted a much better floor plan and cost only half as much per month.

One of the many controversies around ST was the conflict about the discrimination of African Americans. Criticism mounted rapidly when Frederick Ecker announced a ‘whites only’ policy for his project. What most people did not know was the fact that it was Moses who had made this position legal by initiating the amendment to the RCA back in 1943. His removal of public oversight of tenant selection made it perfectly lawful for Met Life to bar blacks from ST. Moses argued:

“If control of selection of tenants” is “to be supervised by public officials,” he claimed, “it will be impossible to get insurance companies and banks to help us clear sub-standard, rundown, and cancerous areas in the heart of the city.”

251 Pries lists articles 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 36, 60, 62, 63, and 70. Pries (2008), p. 139.
252 See Plunz (1990), p. 255. See illustration 3 in chapter 4.2 for a photograph of ST.
253 See ibid., pp. 257-58; Zipp (2010), pp. 111-13. Mumford warned that one “must not be deceived by the fact that new developments like Stuyvesant Town […] have more open space than the old slums. What matters […] is not merely the percentage of the land covered by the buildings, but the number of people crowded together in a given area. Like Le Corbusier, Moses confused visual open space with functional (habitable) open space.” Plunz (1990), p. 257.
254 In the previous chapters, I have demonstrated that Moses was reproached with being a racist by scholars and other critics. At ST, this was once again the case.
255 In addition to that, Moses had curbed the antidiscrimination amendment to the 1938 state constitution.
The ensuing attempts to desegregate ST through a number of different measures failed, when a lawsuit by the NAACP, the American Jewish Congress and other well-known organizations was rejected by the city council and, finally, the Supreme Court.257 Biondi states that the court’s decision was profoundly influenced by Moses’ aforementioned actions. As I have shown in chapter 2.1, Moses used his bill-drafting talent and behind-the-scenes-special-deal-engineering to achieve his goals and, with them, reshape New York. Biondi rightly characterizes Moses as “the quintessential state activist”, who exploited public authority.258 As I have pointed out in chapter 2.2.8, ST launched the modern fair housing movement. However, in the next two decades next to no progress was made regarding the situation of potential black tenants.259

Once more the question arises: was Robert Moses a racist? Again it seems clear that he used his techniques not for the sake of racism, but in order to get things done. By no means was he willing to risk losing his only private slum clearer. Opportunistic as he was, Moses was ready to do virtually anything to satisfy Met Life. Moreover, Moses’ agenda was far from being novel. In fact, as Biondi expounds, his “career exemplifies a central tragedy of modern American liberalism–that it emerged during the era of Jim Crow.” In that period, politicians were essentially promoting segregation through their many laws and policies. It is widely acknowledged that residential segregation was in fact created by the FHA, amongst others. Consequentially the federal government itself, not merely “banks and builders”, was a chief cause for inner-city decay, decentralization and primarily white suburbanization. These customs definitely left an imprint on Moses.260

Another ramification brought about by discrimination at ST was that Moses turned into a builder for middle-income African Americans. The reason was simple: Moses, along with Ecker, wanted to avoid more bad publicity by engaging in “model housing for colored folks”. This undertaking resulted, for instance, in the erection of the Riverton Houses261 in Harlem. The fact that these houses were a middle-income project, and that defending themselves against criticism was the chief reason Moses and Ecker had taken action in building for African Americans in the first place, showed that this was “not a change of heart” or “support for integrated living”. Rather, it was an example of opportunism, something Moses did throughout his career. Furthermore, Moses’ ensuing engagement in sheltering

257 The Supreme Court’s decision was upheld in 1949 by the state’s highest court, the Court of Appeals.
259 In 1960, there were 47 black tenants, i.e. 0.2 percent of ST’s entire population. Biondi, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 116-21, here: p. 119.
261 The Riverton Houses’ 1,232 units were a de facto black-only project intended to balance ST.
African Americans was an opportunity to attract federal money, for new accommodation was desperately needed in black communities. Lenox Terrace, which opened in 1958, was the first of these houses Moses put forward. He even helped the responsible company to obtain the necessary funds, which prompts Biondi to acknowledge Moses’ “determined leadership”. Indeed, he seemed to have provided guidance in the erection of at least one more housing project. However, one should not confuse opportunism with philanthropy. Not only had Moses’ perspective on race certainly not changed, but he was obviously interested in the completion because he did not want to jeopardize future federal funds. Apart from that, it demonstrates that Moses was, to a certain extent, capable of adapting to altered circumstances, for he presumably thought that “resisting fair housing laws was no longer worth the effort.”

In many respects, ST was a harbinger for class and race bias, mass relocation, and the transfer of urban space to white-collar workers under the guise of slum clearance. It also had a pervasive impact on the ethics of city rebuilding. Essentially, for Met Life, ST’s primary purpose was the revitalization of the inner city. It would come to serve as a model “of how to prevent capital flight and commercial decentralization.” Apart from that, ST was a critical factor in the downtown business interests’ ambition to convert the “housing reform movement into an effort to offset decentralization and promote the central business district.”

In many ways, ST was as precedent for Moses’ Title I activities, for it was at ST that he developed his “New York method”, as the Fainsteins label it, or the “New York approach”, as Joel Schwartz calls it. Born at ST, resistance to urban renewal emerged before Title I even came into existence. This was partly due to the fact that New York was the only city in which slums and blighted areas were rebuilt before the start of Title I.

By the end of World War II, Moses was not only the housing man on the CPC and head of the Emergency Committee on Housing, but he had also devised the NYCHA’s agenda and La Guardia’s postwar project through his “Post War Works Program” chairmanship. In 1946, he was appointed City Construction Coordinator. During this time, headwind came from the city’s liberals, who felt that Moses was betraying their ideals. Although they

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262 According to Peter Eisenstadt, this was the case at Rochdale Village, a “racially integrated housing cooperative in South Jamaica, Queens”. See Biondi, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 116-21, here: p. 121.  
263 Biondi, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 116-21, here: pp. 120-21. Other examples of Moses’ racial bias, which I will not enlarge upon, are Moses’ intercourse with several black workers who constructed the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, and the 1964 World’s Fair, where Moses did not hire any African Americans to his executive staff.  
managed to bring the *New York State Committee Against Discrimination in Housing* into being, their ambition to stop Moses failed. In the meantime, Moses embarked on the construction of immense projects in every borough except Staten Island by means of millions of state dollars.\(^{266}\) In order to hasten relocation and construction processes, Moses used his hold over the NYCHA to put evicted tenants into completed public housing projects\(^ {267}\) instead of building public housing on vacant land, which was vigorously promoted by many liberals. Moreover, he blamed much of the city’s dire state of housing on the NYCHA and exerted pressure on mayor O’Dwyer to remove its chairman in 1947. O’Dwyer did just that.\(^ {268}\) Henceforward, “Moses got O’Dwyer’s direct order naming him czar of all public and redevelopment housing.” This promotion together with his appointment to the chairmanship of the MCoSC in 1948 further increased Moses’ leverage and consolidated his position as New York’s construction controller.\(^ {269}\)

A reason Title I was needed was that the RDA was confined to two Met Life projects, Stuyvesant Town and the Riverton Houses. Moreover, all the cited turbulence proved not only precarious for Met Life, but also for the probability that other private investors would risk taking action in redevelopment. Realizing that private developers could not be attracted by the RDA, Moses sought to obtain larger subsidies. In the immediate aftermath of World War II, however, the critical demand for housing temporarily “sidelined slum clearance in favor of faster, easier solutions.” In order to alleviate the housing shortage, the NYCHA started to build on vacant sites on the city’s periphery as well, an approach Moses adamantly opposed. He believed that it would reinforce the decline of the core and abandon the investment in urban infrastructure.\(^ {270}\) As his primary goal was still slum clearance conducted by private enterprises, he started to “push for enactment of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill, which

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\(^{266}\) His projects between 1945 and the inception of Title I included the Lillian D. Wald and Governor Alfred E. Smith projects on the Lower East Side, Abraham Lincoln and James Weldon Johnson Houses in East Harlem, the Brownsville, Marcy, and Gowanus Houses in Brooklyn, the Morisania and Melrose Houses in the Bronx, and the Astoria Houses in Queens. Due to an agreement between the NYCHA and Moses, the bulk of these postwar houses were low-income tenements. Schwartz (1993), p. 113; Bloom (2008), p. 110.

\(^{267}\) At the same time, however, Moses “allowed the authority to reject tenants who likely would have been accepted in other cities.” Bloom (2008), p. 8.

\(^{268}\) The mayor also appointed the chairmain’s successor on Moses’ suggestion and restructured the authority’s board by appointing several men that were sympathizing with Moses. By the late 1940s, Moses’ control over the NYCHA had become even firmer, thanks to the many positions he held. Dismissing the authority’s grounds as “landscaping” not parks, he made sure that they not only contained his usual recreational elements, but also provided new city parks that adjoined many new dwellings. Apart from that, the NYCHA owed its “national reputation in playground design” to Moses. For details see Bloom (2008), pp. 66-68.


