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**The Civic Survey of Greater London:  
social mapping, planners and urban space in the early twentieth century**

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This paper examines work conducted between 1915 and 1919 by a group of architects and planners based at the Royal Institute of British Architects. The project, called the Civic Survey of Greater London, and the substantial collection of maps and diagrams that resulted from it are currently unknown in histories of mapping and planning, thus this paper offers a preliminary account and analysis of the work. The paper begins by assessing the development of surveying and mapping techniques in the nineteenth century with the aim of situating the Survey within broader historical trajectories and drawing out the theoretical elements of scholarship in the field in order to place the Survey analytically within histories of spatial knowledge. The following section of the paper examines the immediate context for the Survey, in particular the place of Patrick Geddes and his ideas. The third part of the paper focuses on the work of the Survey itself, drawing on the records of the project to document the circumstances of its establishment, indicate some those involved and examine the development of the work. The fourth part of the paper draws out key analytical threads in dialogue with a number of the maps of the Survey. The emphasis placed here is on exploring lines of continuity between the Civic Survey of Greater London and earlier techniques of representation and governmentality. The concluding section reflects briefly on the reasons for the Survey's subsequent relative obscurity and the importance of the project for later traditions of surveying.

**Key words:** civic survey; mapping; planning; representation; governmentality; Greater London.

‘Civic survey is in the air, and it is well that it should be...’<sup>1</sup>

There was great faith among certain architects, planners and sociologists in early twentieth-century Britain that the method of civic surveying would serve as the solid foundation for successful town planning. Indeed, among a few it was seen as a panacea with the potential to harness modern social scientific knowledge for the benefit of a future urban society founded on a greater sense of civic consciousness. It was a method concerned with gathering statistical evidence in order to map urban social geographies, but it was, initially at least, also closely tied to the reformist emphasis of early British sociology and connected to a desire to extend a sense of citizenship at a time when political change was shifting the terms of urban life. Seen against the background of the nineteenth century, civic surveying might be understood as drawing together and extending interest in statistics, mapping and urban reform; it partook of the Victorian tradition of utilizing Science to remedy social ills. In the more immediate context of the first years of the twentieth century, the development of civic surveying was shaped by the ideas of Patrick Geddes and the momentum he created during the 1900s and 1910s. His own work on the civic survey of Edinburgh was well known at the time and showcased at the Town Planning Conference held in London in 1910. From this point it is possible to trace the influence of the method among architects and planners who discussed, disseminated and then put it into practice.

The Civic Survey of Greater London (CSGL), which is the focus of this article, began in the summer of 1915 and continued until late 1919. It was based at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) throughout and resulted in a substantial volume of maps and diagrams that were exhibited in the galleries of the RIBA in 1920. The project has, to my knowledge, never before been examined; the maps and diagrams have only recently come to light.<sup>2</sup> In this article I present an initial examination and analysis of the CSGL. The paper begins by assessing the development of surveying and mapping techniques in the context of nineteenth century urbanization. The aim here is, firstly, to situate the CSGL within broader

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<sup>1</sup> Unattributed book review, ‘Social survey,’ *Town Planning Review*, 7 (1916) 61. Note that Patrick Abercrombie was the editor of *TPR* at the time and the words could easily have been his.

<sup>2</sup> I picked up the paper trail that lead eventually to the maps and diagrams of the CSGL while researching the London Society’s Development Plan, which was produced during the same period. The *Journal of the London Society* (May, 1915) contained intriguing references to a ‘National Civic Survey,’ apparently run by H. V. Lanchester and a record of the civic survey exhibition held at the RIBA appeared in the same journal in November 1920. Further references in the *Town Planning Review* prompted some searching of archival databases and the identification of the minute books of the CSGL in the archives of the RIBA. These implied that the collection of maps and diagrams produced by the Survey was considerable and I made contact with a number of individuals and institutions in the hope that some had survived. They had, in their entirety, and are held at the London Metropolitan Archives, but have never been catalogued. However, they were assessed by an archivist in the 1990s. Though that archivist is now retired, Bridget Howlett, a senior archivist at the LMA, remembered the work of her colleague and responded to my enquiries. The collection remains, currently uncatalogued but extensive and fascinating, at the LMA.

historical trajectories and, secondly, to draw out the relevant theoretical elements of contemporary scholarship in this field in order to place the CSGL analytically within histories of spatial knowledge. The following section of the paper examines the immediate context in which the Survey took place. In particular, it reviews the place of Patrick Geddes and his ideas, and develops an account of the growing interest in civic surveying among architects and planners. The third part of the paper focuses on the work of The Civic Survey of Greater London. This section draws on the records of the project itself to document the circumstances of its establishment, indicate some those involved and examine the development of the work. The fourth part of the paper draws out key analytical threads in dialogue with the maps of the CSGL. This section proceeds by elaborating the correspondence between some of the major features of the mapping project and some of the most significant theoretical currents in urban historical scholarship. The emphasis I place here is on exploring lines of continuity between the CSGL and earlier techniques of representation and governance. The concluding section reflects briefly on the reasons for the Survey's subsequent relative obscurity and the importance of the project for later traditions of surveying.

