

Abstract

Jacobs argued that grand planning schemes intending to redevelop large swaths of a city according to a central theoretical framework fail because planners do not understand that healthy cities are organic, spontaneous, messy, complex systems that result from evolutionary processes. She argued that a gradual pace of redevelopment would facilitate maintenance of existing interpersonal ties. This paper operationalises the concept of pace of development within a cross-sectional framework as the 'age diversity of housing'. Analysis of a population-based multilevel community survey of Chicago linked with census housing data predicts individual perceptions of neighbourhood social relations (cohesion, control, intergenerational closure and reciprocal exchange). A gradual pace of redevelopment resulting in historical diversity of housing significantly predicts social relations, lending support to Jacobs's claims.