The Housing Act of 1949 and Title I\footnote{I have outlined the framework of the Housing Act of 1949 and Title I in chapter 2.2.8.}

Robert Moses was the “pacesetter and experimenter-in-chief”\footnote{Ballon, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 194-115, here: p. 94.} for the nation’s massive slum clearance program alias Title I. Through his chairmanship of the MCoSC he used it to engineer scores of undertakings that had a profound impact on New York’s cityscape. It is widely believed that New York had a head start on Title I when The Housing Act of 1949 was enacted, because Moses’ planning efforts had made the city alone stand primed for action. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the city received by far the largest share of federal funds and established the largest urban renewal portfolio.\footnote{See ibid.; Bloom (2008), p. 110; Schwartz (1993), p. 170. According to Zipp, New York City accounted for 32 percent of all construction activity under Title I. In other words, 32 percent of all projects were carried out in a city that accounted for just five percent of the country’s entire population. Admittedly, Title I was conducted mainly in larger cities. Yet, even in Alaska and Hawaii cities received Title I grants. Therefore, the fact that New York’s share was disproportionately large was awesome nonetheless.} According to Ballon, Moses pursued three goals through Title I: “build housing for the middle class, expand higher education, and promote the city’s cultural preeminence.”\footnote{See Ballon, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 194-115, here: p. 96.} It has been suggested that Moses assumed the role of a construction czar who ruled over Title I with absolute power. In reality, Moses was constantly negotiating and mediating between public and private interests. Numerous unexecuted Title I projects remind us that Moses had to fight for every one of his ventures. Nonetheless, Moses did wield considerable power over New York’s spatial and physical development.\footnote{Ballon points out that slum clearance involved “all aspects of urbanism”, e.g. site selection, streets, circulation, sanitation, community facilities, social use, and design.}
As one can see in table 4\textsuperscript{278}, Moses proposed 26 Title I projects from 1949 to 1959. An astonishing 314 acres of New York cityscape were covered by them, that is one forty-fifth of the area of Manhattan. Close to 30,000 units gave shelter to an even greater number of people. Striking, yet not surprising, is the fact that nine out of 26 undertakings were put forward in 1951, the year they became eligible. Roughly one third of all of his endeavors were ready for execution, which indeed gave New York a head start. One can also see that eight out of 26 projects were rejected.\textsuperscript{279} Of Moses’ 26 projects, 19, approximately three quarters, were located in Manhattan. This disproportionate distribution underscores his focus on the central city and his intent to revitalize the core. Another characteristic of Moses’ undertakings is the ethnical distribution of their residents. Based on the 20 projects in table 4, one can see that 13 housing projects either have an extremely high or an extremely low percentage of white people. In fact, the white portion,

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
Project (date proposed) & Acres & Units & Cost (millions) & Site families & Percent nonwhite \\
\hline
Corlears Hook (1/51) & 14.66 & 1,668 & $25.5 & 878 & 24 \\
Delancey Street (1/51) & 12.50 & 1,180 & $15.3 & 1,569 & 0 \\
Harlem (1/51) & 14.79 & 1,716 & $30.3 & 3,109 & 100 \\
North Harlem (1/51) & 13.07 & 1,781 & $26.1 & 1,135 & 100 \\
South Village (1/51) & 13.00 & 584 & $13.4 & 1,700 & 0 \\
Washington Square South (1/51) & 40.00 & 1,956 & $27.6 & 2,741 & 0 \\
Williamburg (1/51) & 45.00 & 2,385 & $35.6 & 5,292 & 2 \\
West Park (ManhattanWest) (9/51) & 26.20 & 2,525 & $56.6 & 4,212 & 52 \\
Morningside (9/51) & 9.39 & 972 & $17.5 & 1,800 & 65 \\
Columbus Circle (Coliseum) (12/52) & 6.28 & 608 & $57.7 & 322 & 54 \\
Fort Greene (12/52) & 21.20 & 842 & $20.0 & 510 & 62 \\
NYU-Bellevue (6/53) & 9.44 & 1,216 & $28.6 & 1,369 & 1 \\
Pratt Institute (7/53) & 29.18 & 2,013 & $36.2 & 1,354 & 36 \\
Washington Square Southeast (10/53) & 14.53 & 2,004 & $64.1 & 152 & 0 \\
Seaside-Rockaway (11/54) & 30.89 & 1,536 & $30.4 & 200 & 0 \\
Lincoln Square (4/55) & 46.08 & 4,500 & $205.6 & 7,000 & 7 \\
Hammonds-Rockaway (11/56) & 40.97 & 2,120 & $28.0 & 1,763 & 67 \\
Seward Park (1/57) & 12.58 & 1,704 & $31.4 & 1,525 & 9 \\
Park Row (1/57) & 4.38 & 400 & $10.0 & 413 & 8 \\
Penn Station South (6/57) & 20.45 & 2,817 & $54.5 & 2,608 & 3 \\
\hline
\textbf{TOTAL (realized projects)} & 314.09 & 28,422 & $722.5 & 28,350 & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Title I program, 1949-1957: projects proposed, realized and rejected}
\end{table}

\begin{flushright}
Source: Schwartz (1993), p. 175; section of original image shown.
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{278} According to Ballon, Moses obtained planning grants for altogether 32 projects. 26 of those 32 projects resulted in published plans. The figures in this chapter are based on those 26 projects. 18 were eventually constructed. During Moses’ creative twelve-year Title I career he managed to obtain $65.8 million for urban renewal projects, while Chicago, the second largest recipient, obtained less than half of that sum. Teaford (1990) and Anderson (1964) cite similar figures. After the PWA funds of the New Deal in 1935/36, this was the second time New York received the largest portion of federal funds. I have compared table 4 with other sources, amongst others the comprehensive catalog in Ballon et al. (2007). This catalog lists the same projects for that period of time plus an additional six more ventures that were proposed by Moses after Penn Station South Title I in 1957, out of which four were not executed. Those six undertakings are: Riverside-Amsterdam Title I (unexecuted), Battery Park Title I (unexecuted), Gramercy Title I (unexecuted), Soundview Title I (unexecuted), Cadman Plaza Title I, and Park Row Extension Title I. The combined figures of Cadman Plaza and Park Row Extension are negligible and can therefore be disregarded. See Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 94, 114, 244-304.

\textsuperscript{279} The reasons for the failures are various: Battery Park Title I, for example, was dropped when Moses resigned from the MCoSC; Delancey Street Title I stalled because Moses could not find a sponsor; and South Village Title I was cancelled when mayor Impellitteri delayed hearings in the face of strong community protest.
apart from the all-white dwellings, is either considerable (between 33 and 76 percent) or close to zero. Although seven projects have a relatively balanced distribution of whites and nonwhites, it is obvious that ST-like tenant policies were still applied in later years.

By means of some of his projects, one can see flaws and benefits in Moses’ approach. Ventures with major defects, such as Washington Square Southeast, on the one hand, exemplify the “overbearing, destructive side of Moses’ large-scale thinking” and were vehemently opposed. They also showed that his power over urban renewal was limited. Another deficient case was Manhattantown Title I, Moses’ most notorious venture. It showed how ruthless slumlords were milking the site tenants for as long as possible without starting construction. Morningside-Manhattanville Title I, on the other hand, combined many positive aspects of Moses’ proceeding, for it had conscientious “leadership, proceeded without delays, handled relocation responsibly, and embraced integration.”

**Lincoln Square**

Of all his Title I urban renewal projects, Lincoln Square was Moses’ pre-eminent undertaking. Two of his aforementioned goals, improving higher education and cementing New York’s cultural supremacy, were intrinsically tied to Lincoln Square. It has been suggested that Lincoln Square was “the most influential Title I project in the nation” and underscored “New York’s status as the so-called capital of the world.” Encompassing 45 acres, the city’s largest Title I venture comprises The Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the

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280 Moses generally conceded the developer vast leeway in his proceedings. As a result, relocation procedures varied from project to project.
281 Ballon et al. (2007), p. 244.
282 The CPC approved Manhattantown in 1952. Five years later, however, the site had still not been cleared which resulted in the deterioration of the condemned properties. Moses turned the project over to William Zeckendorf, who partnered numerous times with him for Title I undertakings. With this change in ownership the venture experienced a turnaround, resulting in the “coordination of Title I and public housing, the provision of public facilities [...] and the privileged use of open space for parking.” Although Moses was, in principle, not responsible for the incidents, the Manhattantown revelations nonetheless tarnished not only his reputation but that of urban renewal and Title I as well. It can be seen as the beginning of the end of Moses’ Title I endeavor. Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 262-63; Caro (1975), pp. 964-65, 970-76, 979-82, 1009-13.
283 Morningside Heights and its president, David Rockefeller, did exemplary work. Moses approved their plans in 1951 and helped achieve partial tax exemption from the Board of Estimate. The NYCHA built two adjacent public housing projects – the General Grant Houses and the Manhattanville Houses – to absorb some of the evicted tenants. Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 260-61.
284 My sources on Lincoln Square are Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 101, 107, 279-89; Gratz (2010), pp. 203-06; Schwartz (1993), pp. 276-87, 289; Zipp (2010), pp. 20-21, 155-249. See tables 12 and 13 in chapter 4.2 for a comparison between the site in its original state and after its transformation.
Lincoln Square also included a commercial development, a park, an elementary school, a church, a police station, and a parking garage. The Lincoln Towers housed luxury apartments.
Square’s centerpiece, a Fordham University campus, the American Red Cross Headquarters, the Lincoln Towers, and Princess Gardens.