### **Investigation, representation and social mapping in the nineteenth century**

The desire and the need to understand the modern industrial city had generated a wide range of investigations and methodologies long before civic surveying emerged as a distinct approach to mapping urban space. As cities began to grow, first in terms of population and then from the mid-century onwards also in terms of spatial extension, nineteenth century Britain was captivated by its urban geography and society.<sup>3</sup> Urbanization occasioned change that was profoundly challenging in both its complexity and its rapidity, and responses to this newly complex urban environment came often in the form of increases in the production of knowledge and changes in the nature of the knowledge sought. Where urbanization transformed Britain's urban world into an uncharted territory, likened by contemporaries to a foreign land, a cast of early social investigators, campaigners and journalists set about exploring the 'darkest' parts of cities.<sup>4</sup> Thus, for example, in Manchester and London from the 1830s, and then spreading and developing through other cities, statistical societies began conducting surveys of poverty, seeking to reveal the conditions of life amongst the poor through their analyses.<sup>5</sup> Health reformers, most notably Edwin Chadwick, also sought to unveil the nature of poverty. Indeed, according to Childers, the investigations and subsequent reports of Chadwick challenged the dominant paradigm of observation by presenting a

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<sup>3</sup> See Andrew Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought, 1820-1940*, Manchester, 1985.

<sup>4</sup> Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, London, 1990, 62-3; David Cannadine, *Victorian Cities: How Different? Social History*, 2 (1977) 460; Felix Driver, *Geography Militant. Cultures of Exploration and Empire*, Oxford, 2001, 170-198.

<sup>5</sup> M. J. Cullen, *The Statistical Movement in Early Victorian Britain: The Foundations of Empirical Social Research*, New York, 1975; Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930*, Cambridge, 2008, 69.

‘profusion of unsparing images of the poor.’<sup>6</sup> By the middle of the century Henry Mayhew was pioneering investigative journalism, revealing the minutiae of urban life among the lower classes through his exploration of London’s street scene, while during the 1870s and 80s an increasing number of editorials, articles and pamphlets drew popular attention to the existence and experience of urban slums.<sup>7</sup>

Much of the concern to know and to chart came from the conviction that invisibility resulted in moral deficiency, and that a lack of knowledge among reformers and officials resulted in an inability to intervene and ameliorate. Thus, according to Chadwick, forcing the poor into ‘places...that [were] secluded from superior inspection and common observation’ contributed to the deepening of their poverty.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Adam Smith articulated the importance of visibility in securing morality:

‘Sunk in obscurity and darkness [the poor city dweller’s] conduct is observed and attended to by nobody, and he is therefore very likely to neglect himself, and to abandon himself to every sort of low prodigality and vice.’<sup>9</sup>

These were, of course, revisions of an older theological strain of thought that posited an omniscient deity capable of overseeing the actions of each individual. In the context of the modern liberal city, however, with its swelling masses of labourers and its chaotic spaces, the logic was transfigured into a rationale for scientific investigation and government from above.<sup>10</sup> They were articulations of a sentiment that became generalized among nineteenth century reformers who were, Driver has shown, ‘particularly concerned [with] their own lack of control over such spaces,’ and they lead to an ‘overriding obsession with hidden recesses, narrow turnings, dark alleys and shadowy corners.’<sup>11</sup> Thus, there was a strongly moralising tone behind the call to ‘dive in’ to the slums and alleys of Britain’s cities and to wrest from the immersion a guide to the terrain that would support decisive interventions.<sup>12</sup>

Extending well beyond the focus on poverty and health, the investigative impulse to measure, quantify, classify and map became a characteristic intellectual and professional mode of the century. Thus, Richard Dennis has pointed to the demand from government for increasing quantities of precise information to facilitate planning, regulation and taxation, to the requirements of businesses for knowledge on which to base investment decisions, and to

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<sup>6</sup> J. W. Childers, ‘Observation and representation: Mr. Chadwick writes the poor,’ *Victorian Studies*, 37 (1994) 406.

<sup>7</sup> See A. S. Wohl’s introductory essay, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London, with leading articles from the Pall Mall Gazette of October 1883 and articles by Lord Salisbury, Joseph Chamberlain and Forster Crozier*, Leicester, 1970.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted by Childers, ‘Observation and representation,’ p 409.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted by Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864*, Chicago and London, 1995, 33-4.

<sup>10</sup> See Poovey, *Making a Social Body* and Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City*, London and New York, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Driver, *Geography Militant*, 180.

<sup>12</sup> Driver quotes George Godwin (1859) encouraging his readers to ‘dive...into the back-slums of London – the social morasses – the shadowy corners.’ *Geography Militant*, 181.

the production of building inventories to support the risk assessments of insurance companies.<sup>13</sup> These approaches to knowledge production resulted in representations of urban life that were explicitly intended to make the city more legible; they were fundamentally concerned with an instrumental spatialization of the urban economy and society. Thus, the project of mapping gained a new sense of urgency during the Victorian period alongside widespread use of quantification and classification. Dennis has indicated, for example, the shift in the scale at which the Ordnance Survey mapped towns as it responded to the needs, first, of public health and sanitary bodies and later the requirements of the Land Registry for greater detail and scrutiny of the urban landscape and its infrastructures.<sup>14</sup> Translating the complexities of the urban environment into an navigable terrain also accompanied the growth of other aspects of urban commercial life and consumption. As Morris and Rodger have pointed out, while relatively few towns and cities had a trade directory or an accurately surveyed map in 1750, a century later urban centres without travel guides, city directories, tourist maps and a rapidly increasing volume of surveys and plans were the exception.<sup>15</sup>

Within this context of innovation in the representations of urban space and society, cartographic techniques, including the use of social mapping, developed markedly. Key early examples in Britain included the mapping of incidences of disease, crime and pauperism, and graphic representations of this nature were honed as the century progressed.<sup>16</sup> In some cases mapping city space was a precursor to voluntary activity, such as in the example given by Mary Poovey of Bible Missions for whom the act of mapping and subdividing space was a prerequisite to their programme of social work.<sup>17</sup> However, the most prominent instance of social mapping in nineteenth century Britain was, of course, the work of Charles Booth. Begun in 1886, Booth's investigation into poverty in London lasted for seventeen years. His process of data collection relied on the record keeping of various officials, including London School Board visitors, charity officers, the police and the clergy, thus aligning the project with the moral interventionism characteristic of the century. The success of his work, which caused a public sensation when it was published, rested partly on the depth of his investigation, but also, Christian Topalov has argued, on the translation of his findings into graphic form.<sup>18</sup> The 'Descriptive Map of London Poverty, 1889' showed levels of poverty across the metropolitan area, fragmenting the space of the capital through meticulous colour-coding to indicate the location and level of poverty. It was this visual depiction that spoke

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<sup>13</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 52.

<sup>14</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 55.

<sup>15</sup> R. J. Morris and Richard Rodger, 'An introduction to British urban history,' in: R. J. Morris and Richard Rodger (eds) *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914*, London and New York, 1993, 8.

<sup>16</sup> See M. Bulmer, K. Bales and K. K. Sklar, 'The social survey in historical perspective,' in: M. Bulmer, K. Bales and K. K. Sklar (eds) *The Social Survey in Historical Perspective, 1880-1940*, Cambridge, 1991, 32.

<sup>17</sup> Bulmer, Bales and Sklar, 'The social survey,' 44.

<sup>18</sup> See K. Bales for a discussion of reactions to Booth's work, 'Popular reactions to sociological research: the case of Charles Booth,' *Sociology*, 33, 1 (1999) 153-168.

‘directly to the public.’<sup>19</sup> It was the first time that such a map, dealing thematically with the entirety of the city, had been produced and the result of this remarkable work was, again according to Topalov, ‘a revolutionary change in the scientific representation of society.’<sup>20</sup>

It is worth deviating here from an exclusive focus on British urban history to draw in the development of social mapping in France, especially the evolution of Parisian urban cartography over the nineteenth century. Antoine Picon has examined alterations in mapping conventions that occurred during this period.<sup>21</sup> He records that urban maps increased in both number and in scale, that they became more systematic and began to be gathered together, bound into volumes that reflected the century’s professional preoccupations with health and poverty, geology and engineering, architecture and infrastructure. Indeed, Picon has argued that nineteenth century Paris witnessed the emergence of a

‘sensitivity to the three-dimensional character of the city [that] deepened as the urban elite came to see the city as a complex sedimentation of natural and human layers. No single map could give a satisfying account of this foliated reality; thus the recourse to a series of maps, to atlases, was...a necessity.’<sup>22</sup>

Maps showing archaeological remains and underground networks were, therefore, set alongside those depicting the spatial distribution of crime and prostitution, property values or incidences of disease. Picon’s discussion offers various examples of thematic urban atlases published during the middle years of the century, but his narrative culminates with the publication of Jacques Bertillon’s *Atlas de statistique graphique de la ville de Paris*. This work, appearing in 1889 and 1891, and therefore contemporaneous with Booth’s, ‘made striking use of graphic techniques’ to show various aspects of the city’s activity.<sup>23</sup>