In 1956, when the Lincoln Square plan was unveiled, the state of the area was consistent with the general notion of a slum, a quarter 5,268 families called home. In spite of resistance, relocation proceeded, by and large, flawlessly, mainly because the two main sponsors and their relocation firm maintained a high standard. The 1956 plan restructured 18 blocks into five superblocks. Before construction started three years later, Moses wrestled with federal officials and coped with lawsuits disputing the “constitutionality of the project”. Moses’ responsibility was not the conception of Lincoln’s Square’s centerpiece, *The Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts*, but its execution. According to Ballon, Moses displayed great vision,

“planning intelligence and particular capacity as a creative thinker”, because he “established the necessary preconditions to create it by providing the land and affirming the strategic value of aggregating similar institutions.” Apart from that, he “never lost track of the city’s budget and debt limit as he tried to stretch federal grants, contain city outlays, [and] shift costs to the private sector”.

In John D. Rockefeller 3rd Moses found a like-minded partner. While Moses played an essential role in Lincoln Center’s realization, Rockefeller was a major reason that its design standards were superior to all other Title I enterprises.

Moses succeeded in obtaining federal funds for Lincoln Center in spite of the fact that housing played only a minor role in the whole enterprise. Like planners in other cities, he took advantage of the Housing Act’s vague wording, avoided the “predominantly residential” clause skillfully, and used slum clearance on behalf of cultural and educational institutions.

One can say that Lincoln Square was yet another example of Moses’ attempt to curb decentralization and attract the middle class back to Manhattan. Not only did it stand for a powerful means to restructure the old city, but it was also an “effort to prepare the metropolis

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287 According to Ballon 77 percent of the buildings were built before 1901 and 30 percent did not have central heating. Most residents were poor. For further details see Ballon et al. (2007), p. 280.
288 According to Schwartz, the orderly removals were “guaranteed by West Side liberals on the Watchdog Committee”. Schwartz (1993), p. 289.
289 The Lincoln Center comprised (in the order of their opening) the Philharmonic Hall, now Avery Fisher Hall (1962), the New York State Theater, the Vivian Beaumont Theater, the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts, the Metropolitan Opera House, and the Juilliard School of Music (1969).
for its role as the capital of modernity and a bulwark in the Cold War.”

It made high culture available to all people in the city. Without a doubt, Lincoln Square is Moses’ crowning achievement, and was built at the height of his urban renewal efforts. At the same time, however, not everybody was similarly enthusiastic, which certainly included the evicted residents. Triggered at ST, resistance and disapproval toward urban renewal developed further at Lincoln Square. Gratz points out that Lincoln Center made the rejuvenation of Manhattan’s West Side more difficult.

Under Title III of the Housing Act, New York became the largest beneficiary of federal grants for public housing purposes. With $4,475,880 in annual subsidies in addition to a $99,464,000 grant, New York erected 135,000 apartments for half a million tenants. Title III’s portion of the Housing Act’s grants was, therefore, larger than Title I’s share. Meanwhile, Moses’ influence on the NYCHA reached its high point in 1951. As I have mentioned before, public housing was a vital part of Moses’ strategy because the NYCHA’s dwellings served as a catchment for relocated tenants. This strategy – pairing middle-income projects with public housing in low-income neighborhoods – was unique in the country. In retrospect, this approach was visionary, for today this mixture is considered fundamental to quality urban planning. Moses called for coordinated construction as early as 1946. From his perspective, public housing was a key to Title I projects, but, from a different perspective, one can say that Title I renewal was the key to “linking middle-class projects to public housing.” Altogether, approximately twelve joined projects were carried out under Moses. Despite its undoubted merits, coordination was not only easier said than done, but, more importantly, the combination of public housing and Title I projects did not solve relocation difficulties. In fact, it did not even come close.

293 See ibid. p. 163.
294 According to Gratz, Moses’ approach “undermines the potential of vibrant, vital, economically and socially robust, integrated, and connected “places” in a city”. See Gratz (2010), pp. 203-06. Quotation is on page 206.
296 The NYCHA and Moses employed this strategy partly because of “external pressure” by politicians and other officials.
297 See Ballon, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 94-115, here: pp. 102-03; Bloom (2008), pp. 118, 133-34; Zipp (2010), p. 21. Moses located twelve of his enterprises adjacent to public housing, and only two (Morningside and Manhattan) were built simultaneously with new NYCHA projects. Harlem, for example, which had the city’s largest concentration of public housing with 27,717 public housing units in 1962, also had four middle-income and two luxury developments with a total of 7,518 units. Only 18 percent of the evicted tenants from the combined Morningside Gardens (Title I) and General Grant Houses (NYCHA) were able to move into other public housing tenements. Blaming the NYCHA’s “tough eligibility standards”, Moses fought hard for the combination of Title I and public housing. His requests were,
Martin Anderson, who lambasted urban renewal in his 1964 book the *Federal Bulldozer*, states that urban renewal’s nationwide impact compared to private construction was infinitesimal. As one can see in chart 1, the country’s urban renewal construction is but a fraction of private construction. Even public building is humongous compared to Title I. Although the national figures are revealing, they need to be put into perspective regarding New York. In the empire city, the gap between private and urban renewal construction is not nearly as big as in the entire country, as Manhattan’s share of all national urban renewal construction was 32 percent (see footnote 275 on page 65). Nevertheless, the difference is considerable. According to Ballon, Moses’ roughly 28,400 Title I apartments compare to 30,680 housing dwelling units in Manhattan alone, and, as one can see in chart 2, to 72,000 in the entire city during roughly the same period. While public housing, therefore, produced more than twice as many units as Moses however, rejected by the NYCHA’s chairman. This exemplifies that Moses’ influence on the NYCHA had its limits.

298 In his devastating critique of urban renewal and the Title I program, Anderson’s arguments include: the economy was not stimulated; most new buildings were high-rises for high-income families; evicted families often went into housing that was worse than their original home; slums were simply shifted; it only caused shifts in construction activity rather than in increase; and rehabilitation had most of the same consequences as renewal. For a brief summary of his arguments see Anderson, Martin: The Federal Bulldozer. A Critical Analysis of Urban Renewal 1949-1962, Cambridge 1964, pp. 219-23, 228-30.


300 All numbers refer to New York. Public refers to units erected or operated by the NYCHA. Publicly Assisted refers to units that were insured, subsidized, and in other ways aided by the municipal, state, or local government.
did, private construction, accounting for 234,000 units, dwarfed his accomplishments completely. In other words, roughly eight times as many units were erected by free enterprise than through Title I. Evaluating Title I in terms of started construction compared to public and private housing, one can, therefore, conclude that its impact from a nationwide standpoint is minute. From New York’s perspective, more importantly, this statement is qualified to some extent. Nevertheless, even in Gotham Title I urban renewal activities played only a minor role regarding the overall amount of construction.

Moses’ construction activity certainly deserves credit as well as blame. Let us first take a look at the plain facts. During his Title I era, Moses was responsible for the erection of 28,400 housing units, for which he obtained more than $70 million dollars. For his 18 executed projects, 28,000 families, approximately 100,000 people, were evicted, which cost the city, the federal government, and private sponsors $722 million. Combined with public housing, that number rises to 200,000 people. At least 5,000 businesses fell victim to site clearances, and an estimated 30,000 to 60,000 jobs were lost in the process, a number that increased to “several hundred thousand” by the end of the 1950s.301

Apart from those primary effects, it is widely believed that the slum clearance policy of Title I also had detrimental “secondary effects”, such as the creation of new slums, re-segregation, discrimination, and a housing crisis. It has even been suggested that the urban crisis (see chapter 2.1) was rooted in public housing and Title I slum clearance activities. At the same time, however, it “preserved and enhanced the city’s claim to be capital of the world” by bringing world class institutions to New York.302 Moses was certainly less worried about the thousands of people that remained in their tenements than how he could beautify and enhance the city by replacing the tenements with attractive apartment towers. In other words, a city full of tenants did not bother him, as long as they did not dwell in ancient tenements.303 Succinctly, the physical, not the social problem was important to Robert Moses. This does not, however, make his approach abnormal or unique, for his proceeding was more or less in keeping with the concept of modernity’s missing sociopolitical element in America.

Regarding the NYCHA and public housing, Moses’ impact was generally a beneficial one, as Bloom states:

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303 Bloom (208), p. 15.
“One of the primary reasons that New York [...] remained America’s best high-rise housing authority in the 1960s is that its longtime patron [...] had done much to preserve the authority as a large, competent housing organization during the 1940s and 1950s.”

Although not absolute, Moses’ influence on the NYCHA from the end of the war until 1958 was without a doubt significant. By the late 1940s, he had handpicked a majority of the authority’s board. He “personally selected sites”, and eventually, it was him who approved “all NYCHA housing projects”. Yet his influence over when and where the authority built was greater than his control over how it built. Moses’ eighteen-year career with public housing fell in a time during which the NYCHA built so many dwellings that they inevitably caused “neighborhood social integration”. Therefore, Bloom argues, Moses’ impact on the integrating of New York was considerable. It goes without saying that Moses did not love public housing. He also showed little concern for destroying vibrant neighborhoods. He did, however, believe in public sector competence and “needed public housing as an adjunct to his wider development plans”. Apart from that, Moses not only exploited the malleable and vague nature of the CPC’s master plan (see chapter 2.2.8), but employed it as a blueprint for site selections. Regarding architecture, it was not Moses who introduced the tower-in-the-park concept to New York, but he contributed greatly to the ballooning of its prevalence. Just as little is it Moses’ fault that the apartment towers had a mostly bleak and repetitive design, because the NYCHA had experimented with such concepts as early as before World War II. Bloom argues that Moses should “only be blamed for extending NYCHA’s influence over more territory.”