The analyses offered by Topalov in connection to Booth’s work and by Picon in his discussion of Parisian cartography have a number of instructive similarities. At the core, for both writers, is the contention that these approaches to representing urban space manifested certain novel characteristics. Firstly, mapping techniques began to register and embrace the technical and scientific currents of industrial revolution. In particular, they pressed forward the use of quantification, introducing both categorical uniformity and spatial standardization. Thus, the Parisian atlases drew on the increasing depth and breadth of statistical information collected by public administration, while Booth pioneered the transformation of social classes into statistical categories. This feature of nineteenth-century social mapping contributed to a transformation of the city in perspectival terms: as ‘urban cartography became more and more permeable to the scientific discourses and practices of the time...Mapping the

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<sup>19</sup> Christian Topalov, ‘The city as *terra incognita*: Charles Booth’s poverty survey and the people of London, 1886-1891,’ *Planning Perspectives*, 8 (1993) 408.

<sup>20</sup> Topalov, ‘The city as *terra incognita*,’ 397.

<sup>21</sup> Antoine Picon, ‘Nineteenth-century urban cartography and the scientific ideal: the case of Paris,’ *OSIRIS*, 18 (2003), 135-149.

<sup>22</sup> Picon, ‘Nineteenth-century urban cartography,’ 138-9.

<sup>23</sup> Picon, ‘Nineteenth-century urban cartography,’ 147-8.



city...became part of its transformation into an object apprehensible in scientific terms.<sup>24</sup> In the examples of both Booth's work and the Parisian urban atlases this shift towards a methodology that utilized the language and tools of empirical science consolidated and drove forward the desire to know in order to intervene and govern. Picon has thus pointed to a 'new political agenda' underpinning the evolution in mapping that was directly influenced by social unrest in Paris. It was this, he argued, that provided the impetus for mapping the urban subterranean, in particular the extensive Parisian quarries: 'the underground symbolized the resistance of the citizens to sanitation and pacification...exposing the structure of the city's bowels, making all aspects visible, was part of a larger program of rational control.'<sup>25</sup> Topalov does not discuss the London riots of 1886, which formed the immediate context, if not the cause, for the start of Booth's work, though this is explored elsewhere.<sup>26</sup> However, Topalov does point to the rhetorical framing of Booth's study. Continuing the British tradition of likening areas of poverty to alien territories and characterising those living in poverty as morally questionable or even dangerous, Booth described the members of his lowest social category as 'savages' and his process of investigation as a 'voyage of exploration.'<sup>27</sup> In both cases, the act of gathering quantitative, and therefore scientifically valid knowledge, and the production of a visual representation that spatialized that knowledge, was fundamentally connected to the extension of control over the unruly complexity of urban social life. In Paris thematic atlases were produced as a 'tool' of government that could help officials both 'understand and manage the city,' while Booth's work was an attempt to 'take possession of the territory by a complete representation of it... therefore open[ing it] to a coordinated administration.'<sup>28</sup>

### **Patrick Geddes and the civic survey in early twentieth century London**

Topalov's analysis of Booth's work appeared some years in advance of Picon's consideration of Parisian cartography, and Topalov does not refer to the thematic atlases that are Picon's concern. However he does indicate that Booth's insistence on a quantitative approach derived in part from his admiration of French sociologists, particularly Frederic Le Play.<sup>29</sup> Patrick Geddes, too, was influenced by the more established traditions of sociology in France. Geddes first came across the approach of Le Play in 1878 and from that point developed both his perspective, his practical work and a network of acquaintances around his regard for Le Play.<sup>30</sup> In addition, Geddes had a longstanding interest in the work of the France geographer Elisée Reclus. During time spent in Edinburgh, Reclus collaborated with Geddes over the establishment of the Outlook Tower and Geddes was a staunch supporter of

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<sup>24</sup> Picon, 'Nineteenth-century urban cartography,' 140.

<sup>25</sup> Picon, 'Nineteenth-century urban cartography,' 143.

<sup>26</sup> Bales, 'Popular Reactions to Sociological Research.'

<sup>27</sup> Topalov, 'The city as *terra incognita*,' 412.

<sup>28</sup> Picon, 'Nineteenth-century urban cartography,' 139; Topalov, 'The city as *terra incognita*,' 412.

<sup>29</sup> Topalov, 'The City as *Terra Incognita*,' 397-8.

<sup>30</sup> Sian Reynolds, *Paris-Edinburgh: Cultural Connections in the Belle Epoque*, Aldershot, 2007, 83.

Reclus's proposal to construct a 'Great Globe' for the Paris Exhibition of 1900.<sup>31</sup> Geddes was, then, familiar with the vanguard of French social science and geography, and he knew also of Booth's study and map of London, claiming pre-eminence for London in the field of social survey because of Booth's map in his first lecture to the Sociological Society in 1903.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, while the intellectual foundation stones of Geddes' ideas, established during a period working for T. H. Huxley during the 1870s, lay in the natural sciences, Geddes was a disciplinary magpie. The work done during his time based in the Outlook Tower in the heart of Edinburgh's Old Town, which came to serve as an exemplar of his ideas and but of his survey method, reflected his interest in biology, geography, sociology and social reform. In his 'sociological laboratory' at the Outlook Tower Geddes brought these disciplines together in the method of civic survey, generating an exhibition of maps, plans, photographs, engravings and statistical data that was, to use Meller's phrase, 'a prototype for a new kind of municipal museum.'<sup>33</sup>

Edinburgh and the Outlook Tower were Geddes's base until 1900 when he shifted his focus to London. His output during his time in London was later eclipsed in terms of volume by the fifty town planning reports for Indian cities he authored after his move there in 1914, but in terms of his theory of civics and his methodology – the survey – the first decade of the twentieth century was definitive.<sup>34</sup> Taken together, his outputs during this period formed the basis of his ideas and the focus for those interested in his project.<sup>35</sup> Geddes argued that it was the city which most significantly impacted on the shape and quality of human life and that, therefore, the new science of sociology should be a 'Science of cities.'<sup>36</sup> He was, however, concerned by what he believed was a widespread lack of awareness of and participation in the communal life of cities and, so, at the core of his schema lay a conviction that sociology, conceived as 'civics or applied sociology,' would provide the means of developing both the landscape of cities and the citizens of the future. 'The investigation of the City,' he argued, 'tends towards the practice of citizenship' and sociology should aim to become 'the institute of citizenship.'<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Reynolds, *Paris-Edinburgh*, 95. Reclus's Great Globe was an ambitious project and never completed. The proposal involved the construction of a globe large enough to show the contours of the earth. Geddes tried to raise funds for the venture, describing its potential as an 'ever-progressive record of geographic exploration and survey' capable of being 'displayed, visited and studied...a universal geography.'

<sup>32</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Civics: As Applied Sociology,' *Sociological Papers vol. I*, London, 1905, 104.

<sup>33</sup> Helen E. Meller, *Patrick Geddes. Social evolutionist and city planner*, London and New York, 1993, 106.

<sup>34</sup> Helen E. Meller, 'Patrick Geddes: An Analysis of his Theory of Civics, 1880-1904,' *Victorian Studies*, 16 (1973) 293.

<sup>35</sup> During this decade Geddes published his report for Dunfermline, *City Development. A Study of Parks, Gardens and Culture-Institutes. A Report to the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust*, 1904, Edinburgh, gave three lectures to the Sociological Society that provided the key articulation of the scope of his ambitious programme, his theory of civics and surveying method, and wrote *Cities in Evolution*.

<sup>36</sup> Geddes, 'Civics,' 86.

<sup>37</sup> Geddes, 'Civics,' 157, 160.

The civic, regional or social survey<sup>38</sup> was at the core of his conception of sociology. It was, he asserted, a methodology that would ‘appeal to practical men and civic workers,’ serve to inform and educate citizens about their locality and provide the basis of a civic museum or exhibition (like the Outlook Tower) that could secure some sense of continuity in the context of ongoing change.<sup>39</sup> As Geddes presented the method, civic survey was to reflect the knowledge gained through a range of disciplines, though he consistently placed greatest emphasis on geography, history and social study. At an early meeting of the Sociological Society, held in London in 1904, Geddes asked his audience where, in ‘coming to concrete Civic Survey...shall we begin?’<sup>40</sup> The answer lay in the ‘panoramic view of a definite geographic region.’<sup>41</sup> This should be followed by a historic survey that would recognise and examine the city as a ‘drama in time.’<sup>42</sup> The historic aspect of the surveying technique was to provide the basis for comprehending the contingency of the future upon the present, just as the present rested on the past, and so ‘reach[ing] the plane of modern civic problems and policies’.<sup>43</sup> Social study would naturally follow, providing a survey of contemporary life, cementing an analytical grasp of such aspects of collective life as transport networks and infrastructure, methods of communication and the distribution of amenities. The results of these phases of work should, according to Geddes, be exhibited with accompanying illustrations. Indeed, he was insistent about the value of translating information into visual form, specifically mentioning the use of maps, plans, photographs and statistics.<sup>44</sup>

The first two lectures Geddes gave before the Sociological Society described his method in largely abstract terms, but in the third he sought to demonstrate the application of the method to London. He argued that the remarkable growth of London into a regional urban landscape had bequeathed it a difficult legacy: it possessed little sense of cohesive identity, instead manifesting a spatial fragmentation that militated against the development of citizenship. ‘Here, in this vastest of all cities as regards numbers,’ he argued, ‘what should be seen as a ghastly paradox has become a mere commonplace, that this “greatest of cities” is as