It might appear that Moses was all too opportunistic in his actions and did not, or better, could not pursue a stringent plan. However, as I have pointed out at this beginning of this chapter, Moses’ actions were based on three main objectives. While he definitely missed his first mark, recapture the middle class, he did have success with his second plan, as he enabled two universities – NYU and Fordham – to expand their campuses in Manhattan. Finally, he was triumphant in his third endeavor, as he propelled the construction of Lincoln Center, helped build the Coliseum, and played a crucial role in bringing the United Nations to New York. Although Schwartz admits that Moses initially had “purposeful reclamations for

305 I have included two maps showing the master plan and public housing in the appendix, where one can see that most proposed sites were later adopted in reality. See maps 10 and 11 in chapter 4.2.
307 It is safe to say that goals two and three were ultimately supposed to serve goal one. In this respect, they failed. It appears that Moses, other planners and downtown business interests, who pursued the revitalization of
mixed-uses” in mind, he states that Moses later abandoned those plans and “adopted the opportunist approach” in the face of “studied indifference of investors”. He concludes: “The resulting Title I’s had no central purpose”, while “the lack of planning vision […] explains the number of projects that Moses never got off the drawing board.”

Both Ballon and Schwartz concur that Moses was opportunistic. As I have and will illustrate throughout this thesis, there is little doubt that he was. They contradict, however, in terms of Moses’ existing or non-existing “planning vision”. I argue that he did have a strategic vision on which he based his plans. Schwartz firstly fails to take into account that Moses had no alternatives but to be somewhat opportunistic and pragmatic without jeopardizing his ventures. When a source like the RCA proved ineffective, he looked for a new method to implement his plans. Moses was compelled to modify his elaborate vision and well conceived goals in order to have success. This was indeed opportunistic, but it nonetheless helped accomplish what he pursued. Secondly, he never lost sight of his three main objectives. Although Moses certainly altered quite a bit of his program, he remained, by and large, committed to his original plan, which included using Title I exclusively for non-commercial purposes. In this respect, Moses’ procedure was unique. Thirdly, Moses’ influence was not only greater than Schwartz suggests, but given that he was facing tremendous difficulties, Moses certainly achieved a lot by implementing the bulk of his plans.

However, design was a victim of this opportunism. Moses was ultimately responsible for this serious drawback, for his MCoSC issued the site plans. Compared to his exceptional work of the 1930s, when he was accountable for creative playground design and elegant parks, the coloring and shaping of urban renewal enterprises was mediocre at best.

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309 Other cities employed Title I to attract banks and office building back to the hub. The only exception in New York was, of course, the Coliseum. Built from 1954 to 1956 as a part of the Columbus Circle Title I, it served as a convention center from 1956 to 2000, when it was demolished and replaced by the Time Warner Center. For details see Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 263-67.
310 See Ballon, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 94-115, here: p. 109. Other reasons for the inferior design standards were lack of creative urban thinking by Moses’ employees at the MCoSC, a “federal approval process that obstructed design improvements, Moses’s [sic] deferral to private developers, and the bottom-line orientation or redevelopment.” Moses also became more careless and opportunistic in the selection of sites.
2.4 Robert Moses and the press

Robert Moses owed his power and success not only to his various posts, but also to his remarkable relationship with the media and the public. Since the beginning of Moses’ career, New York’s press helped create an image of a selfless and resolute public servant, who was celebrated for his integrity and his ability to suit his actions to the word. Their almost unanimous and uncritical support helped establish his excellent reputation, made him all but immune from attempts to curtail his power base, gave him a hold on public opinion, and provided a platform to present his projects and his opinion in an advantageous and prominent light. Through his skillful dealing with the press, Moses played a significant part in his own favorable treatment. Just as much as the media contributed to build up his popularity and influence, it hastened its downfall toward the end of his career. In this chapter, I will outline Moses’ relationship with the media and illustrate how it affected his career.

Moses quickly learned that even well conceived plans cannot be carried out without strong public support. He was aware that the media was an influential and powerful means that he could utilize to achieve his aims. Rapidly developing a talent to galvanize the press and public support, Moses soon grasped how the media operates and apprehended how to manipulate it. Starting with a press release in 1925 that accused “rich golfers” of “blocking plans for state park”311, Moses provided the press with stories throughout his career by artfully employing different techniques to present his case in the most advantageous light. Thereby Moses gave the New York news media “the kinds of stories—and symbols—they needed to maintain their own local audience”, as Kaniss states. Through the “unveiling of one majestic project after another”, he continues, Moses allowed “the media the opportunity to reinforce a sense of shared local identity”.312

Moses’ tremendous public relations success was due to a consistent stream of press releases, stylishly illustrated brochures, documents, uncounted speeches, reports, guided tours for reporters, smear campaigns313, and other measures to publicize and glorify his projects and denigrate the opinion of his antagonists. Combined with his political skill, his public relations talents were critical in gathering support for his numerous enterprises.314

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311 This press release from the January 8 issue of The New York Times did not mention that Moses’ proceeding had been found illegal. See Caro (1975), p. 190.
313 On Moses smear tactics see especially Caro (1975), pp. 469-74.
314 Moses’ public relation efforts, at least concerning playgrounds, were based on those by social reformers of the Progressive Era. Like the reformers’ success, Moses’ accomplishments “rested on his ability to publicize his
The reason Moses won the press’ and the public’s favor at the early stage of his career was parks. At that time, parks were few and hard to reach, and therefore the public and the press embraced Moses’ park program enthusiastically. By proposing parks, Moses identified himself with a popular cause. At the same time, he made sure that reporters and, with it, the public focused on the end and not the means. He always tried to stay out of the picture and let the media only write about his ventures. Besides parks, virtually all of his early work, particularly his beaches and parkways on Long Island and his pools and playgrounds in the city, were all but unanimously appraised.\textsuperscript{315}

Moses’ 1934 battle against Franklyn Delano Roosevelt demonstrated his skill to take his matter to the press and get public support on his side. This move was not only helpful but of vital importance to his career, because he presumably would have been ousted had he not leaked Roosevelt’s order to the press. The reaction of the media and the public was so forceful that the President of the United States had to withdraw his ordinance. According to Cleveland Rodgers, one of Moses’ biographers, he “received the most impressive demonstration of public confidence in his career.”\textsuperscript{316}

Over the years, Moses established close relationships with journalists, publishers, editors and owners of the city’s 13 daily newspapers. He cultivated these ‘friendships’ with thoroughness by

“giving newspaper owners pre-opening tours of new bridges and free passes to them thereafter, inviting them to sail on the Long Island Park Commissioner’s yacht, bathe in the reserved section of Jones Beach and dine in the private section of the Marine Dining Room—where he served them lavish helpings of his imitable charm”\textsuperscript{317}.

His most important allies were Iphigene and Arthur Sulzberger, the owners of the most important periodical in the country, \textit{The New York Times}. According to Gay Talese, a longtime employee of the newspaper, Moses’ privileged treatment was “achieved mainly through Moses’ audacity, [and] his skill at using his personal connections”\textsuperscript{318}. Other allies were Helen

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achievements and the needs of his organization through the press”, which extended his “base of support.” Ballon et al. (2007), p. 174.
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\textsuperscript{315} See Caro (1975), pp. 190, 218, 424.
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\textsuperscript{316} Rodgers quoted in Caro (1975), p. 440. For more on Moses’ victory see chapter 2.1 and Caro (1975), pp. 426-441.
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\textsuperscript{317} Caro (1975), p. 457. On Moses’ generous dealing with the selected member of the press see also Caro (1975), pp. 458, 816-28.
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\textsuperscript{318} Talese, Gay: The Kingdom and the Power, New York \textsuperscript{5}1978 [first published in 1966], p. 107. Another reason for the \textit{Times’ }almost unrestrained support was Iphigene’s devotion to parks. On Moses’ relationship with the \textit{Times }see Caro (1975), pp. 460-62, and Talese (1978), pp. 107-09.
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and Ogden Mills Reid of the *Herald Tribune* and Roy W. Howard of the *World-Telegram*. Moses also maintained relations to top editors, which included former Yale classmates Harold Phelps Stokes and Charles Merz. Favorable

His carefully nurtured bond with the press elevated Moses to heroic stature. The media did not simply laude him for his projects but made him a larger-than-life figure that appeared unable to do something worth criticizing. Moses was frequently present on front pages and editorials in the whole country that reminded the public how much the city and its people owed to him. In 1934, for example, the *Times* carried 29 editorials and 346 separate articles on Moses’ activities – and every single one was favorable.\(^3\) Public opinion echoed the applause by the press which manifested in numerous letters to the editor and huge attendances at the opening of Moses’ projects. As his career progressed, the press’ positive attitude toward Moses slowly became less approving: after World War II, for instance, newspapers like the *New York Post* and the *Herald Tribune* began to criticize Moses and started investigating his methods, and the public, slowly realizing that Moses’ highway policies might be self-defeating, expressed their doubts in letters to the editor. Nevertheless, Moses could still count on the invariable support of the *Times* and the *Daily News*, the two periodicals that were “most decisive in shaping public opinion in New York”\(^4\), until the later stage of his career. The *Times*’ reaction to pressure from the federal administrator of Title I, who had pressured mayor Wagner to curtail Moses’ powers and threatened to cut off Title I aid to the city, demonstrated that Moses still had the support of the city’s media in the late 1950s:

“To be sure, it’s possible to find a mistake and a failure here and there. But look at the long, long record of successes. You don’t bench a Babe Ruth because he strikes out once in a while. […] Maybe some other system would have worked better here, on urban renewal, than the “unique” New York system. […] What we do know is that, in general, New York’s slum clearance progress has been unequalled and that […] there has never been the equal of Bob Moses for getting things done.”\(^5\)

While the press’ praise of Moses was certainly justified to some extent, it lacked unbiased, objective coverage and, more importantly, failed to investigate Moses’ projects and proceedings, assuming that everything was exactly as Moses said and that there was nothing worth probing. Much of Moses’ image as a creator and defender of parks endured because his questionable actions regarding parks were not given play by the New York press. For years,

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320 Ibid. p. 902.
321 Ibid. p. 1015.
articles about him had been researched, written and played in the light of the image of Robert Moses as a hero. Frieden states that the “press at the time was generally supportive of city efforts and one-sided in its coverage.” New York, however, was no exception, as the “national press was equally uncritical.”

One example is Moses’ building endeavor. When a new road or bridge was congested and Moses stated that more highways and bridges were needed in order to alleviate traffic, the press usually concurred with him. In the majority of the cases the newspapers buried stories about the fact that all of Moses’ traffic-relieving projects made traffic worse on the back pages, if they bothered to write about it at all. Another example is Moses controversial plans to build roads through densely populated areas, such as the Cross-Bronx Expressway and the widening of the Gowanus Parkway. In both cases, residents proposed alternative routes that would have been less detrimental to the neighborhood. The city’s three most important papers, the Times, the Tribune, and the Daily News gave the fights only sparse and unbalanced coverage. Even when the roads were finished – exactly how Moses wanted them – and decay of the neighborhoods became visible, very few newspapers portrayed those different options.

In a press release, Moses claimed that the cost of his West Side Improvement was $24,000,000, and every reporter of the New York press bought into that statement without attempting to scrutinize the real scale of the expenditures. The same can be said about power and posts that were bestowed on Moses. For instance, the press did not make an effort to examine the extent of the authority that Moses was vested with as City Construction Coordinator, relying instead on mayor O’Dwyer’s declaration that Moses’ responsibilities

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322 Caro (1975), pp. 989, 1039.
Caro states that the national magazines were even more uncritical and full of plaudit than the New York newspapers. Caro cites the following magazines: Harper’s Magazine, Time, The Saturday Evening Post, Current History, Architectural Forum, and Fortune.
324 As a matter of fact, the only published hint during all of 1936 that Moses’ bridges were being used by far more automobiles than expected was a four-paragraph article by the Times on page 26 of the July 10 issue.
325 In East Tremont, Bronx, the alternative route would have caused the destruction of only six small buildings. In Sunset Park, Brooklyn, the suggestion was to build the elevated highway along Second Avenue, which was dominated by industry, instead of Third Avenue, which was busy street with numerous shops. See Caro (1975), pp. 850-79 for the Cross-Bronx Expressway and ibid. pp. 520-25, for the Gowanus Parkway. Only the Post and, occasionally, the World-Telegram dedicated detailed articles to those topics.
326 According to Caro, the cost was at least $180,000,000. See Caro (1975), p. 557.
were “purely administrative and not policy-making.” Due to this lack of investigation, therefore, the press and, accordingly, the public did not fully comprehend the extent of Moses’ control and power over different institutions and persons which is visible using the example of the NYCHA (see chapter 2.3.4). Caro and Zipp state that not one of the city’s newspapers produced a precise analysis of Moses’ influence. The New York news media not only fell short of grasping Moses’ real influence, they also, perhaps more importantly, did not link disputable strategies like the city’s transportation policy to the man that had considerable influence on it.

In other cases, reporters would, on the one hand, only “rate a scarce paragraph at the very end of stories” even “when they meticulously documented their objections”. “Moses’ pronouncements”, on the other hand, “would be reported verbatim at the top of every article”. Caro argues that this lopsided treatment existed, apart from “the publisher’s admiration for Moses”, because “it seemed to editors a waste of time: where Moses was involved, they felt, there would be no scandal to be found; trying to find it would be a misuse of manpower that could be more profitably employed investigating politicians or bureaucrats. The creators of the Moses myth believed in what they had created.”

For a long time, New York’s press also failed to thoroughly investigate the Title I relocation methods and procedure. Even when evidence was brought forward by others, most of the periodicals simply would not print it. One of most glaring shortcomings was the refusal of all papers except the Post to publish “solid evidence that Robert Moses’s [sic] official reports were undercounting displaced people and misinterpreting the harsh treatment given to them”, which was provided by Lawrence Orton, the city’s planning commissioner, and the Women’s City Club. Even the biggest Title I scandal, the one at Manhattantown, did not hurt Moses as much as it could have, because the press did not associate him with the project despite their knowledge of his involvement. The Times’ story on Manhattantown did not mention Robert Moses once. While Moses was certainly a factor that the press did not see what really

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327 Caro (1975), p. 705. Had they studied the code amendment carefully, they could have found out that Moses did have much broader powers than O’Dwyer had indicated. See chapter 2.1 for details on Moses’ amendment.
331 Frieden et al. (1990), pp. 36-37. See also Caro (1975), pp. 966-67. Fishman argues that it was possible to diminish this condemnation, because the public believed that Moses “was engaged in a series of great works” that was “necessary for the greatness and even the survival of twentieth-century New York […]. As long as that belief remained strong, even devastating criticism could be marginalized.” Fishman, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 122-29, here: p. 123.
happened on Title I sites, it was the media itself that was mainly responsible for its own lack of insight.\textsuperscript{332}

Since a favorable press was of critical importance to functional agencies, Moses and the TBTA were fortunate that New York’s press helped foster the public authority’s image of an independent, efficient organization that required political autonomy in order to endure. The \textit{New York World Telegram and Sun} observed: “Time after time when the politicians have gotten in a jam they have had to create an authority and call on successful businessmen to bail them out.” Again, Moses was a driving force behind the media’s praise: he distributed press releases and brochures, delivered speeches and did everything he could to make the public believe that the TBTA was indispensable to carry out major public works in the New York region\textsuperscript{333}:

“[T]he authorities and their associates in the highway coalition”, as Danielson calls it, “were engaged in an immensely successful campaign of public education.” They “responded to one important set of public concerns, and strongly influenced the way transportation problems were defined by […] the press, thereby shaping the kinds of solutions that seemed desirable in the public mind.”\textsuperscript{334}

However, Danielson also points out that public support for the construction of vehicular highways was not easy to come by; even when road building was at its zenith, it required artful publicity efforts to sustain a positive image.\textsuperscript{335} The news media was making it easy for Moses to uphold that image, for it flooded the public with articles that highlighted the positive characteristics of the TBTA and other authorities. From 1946 to 1951 alone, more than 1,400 editorials in metropolitan newspapers lauded the agencies. Besides, Moses’ personal reputation was strengthened by that of the TBTA.\textsuperscript{336} When the joint study was announced in 1955, the press embraced it unanimously. \textit{The New York Times} acclaimed: “we have men …

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\item\textsuperscript{332} Caro (1975), pp. 982-83. See also chapters 2.1 and 2.3.4 of this thesis. According to Fainstein et al., Moses’ retreat from the housing theater was due to an “attack from the liberal intelligentsia and the press, along with several public scandals”. Fainstein et al., in: Mollenkopf (ed.) (1988), pp. 161-99, here: p. 170.
\item\textsuperscript{333} Danielson et al. (1982), pp. 181-83.
\item\textsuperscript{334} Ibid. p. 183.
\item\textsuperscript{335} Leavitt points out that the \textit{Times} “editorially supported the Interstate System, as did most local newspapers across the country. The American people were sold on the idea of driving automobiles”. Leavitt (1970), p. 39.
\item\textsuperscript{336} According to Caro, the newspapers attributed a number of qualities to the authorities. The \textit{Tribune}, for example, editorialized: “They are free from the dead hand of partisanship and bureaucracy”. Caro (1975), p. 716.
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who can understand problems of such magnitude … and work them out while the rest of us gasp with awe.”

The first time Moses was widely criticized by the press was during his gubernatorial campaign in 1934, when it did not take him long to alienate and antagonize it, which was unusual, as he generally adulated the media. According to Caro,

“by the end of his campaign he was spending a substantial part of his press conferences berating the press—and he had completely forfeited the sympathy with which most reporters had been prepared to view his candidacy.”

Moreover, Moses displayed candid disdain for the public. It was his victory over Roosevelt that restored his excellent relationship with the press and his popularity in the public.

The Battery crossing quarrel and Moses’ ensuing attempt to tear down the Fort Clinton were the next episodes of disapproval by the press. Strong criticism, however, did not emerge until the first battle of Central Park in 1956. That fight marked the first time Moses outraged every newspaper in the city without exception. The Post fumed:

“Who else but Bob Moses would have been audacious enough to proceed in this fashion”, and added: “Politicians live in awe of him and journalists treat him with … nervous … reverence. […] Before this is over, at least a few more city dignitaries (and editorial writers) may finally say out loud that Robert Moses can be wrong.”