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<sup>38</sup> Geddes’s use of terms was frequently inconsistent. In his lectures before the Sociological Society he used terms civic, regional and social survey apparently interchangeably, see ‘Civics.’ My focus on the ‘civic’ survey reflects the primary topic of this paper, the Civic Survey of Greater London. The term ‘civic’, rather than ‘regional’ was deliberately chosen by those conducting the CSGL. C. Harrison Townsend, the assistant director, commented in an explanation of the project that a survey civic ‘might embrace the consideration of a whole county, or even a group of counties, irrespective of any particular town or city centre, where the words “Regional Survey” seem best fitted to define the scope of the undertaking. What, however, at the present time is being more widely and particularly discussed is the *Civic* survey...’ (emphasis in the original), ‘The Civic Survey,’ *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 23, 177.

<sup>39</sup> Geddes, ‘Civics,’ 103, 113, 118.

<sup>40</sup> Geddes, ‘Civics,’ 104.

<sup>41</sup> Geddes, ‘Civics,’ 104-5.

<sup>42</sup> Geddes, ‘Civics,’ 107.

<sup>43</sup> Geddes, ‘Civics,’ 108.

<sup>44</sup> Geddes, ‘Civics,’ 110.

yet the least developed in citizenship.’<sup>45</sup> The solution rested, of course, on the practical application of his civic survey method. He argued again for the value of combining social and spatial representations, pointing to their ability to supply a view of an urban whole that could never otherwise be seen: ‘how can we hope to become aware of this stupendous city around us?...London is too big for us: nobody has ever seen it in any complete way, nobody ever will.’<sup>46</sup> In the composite representation of the survey, however, a new mode of perception was established. Utilizing the skills of topographers, who could describe the whole landscape, the quantitative resources of the registrar, who could supply demographic characteristics, and ‘half a dozen other specialisms,’ Geddes claimed that the complexity and scale of Britain’s courbations, particularly London, could be meaningfully comprehended.<sup>47</sup> It was the task of the Geddesian sociologist to ‘try to use the results of all these different specialisms, but to avoid the limitations of their cultivators by uniting all these various partial concepts of the city into a single living whole.’<sup>48</sup> The final step Geddes proposed was the creation of a civic museum and exhibition, based on the results of the civic survey, that would serve as a centre for study and planning.

Geddes’s work on the civic survey of Edinburgh assumed an important place in 1910 when London played host to the international Town Planning Conference. He was provided with funding to transport his work from Scotland to London for exhibition at the conference where it was presented to Britain’s early planners as ‘a developed example of the methods of Survey of Cities.’<sup>49</sup> Its inclusion in the Town Planning Conference generated momentum for the promotion of civic survey. Immediately following the event the Cities Committee of the Sociological Society, which had been formed to reflect the Geddesian emphasis on urban study, merged with the Exhibition Committee of the Town Planning Conference, placing John Burns, president of the Local Government Board and promoter of the Housing, Town Planning Act 1909, in the role of president and Geddes in the position of convenor.<sup>50</sup> This new Committee sought to promote the surveying method using Geddes’s survey of Edinburgh as the centre piece for a touring exhibition. The material was offered, at a cost of £300, to councils interested in town planning. Chabard’s investigation of the career of the Exhibition has shown that it journeyed through London, where it was displayed at Crosby Hall after the Town Planning Conference, and on to Edinburgh, Dublin and Belfast between February and August 1911.<sup>51</sup>

The Cities Committee also published a pamphlet on ‘City Survey preparatory to Town Planning.’ This short explanation of the survey method, prepared presumably under the watch of Burns and Geddes, provides an insight into the contemporary dissatisfactions

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<sup>45</sup> Patrick Geddes, ‘A Suggested Plan for a Civic Museum (or Civic Exhibition) and its Associated Studies,’ *Sociological Papers, vol. III*, London, 1907, 200-201.

<sup>46</sup> Geddes, ‘A Suggested Plan,’ 201-2.

<sup>47</sup> Geddes, ‘A Suggested Plan,’ 204.

<sup>48</sup> Geddes, ‘A Suggested Plan,’ 204.

<sup>49</sup> Patrick Geddes, ‘The Civic Survey of Edinburgh,’ *Town Planning Conference, London, 10-15 October, Transactions*, London, 1911, 538.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Report for the year 1911,’ *Sociological Society Reports 1905-1911*, p 7-8 (no author given).

<sup>51</sup> P. Chabard, ‘Competing scales in transnational networks: the impossible travel of Patrick Geddes; Cities Exhibition to America, 1911-1913,’ *Urban History*, 36 (2009) 208.

surrounding the Housing, Town Planning Etc., Act. Though it began with some appreciative noise, it moved quickly into a critical mode about the progress of work under the Act: 'We have reason to fear that [the planning] schemes in incubation...are not based upon any sufficient surveys of the past development and present conditions of their towns, nor upon adequate knowledge of good and bad Town-Planning elsewhere.'<sup>52</sup> The pamphlet argued that 'Survey before Town Planning' was 'the natural order' and that the authors saw this emphasis as 'the beginning of a new movement – one already characterised by an arousal of civic feeling, and a corresponding awakening of more enlightened and more generous citizenship.'<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, according to this publication there were a number of urban centres already in the process of developing surveys.<sup>54</sup> A full survey should consider, it argued, 'the whole topography of the town and its extensions,' generating contour maps, geology maps and climate maps. A historical survey was essential: 'By this study of the actual progress of town developments...our present forecasts of future developments may usefully be aided and criticized.' The survey would also investigate and map the means of communication, the place of the centre in its region and the social aspects of urban life. The breakdown of subjects and their sub-fields offered a challengingly lengthy list of categories which would, it argued, together provide a picture of the whole city. The pamphlet gave instructions for the exhibition of the work, which should include '(a)...good examples of Town-Planning elsewhere' and '(b)...designs and suggestions towards the City's Future.' Finally, there was the encouragement that the information should be given 'as far as possible in graphic form, i.e. expressed in maps and plans, illustrated by drawings, photographs, engravings, etc., with statistical summaries, and with the necessary descriptive text.'

### **Architects, planners and the civic survey method during the first World War**

There is no doubt that the method of civic survey was being actively taken up and developed by architects and planners at this point. In addition to the touring exhibition and the pamphlet produced by the Sociological Society, the RIBA prepared and published a series of 'Suggestions to Promoters of Town Planning Schemes.'<sup>55</sup> These suggestions call for 'civic' and 'technical' survey. The first element being a process of information gathering that would consider the social and economic conditions of a town, its geographical and historical characteristics, while the second involved the conversion of information into visual form. Departing in its recommendations from the Geddesian emphasis on public involvement in surveying as a means to enhance citizenship, the statement suggested such work would be of use specifically for 'those actually engaged in planning the town.' Nevertheless, in all other regards this description remained consistent with earlier expositions of the method: work should include the colouring of Ordnance maps to indicate distributions, densities and values;

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<sup>52</sup> Cities Committee: Sociological Society, 'City Survey Preparatory to Town Planning.'

<sup>53</sup> Cities Committee, 'City Survey.'

<sup>54</sup> 'In Leicester and Richmond, Woolwich and Chelsea, Dundee and Edinburgh progress has already been made...' Cities Committee, 'City Survey.'

<sup>55</sup> 'Suggestions to Promoters of Town Planning Schemes,' *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 18 (1911), 661-668 (no author given).

models would show the contour of land; and photographs could record features (trees, prospects, buildings, etc) worth preserving.<sup>56</sup> This statement gave a clear indication of the interest of the Institute in the survey process, however, the concurrent progress of the planning schemes was glacial. By spring 1914, five years after the passing of the Act, only two, both in Birmingham, has been approved and just three more were completed, submitted to the LGB and awaiting approval.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, following the outbreak of war in July there was a near cessation of building activity and architects and surveyors began to lose their sources of income as both public and private work halted abruptly. The scale of unemployment was significant: in 1915 Patrick Abercrombie reported the discharge of 1,700 surveyors at one month's notice.<sup>58</sup> At the Local Government Board's Committee for the Prevention and Relief of Distress, a sub-committee tasked with considering the needs of 'professional classes' recommended that an initial grant of £1,000 be made to support a 'civic survey scheme' put forward by a number of organizations representing the interests of architects and surveyors.<sup>59</sup> The *Town Planning Review* of January 1915 suggested that this scheme had been under development during the previous year.<sup>60</sup> The bodies involved in these early discussions, whose representatives went on the form the Civic Survey Joint Committee (CSJC), included the RIBA, the Surveyors' Institution, the Society of Architects, the National Housing and Town Planning Council, the newly formed Town Planning Institute, the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, The London Society, the Architect's War Committee and the Architect's Benevolent Society.<sup>61</sup> Such a list suggests that the scheme was both widely known and supported by the organizations representing architecture and the emerging planning profession at the time.

The *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* carried two separate accounts of the civic survey method during 1915. The first gave a list of eight categories in which material gathered through survey should be grouped: archaeological, social and recreative, educational, hygienics, commerce, traffic, valuation and general. 'The information gathered under these headings,' the piece continued, 'would be placed in graphic form on ordnance maps, thus giving facilities for comparison...and forming a permanent record of present

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<sup>56</sup> 'Suggestions to Promoters,' 661-2.

<sup>57</sup> Patrick Abercrombie, 'The Town Planning Act. Memorandum of Progress and New Procedure Regulations,' *Town Planning Review*, V, 1 (1914) 57. In this article Abercrombie remained (one suspects strategically) positive about progress under the Act, describing many authorities as getting 'seriously to grips with their schemes.' In practice, however, this meant that in 47 cases the preliminary stage of being granted authority to prepare schemes by the LGB had been reached and 14 further applications for that preliminary authority had been submitted to the LGB.