Condemnation in the press was reverberated by the public. Thousands of letters sent to periodicals and public officials were proof that Moses’ reputation had been damaged beyond repair. His popularity, which had been widely intact before, being tarnished by a single event, shows that it is a slender reed indeed. Together with the second battle of Central Park in 1959 and Moses attempt to extend 5th Avenue through Washington Square Park, these incidents

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337 Danielson et al. (1982), p. 201. Other periodicals called the program “awe-inspiring”, “monumental”, or “spectacular”.
339 See ibid. pp. 402-25. The Times reported that Moses’ program “was marked by more attacks on personalities than any similar meeting in recent political history”. On Moses’ contempt for the public see also Gutman, in: Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 72-85, here: p. 73.
340 Ibid. p. 994. Kaniss points out that Moses’ adversaries were victorious because “they, not Moses, were able to symbolically frame the issue in the kinds of terms that held appeal to the local news media. Moses was successfully cast as the defiler of one of the most symbolic local assets in New York, Central Park, and soon after began to lose his status as local hero.” Kaniss (1991), p. 185.
341 The Village Voice, which began publication in 1955, played a significant part in Moses’ defeat. While the Times would “cover the story with competence and objectivity”, the Voice “opened its columns and editorial pages to Hayes and her colleagues, not only to publicize rallies but to engage the larger issues raised by the
shattered Moses’ reputation. He was no longer seen as a creator and defender of parks but as their destroyer. Moreover, his name was implicated in scandal. However, Moses no longer depended on public opinion at that point of his career. In fact, the appointment to the chairmanship of the TBTA back in 1934 had made him largely independent from it. Although it naturally hurt Moses, the loss of favorable public opinion was far more easy to cope with than at earlier stages of his career.342

Around the same time, a group of reporters started to research and investigate Moses’ Title I ventures, thereby inducing a critical spirit of the news media.343 Their revelations were given significant play by different newspapers, which picked up each other’s stories, resulting in many page one reports on the exposures. Not only did they render pioneering work in that field years before established newspapers like the Times became active, which were more “concerned with circulation and the headlines that could boost it”, would even begin to investigate, but through their revelations of those drawbacks they also triggered off scrutiny by the rest of the media. Thanks to the work of those few journalists and the two Central Park incidents, Caro explains, the newspapers “understood better now that probing Moses’ operations would yield headlines”. Moreover, they realized that “Moses’ operations not only could but should […] be scrutinized.”344 This new consciousness was a crucial understanding, for the media

“is so strongly influenced by the images that are its own creation. For years, articles about Robert Moses had been researched, written and played in the light of Robert Moses as a hero. Now Robert Moses was a villain. If the press was to obtain information of the kind it had previously downplayed, now it would upplay it—mercilessly.”345

Moses’ final fall from media’s grace came during his presidency of New York’s World’s Fair in the mid-1960s. According to Talese, he “encountered a chilly press reception”346, which was largely due to his dealing with the media that was similar to the one during his

344 Ibid. p. 1039. According to Talese, there was another important reason for the end of the Times’ special treatment of Moses. He states that it was “largely attributable” to the newspaper’s “great organizational shift during the Sixties”. Explanations for this change were the “illness and incapacity of Sulzberger” and the unanticipated death of his successor in 1963, which had a “disruptive effect on many traditional habits and values at The Times.” Most of the new employees had “little reverence for the sacred cows” like Moses. Talese (1978), p. 109.
gubernatorial campaign. Now, however, it was no longer uncommon for the press to scrutinize and lambast Moses, which showed in the devastating stories and reports on his actions regarding the fair and the press. Once again Moses demonstrated contempt for the media and the public, which aroused more criticism, which in turn made Moses counteract, which made matters even worse. With this self-defeating mechanism “Moses himself had fostered the growth of his own opposition”347, as Talese describes:

“They quoted that one extra word or phrase that was too much, inserted that extra little detail that can subliminally convey skepticism to a reader. […] The Times’ editorials criticized Moses’ financial handling of the Fair, his “penchant for invective,” and the reporters seemed to delight in recording his every frustration […]. No one seemed particularly interested in helping Moses at this point”.348

The press did not spare Moses the ramifications of the World Fair’s financial troubles, which included his own, considerable salary. He was characterized as a person that was greedy for money and the main reason that the public regarded the Fair as a disaster.

After the World’s Fair, Moses’ 40-year honeymoon with the press was over for good. Even public works coverage was no longer composed from the perspective of TBTA, because “local perspectives” in “development issues” received increasing attention.349 Moses’ special relationship with the New York news media was an integral part of his success, giving him an edge in many conflicts and serving as an instrument which he brilliantly exploited to his advantage and to harm opponents. Toward the end of his career though, Moses’ “heavy-handed and imperious manner had tarnished his once-gleaming reputation.”350 It is important to note, however, that Moses was not unique in his interaction with the press. Edward Logue of Boston, for example, also had a “congenial relationship with the media”.351 It is safe to say that a healthy liaison with the press was and is essential for a public official of Moses’ caliber in order to be successful.

351 According to Kennedy Logue also had the ability to “get something up to show them.” Kennedy (1992), p. 176.
3. Conclusions

What can be said about the transformation of New York under Robert Moses in conclusion? What was his impact on the city? What is his legacy? Has New York benefited from him or had the city been better off without him? These questions have been answered most diversely since Moses’ career ended in the late 1960s. A precise, in-depth attempt to assess Moses’ influence would go beyond the scope of this thesis and is, moreover, all but unfeasible, for a huge metropolis like New York City is too complex and dynamic to conduct an adequate, exact evaluation of one man’s impact on it. Apart from that, it is virtually impossible to appraise the long-term effects of Moses’ actions. Therefore, all this conclusion can offer is a summary of the main body and an attempt to put his legacy into perspective.

Moses declared that “expressways [...] must go through cities [...], because most traffic originates and ends in urban centers.” He went on: “practical solutions of the traffic problems in cities should be co-ordinated with slum clearance, street widening, parks and playgrounds, utility modernization, and other improvements.”

This quotation shows that Moses had a comprehensive plan for New York. However, he did not see the city as a complex urban structure that consisted of distinct quarters, but as one unit for which standardized solutions were required. His mission was to modernize the metropolis, and he dismissed the damage inflicted by public works on neighborhoods and people as a necessary cost of progress. As we have seen, his ventures were not confined to one aspect of city building but encompassed almost every fabric of it: Moses built roads, parks, public housing and Title Is, playgrounds, swimming pools, and bridges. Not only did he severely alter the contour of the island city by adding to it 25 square miles through landfill, he was also responsible for the construction of 627 miles of roads in and around New York City and equipped Gotham with hundreds of playgrounds and vast recreational facilities. For his public works, close to 500,000 people were evicted from their homes. He formed the metropolis under the tenures of six governors and five mayors for more than 40 years.

After World War II, criticism of the construction of roads was rendered almost unviable by the dynamics of highway building. Naturally, highways were not only built in

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New York but in every major metropolitan area of the United States. The success of the road was a direct consequence of the prevailing positive attitude toward the automobile. Jackson points out that Moses’ “extraordinary success derived partly from the fact that his attitude toward the street was in harmony with that of a growing number of citizens.” Whereas cities like Los Angeles and Houston have cores that are sliced by intersecting highways, however, New York’s CBD remained largely intact because Moses was halted in time before he could ram his cross-Manhattan expressway through Gotham’s hub. Gutfreund states:

“To be sure, without his remarkable talents, New York’s adaptation to the auto age would probably have been less extensive, and consequently less successful […].” Nevertheless, had he been allowed to proceed, completing his last proposed spate of massive new expressways, he might have pushed the city past the proverbial tipping point, destroying its center in favor of easing suburban and peripheral travel and thereby undermining the long-term sustainability of the city’s core. Instead, America’s dominant city of the nineteenth century survived to thrive in the twenty-first century.”

As I have pointed out in chapter 2.2.7, Moses and the road coalition were not all powerful. It is not accurate that Moses “flooded the city with cars”. Nor was he responsible for “starving the subways and the suburban commuter railroads”. And most certainly, he was only a minor force in the “sprawling, low-density development pattern relying primarily on roads instead of mass transportation”. The similar development patterns in other cities indicate that this process had inevitably been the same, regardless if Moses had been in power or not. Had he been an advocate of mass transit instead, the city and the rest of the nation still would have built highways and bridges and favored the road over the railroad, because the underlying principles of the era were pervasive. Victor Hugo’s proverb “one cannot resist an idea whose time has come” describes this development well. “The availability of the automobile, the desire of citizens for space and privacy, and the technical advantages of open space for new industrial plants were all beyond the control of any small group of actors.”

Moses promoted an idea that was also endorsed and tremendously stimulated by the government, in particular by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. The neglect of investment in the public transit

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system during the period from 1930 to 1970 reflected the priority that federal, state, and city governments gave to highways. Moreover, Moses availed himself of the RPoNYaIE, which indicated where parkways, bridges, and expressways were to materialize.

 Granted, persons that were in a situation like Moses were able to “shape the forces of urban change, and alter the rate and direction of development in quite significant ways.” Without Moses’ TBTA the overall tempo of highway construction and urban sprawl would most likely have been slower, especially because the water and state line barriers made planning very demanding. Large-scale projects like the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge would still have been built, but presumably not as soon.

 Concerning the recreational facilities Moses built, one can say that he made public recreation intergenerational. Moreover, he democratized access to recreation and to higher culture through his numerous swimming pools and the creation of Lincoln Square, respectively. Gutman states:

“Robert Moses invested in extraordinary public buildings and outdoor spaces that celebrated new ideals of leisure and made clear that providing recreational space is a responsibility of government. […] Moses superimposed monumental modern buildings on existing infrastructure and underused sites. The siting decisions, […] rooted in the reform urbanism of the Progressive Era, made new civic amenities accessible and helped to integrate them into the fabric of everyday urban life.”

Moses’ first priority was to provide “exercise and healthy outdoor recreation”. He revoked all private concession to prevent the encroachment of unwholesome amusements. Yet, although he ardently opposed commercial ventures within his parks, with the exception of Shea Stadium and the Jones Beach Amphitheater, Moses enthusiastically used the commercialism of the two world’s fairs to achieve a public purpose: the construction of a public park.

 In chapter 2.3 I have shown that Moses’ racism was not unusual but rather reflected the prevailing social norm among his contemporaries. His actions did not have a disproportionately negative effect on African Americans. Biondi states:

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362 The composition of New York’s geographical landscape required comprehensive, coordinated, uncomplicated and interstate planning. The TBTA and the PNYA were useful, perhaps essential component in meeting regional “needs”. In other urban regions, the “leadership of the highway coalition was centered in state highway departments and other executive agencies”. Danielson et al. (1982), p. 184.
364 Ibid. p. 83.
365 See Ballon et al. (2007), pp. 160, 162, 200. This, of course, refers to Flushing Meadows Park.
“It is troubling that the man who built so much of the New York metropolitan area’s infrastructure was influenced by the long arm of Jim Crow in shaping national racial ideology and practices. Many of Robert Moses’s [sic] most admired creations have racist overtones. [...] But the built environment of New York City is not forever bound by Moses’s [sic] vision.”

Moses had three aims regarding public housing and urban renewal: “Recapture the middle class, [...] by building modern, affordable housing [...], establish New York as the center of higher education”, and “elevate the national and international stature of New York” with excellent institutions. Moses certainly accomplished objects two and three, while goal one was out of his reach, partly because his actions had the opposite effect. It is important to note that public officials in other cities such as Edward Logue in Boston, Louis Danzig in Newark, Edmund Bacon in Philadelphia, or Austin Tobin of the PNYA are proof that Moses was not the only person in his position who wielded considerable power. In fact, “where power was dispersed, redevelopment often lagged”.

Naturally, it is all but impossible to carry out slum clearance projects in a densely populated city without causing opposition or resistance. Even the erection of Moses’ swimming pools, which were incorporated into parks, not into residential areas, has caused protest marches. There is, obviously, no valid answer to the question if urban renewal was necessary in the first place. Trying to assess its impact is a moot point, the more so as it has been suggested that the city would have evolved similarly without Moses.

As I have cited in the chapter on CIAM, modern housing and urban renewal in the United States were first and foremost economic endeavors. The physical, not the social problem was paramount. After World War II, the country’s cultural and political dominance, especially over its Cold War rival, the Soviet Union, unprecedented individual and economic prosperity, and domestic tranquility were to be promoted, attained and protected. It was this mindset that spurred urban renewal and the associated need to revitalize the central cities, thereby alleviating inequities and advancing to a new era of modernity, which would secure abundance for cities and all its residents in the so-called American century.

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369 Anderson argues that 50 to 75 percent of construction in urban renewal areas would have been built on the same or other locations even if there had been no such program. See Anderson (1964), pp. 180-81, 221-22.
Concerning Robert Moses and his relationship to the press, it can be said that the media significantly contributed to Moses' ability to transform New York, for it provided him with immense popularity, thus substantially spurring his career and giving him leverage in many decisive conflicts. Later in his career, when public opinion and the press turned against him, he had other means at his disposal which permitted him to get things done. Regarding public authorities, it is widely believed that a 

“favorable press was and is of critical importance […]. Stories that applauded the clearing of slums in Newark or New York […] kept the general public a friendly audience. […] Robert Moses’s [sic] news conferences, brochures, and regular column in Newsday […] were motivated by more—excused less—than a desire to keep the public fully informed. The battalions of press and information activities were carefully aimed at maintaining a favorable public image, devastating opponents”, and at proclaiming their “great public works”. 371

It is widely believed today that Moses, despite his undoubted shortcomings, had a beneficial impact on New York City. In retrospect, Moses was – in many regards – not a unique phenomenon but a product of his time. Nonetheless, his work still looms large in a city with many magnificent buildings. Moses’ character and his influence were certainly hardly typical. Yet, despite the scale of the New York metropolitan area, the “patterns of urban development in the region are far from unique.”372 Evolving similarly, virtually every metropolis experienced the deterioration of its CBD, a sharp decline of its population, and the massive loss of industrial employment. Moreover, cities across America built thousands of miles of highways and neglected mass transit. As we have seen throughout this paper, many of Moses’ accomplishments were not originally his but “rested on forty years of agreement about the future of the city”.373 Although he certainly left his own imprint on many of his enterprises, he 

“demonstrated that he was a consummate opportunist, adapting his activities to the spending priorities of the times, even while selectively borrowing he planning and design ideas innovated or advanced by others.”374

Moses’ ability to shape New York came through a mix of genuine power, force of personality, an effective publicity machine, and a set of prevailing circumstances and notions that resembled his. Given the complex governmental bureaucracy in which he operated and which imposed limits on his power, it is remarkable how Moses managed to disguise those limits

371 Danielson et al. (1982), pp. 334-35.
372 Ibid. p. 38.
and to push through large-scale projects. He promoted ideas that were shared by a majority of the public and important officials. Had he risen to power 20 years earlier, he probably would have had little chance to implement his plans, as, for example, the automobile was not as dominant yet. Likewise, had his heyday coincided with the urban crisis, his creative phase would have surely been briefer. Instead, Moses roads were a tremendous success, because Ford had come up with the cheap and mass manufacturing of the automobile. Also, he was able to shape much of the city thanks to the widespread belief that the city needed to be renewed from the inside out with federal funds in *City Efficient* manner, a notion rooted in the Progressive Era. As a representative of his generation, his actions conformed to the prevailing American notions of city rebuilding. Moses was part of a larger development that was not confined to New York. Insofar, Moses was symptomatic for his age:

“Moses was the right person in the right place at the right time. He did not invent a vision of a New York from whole cloth, but instead he deftly appropriated innovations and plans of others, adapting and combining them to suit his purposes and then readapting them as circumstances changed. He was a gifted opportunist and pragmatic administrator, able to shepherd public works projects through to completion at a breakneck pace by shrewdly accumulating institutional power and harnessing ever-shifting funding streams.”

Therefore, the real measure of Moses’ power is not how much was done when he was in office, but how much less would have been done had he not been in office. As I have demonstrated in this thesis, I hope convincingly, New York would have presumably evolved similarly if Moses had not lived, for the metropolis was as much subject to the underlying principles of the era as other cities, and blueprints like the RPonYAIIE and the CPC’s master plan were already at hand. Future generations will judge Moses’ impact from their perspective. Whatever the next round of historical revisionism brings about, cities everywhere become increasingly reliant on people like Moses as it gets harder to implement large-scale public works. I imagine that Robert Moses would have taken advantage of the opportunity to rebuild lower Manhattan after September 11. Regardless of upcoming views on Moses, his physical legacy will remain – at least in the foreseeable future.

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4. Appendix

4.1 Catalog of built work in New York City, 1924–1968

This catalog serves to illustrate both quantity and scope of Moses’ works. It lists physical works in the New York metropolitan area and on Long Island in whose creation or reshaping Robert Moses played the dominant role. This catalog makes no claim to be accurate or complete. The Long Island parks are listed according to their geographical position, from the city limit eastward. A complete list of Moses’ playground goes beyond the scope of this paper and is, moreover, unattainable for reasons I have mentioned in chapter 2.3.3. Therefore, I have only included examples of playgrounds based on his strategies of land acquisition. Pools are listed in order they opened. Parkways are listed separately from city roads, although Moses’ parkways were also built within the city. As each Title I project had several features that were built successively, I have only listed the most important features; the year indicates the publication of the plan. The year in brackets refers to the opening year or years the work was constructed.

1. Parks
   - **Neighborhood parks**
     - Battery Park, Manhattan (1941-52)
     - Bryant Park, Manhattan (1934)
     - East River Park, Manhattan (1939)
   - **City Parks**
     - Staten Island
       - Willowbrook Park, Wolfe’s Pond Park, Great Kills Park, South Beach Park, Clove Lakes Park, Silver Lake Park
     - Brooklyn
       - Dyker Beach Park, Jacob Riis Park, Canarsie Beach Park, Spring Creek Park, Rockaway Park
       - Prospect Park, Brooklyn (1934-61)
         - Prospect Park Zoo (1935), band shell, baseball diamonds, Wollman Rink
     - Queens
       - Forest Park, Brookville Park, Baisley Pond Park, Juniper Valley Park, Astoria Park, Cunningham Park, Alley Pond Park, Clearview Park, College Point Park, Kissena Park Corridor
       - Flushing Meadows-Corona Park
         - 1939 World’s Fair, 1964 World’s Fair, Shea Stadium (1964), Queens Zoo, Singer Bowl (1964)
     - Manhattan
       - Corlears Hook Park, Battery Park, Highbridge Park, Inwood Hill Park
       - Central Park (1934-62)
         - 15 marginal playgrounds (1936), North Meadow (1934), Great Lawn (1936), Mary Harriman Rumsey Playground (1937), Tavern on the Green (1934),
Bethesda Terrace restaurant (1935), zoo (1934), Conservatory Garden (1937), Ramble, Delacorte Theater (1962), Loeb Boathouse (1952), Krebs Boathouses (1953), Wollman memorial skating ring (1950)

- Randall’s and Wards Islands, Manhattan, Queens, and the Bronx (1934-68)
  - Downing Stadium (1936), Wards Island Pedestrian Bridge (1951)

  o Bronx
    - St. Mary’s Park, Crotona Park, Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx Park, Pelham Bay Park, Ferry Point Park, Soundview Park

- Long Island Parks
  - Valley Stream State Park
  - Hempstead Lake State Park
  - Jones Beach State Park
  - Massapequa State Park (undeveloped)
  - Bethpage State Park
  - Caumsett State Park
  - Gilgo State Park
  - Belmont Lake State Park
  - Robert Moses State Park
  - Captree State Park
  - Sunken Meadow State Park
  - Heckscher State Park (1929)
  - Connetquot State Park
  - Wildwood State Park
  - Orient Beach State Park
  - Hither Hills State Park
  - Montauk Point State Park

2. Beaches

- Jones Beach, Brooklyn (1926-29)
  - Jones Beach Marine Theater (1952)
- Orchard Beach, Bronx (1938)
- Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn (1955)
- Coney Island (beach and boardwalk expansion), Brooklyn (1938-41)
  - New York Aquarium at Coney Island, Brooklyn (1957)
- Jamaica Bay and Marine Park, Brooklyn (1924 to early 1950s)
- Jacob Riis Park (renovation), Queens (1936-38)
- Rockaway Improvement, Queens (1938-39)
- South Beach, Staten Island (1955)

3. Parkways

- Southern State Parkway (1927)
- Wantagh State Parkway (1929) and extension (1938)
- Northern State Parkway (1931)
- Meadowbrook State Parkway (1932-1934) and extensions (1935, 1956)
4. Bridges

- Henry Hudson Bridge (1936)
- Triborough Bridge (1936)
- Marine Parkway Bridge (1937)
- Alexander Hamilton Bridge (1963)
- Cross Bay Bridge (1939)
- Bronx-Whitestone Bridge (1939)
- Throgs-Neck Bridge (1961)
- Verrazano-Narrows Bridge (1964)

5. City roads

- Cross-Bronx-Expressway (1948-63)
- Major Deegan Expressway (1950-56)
- Bruckner Expressway (1957-74)
- Sheridan Expressway (1958-52)
- Brooklyn-Queens-Expressway (1964)
- Van Wyck Expressway (1950-63)
- Long Island Expressway (1955-72)
- Prospect Expressway (1962)
- Gowanus Expressway (1964)
· Whitestone Expressway (1963)
· Clearview Expressway (1963)
· Throgs-Neck Expressway
· Staten Island Expressway
· Seafoad-Oyster Bay Expressway
· Nassau Expressway
· New England Thoroughway
· Rockaway Freeway
· Cross Bay Boulevard
· Conduit Boulevard
· Atlantic Avenue
· Harlem River Drive
· East River Drive Extension

6. Tunnels
· Queens-Midtown Tunnel (1940)
· Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel (1950)
· Battery Park Underpass (1951)

7. Pools
· Hamilton Fish Pool and bathhouse, Manhattan (1936)
· Thomas Jefferson Pool and bathhouse, Manhattan (1936)
· Astoria Pool and play center, Queens (1936)
· Joseph H. Lyons Pool, Staten Island (1936)
· Highbridge Pool and bathhouse, Manhattan (1936)
· Sunset Pool, Brooklyn (1936)
· Crotona Pool, Bronx (1936)
· Faber Park and Brownsville, Bronx
· MacCarren Pool, Brooklyn (1936)
· Betsy Head Pool, Brooklyn (1936)
· Jackie Robinson Pool and recreation center, Manhattan (1936)
· Sol Goldman Pool, Brooklyn (1936)
· Barge pools, Manhattan (1938)
· Municipal bathhouse pools
  - Asser Levy Recreation Center, Manhattan (1938)
  - Carmine Street Pool and the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center, Manhattan (1939)
  - John Jay Pool and bathhouse, Manhattan (1940-42)
  - Recreation center 59, Manhattan (1943)
· Flushing Meadow Pool, Queens (1940)
8. Playgrounds

- **Prototype: war memorial playgrounds**\(^{376}\)
  - Louis Zimmerman Playground, Bronx
  - Ciccarone Playground, Bronx
  - William E. Sheridan Playground, Brooklyn
  - William McCray Playground, Manhattan
  - Joseph C. Sauer Playground, Manhattan
  - Daniel M. O’Connell Playground, Queens
  - Howard A. von Dohlen Playground, Queens
  - Austin J. McDonald Playground, Staten Island
  - Nicholas de Matti Playground, Staten Island

- **Reassignment**
  - Williamsbridge Oval, Bronx (1937)
  - Sara Delano Roosevelt Park, Manhattan (1934)

- **Rehabilitation**
  - Queensboro Oval, Manhattan (1934)

- **Landfill**
  - Carl Schurz Park, Manhattan (1936)

- **School sites**
  - P.S. 52 (Zebra Playground), Brooklyn (1951)

- **Housing sites**
  - Harlem Lane Playground, Manhattan (1937)
  - Colonel Charles Young Triangle, Manhattan (1937)
  - Frederick Johnson Park, Manhattan (1939)
  - Holcombe Rucker Playground, Manhattan (1956)

- **Arterial**
  - Shore Road Park, Brooklyn (1942)

9. Housing

- **Redevelopment Companies Act**
  - Stuyvesant Town, Manhattan
  - Peter Cooper Village, Manhattan
  - Riverton Houses, Manhattan

- **Public housing**
  - **Manhattan**
    - Governor Alfred E. Smith Houses, Lower East Side
    - La Guardia Houses, Lower East Side
    - Baruch Houses, Lower East Side
    - Lillian D. Wald Houses, Lower East Side (1949)
    - Riis Houses City, Lower East Side
    - Jacob Riis Houses, Lower East Side (1949)
    - John Elliott Houses

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\(^{376}\) These playgrounds all opened July 15, 1934.
• Lexington Houses, East Harlem
• Booker T. Washington Houses, East Harlem
• Carver Houses, East Harlem
• Frederick Douglas Houses, Upper West Side
• Stephen Foster Houses, Harlem
• James Weldon Johnson Houses, East Harlem
• Jefferson Houses, East Harlem
• Robert F. Wagner, Sr. Houses, East Harlem
• Abraham Lincoln Houses, East Harlem (1948)
• General Grant Houses, West Harlem
• Manhattanville Houses, West Harlem
• St. Nicholas Houses, Harlem
• Colonial Park Houses, Washington Heights

  o Brooklyn
  • Cooper Park Houses, Greenpoint
  • Bushwick Houses
  • Sumner Houses
  • Marcy Houses (1949)
  • Farragut Houses, Vinegar Hill
  • Gowanus Houses
  • Brevoort Houses
  • Albany Houses
  • Howard Houses
  • Brownsville Houses (1948)
  • Van Dyke House

  o Bronx
  • Morisania Houses
  • Melrose Houses

  o Queens
  • Astoria Houses

  ▪ Title Is
    • Corlears Hook (1951)
    • Harlem (1951)
    • North Harlem (1951)
    • Morningside-Manhattanville (1951)
    • Manhattantown (1951)
    • Columbus Circle (1952)
      - New York Coliseum (1953-56)
    • Fort Greene (1952)
    • Washington Square Southeast (1953)
    • NYU-Bellevue (1953)
    • Pratt Institute (1953)
    • Seaside Rockaway (1954)
    • Hammels Rockaway (1956)
4.2 Juxtapositional and additional maps

Juxtaposition of map 2 and map 7

Map 2: Regional highway routes, published in the RPoNYaIE

Map 7: Arterial roads in the New York region, 1955
Juxtaposition of map 10 and map 11

Map 10: City Planning Commission’s Master Plan, 1940

Map 11: Landscape by Moses: New York City


Source: Caro (1975), p. ii; section of original image shown.
Stuyvesant Town

Illustration 3: Stuyvesant Town (foreground)

Source: Ballon et al. (2007), p. 188; section of image shown.
Juxtaposition of maps 12 and 13 – Lincoln Square

Map 12: Lincoln Square, circa 1935-1955

Map 13: Lincoln Square, circa 1970

Map 14: landscape by Moses: New York City and Long Island

Source: Caro (1975), p. iii.
Map 15: Landscape by Moses: New York City and Nassau County

Source: Caro (1975), p. ii.
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4.5 Declaration


Gießen, 24.09.2011

Benjamin Bathke