<sup>58</sup> Letter to the Civic Survey Joint Committee, minutes of Civic Survey Joint Committee, RIBA Archives, RIBA/Env (hereafter Minutes CSJC), 19 October, 1915.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from the Secretary of the Government Committee on the Prevention and Relief of Distress, 24 June 1915, Minutes CSJC.

<sup>60</sup> 'Chronicle of Passing Events. Civic Surveys in War Time,' *Town Planning Review*, 5 (1915) 331 (no author given).

<sup>61</sup> See 'Chronicle of Passing Events,' also letter from Ernest Newton and Rudolf Dircks (CSJC) to James Bird, Clerk of the London County Council, 21 June, 1921, London Metropolitan Archives Acc/3582/049.

conditions and future possibilities.<sup>62</sup> The second account of the method, written by Geddes's collaborator, planner H. V. Lanchester, gave details of a version of the civic survey authored by Raymond Unwin. Well-established as a leading light in the early planning movement, Unwin had worked on Letchworth Garden City and Hampstead Garden Suburb. Significantly, however, at this time he was the recently appointed chief inspector of planning at the Local Government Board. His lengthily titled 'Schedule of Preliminary Information the Collection and Consideration of which at a Public Town Planning Enquiry Should be Provided for by the Town Planning Bill' followed the recommendations of the Sociological Society's Cities Committee by framing the survey method as a tool that would operate specifically to support planning schemes. His account was, if anything, even more extensive and detailed than earlier versions of the method. Unwin suggested a survey should gather old maps that could show the lines of previous urban development, geological maps and maps demonstrating local environmental variables such as rainfall and prevailing winds, contour maps that could show the level of the ground at regular intervals and, as a supplementary source of information, relief models would be 'most desirable.'<sup>63</sup> Maps of traffic conditions should account for the direction and volume of flow and for railway, waterway, highway and tramway infrastructures. Public buildings, the distribution of manufacturing areas, concentrations of poverty or insanitation must also be identified. He considered, too, that 'all the finer trees in the area' and 'historical and legendary associations with places or buildings' should form part of the survey work.<sup>64</sup> Further, Unwin recommended the gathering of sufficient information to give a complete picture of current land use throughout the area under survey and, again signalling continuity with previous formulations of the method, he emphasised the importance of translating information into graphic form. Indeed, Unwin pressed the value of gathering old maps, plans and photographs, but at the core of his method remained a series of maps coloured to show 'the present condition of the town'.<sup>65</sup> Lanchester followed his description of Unwin's method with further detailed specifications, including suggested colour schemes.

The stated aim of the Civic Survey of Greater London, reported in the *Town Planning Review* in 1915, was to produce 'a series of graphic diagrams...dealing with questions of sanitary conditions, amenity and convenience, and showing both the merits and faults of a district.'<sup>66</sup> Like the pamphlet issued by the Cities Committee and Raymond Unwin's account, this explanation, probably authored by Patrick Abercrombie as editor at the time, suggested that a survey would produce diagrams relating to the physical characteristics of the area, its vital statistics (births, deaths and disease), growth and density of population, provision of open space, character of industry, scope of services, traffic and housing. Work began in July 1915, the project shaped by a series of terms attached to the Government grant.

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<sup>62</sup> Architects' War Committee: Relief of Professional Unemployment, *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, XXII (1915) 46-7 (no author given).

<sup>63</sup> Quoted by H. V. Lanchester, 'The Civic Development Survey as a War Measure,' *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, XXII (1915) 107.

<sup>64</sup> Lanchester, 'The Civic Development Survey,' 107.

<sup>65</sup> Lanchester, 'The Civic Development Survey,' 107.

<sup>66</sup> 'Chronicle of Passing Events. Civic Surveys in War Time,' 331.

These stipulated that a maximum of 40 men at any one time could be employed on the survey of Greater London; it set their rate of pay at a maximum of £2 per week and their period of employment at a limit of 6 months (the latter condition was subsequently relaxed); and it required a monthly progress report to be sent to the Professional Classes Sub-Committee throughout the period of work. In the end, that work continued, with a fluctuating number of men employed on the scheme, until October 1919 at which point government funding totalled close to £14,000, a figure that would have equated to approximately £800,000 in 2011 and thus represented a reasonably significant official investment in the development of the method.<sup>67</sup> The RIBA was central to the project, offering accommodation for the ongoing work and gallery space to exhibit the results in its rooms at Conduit Street. Regular attendees of the CSJC included its chairman and RIBA president, Ernest Newton, the architect-planners W. R. Davidge, H. V. Lanchester, S. D. Adshead and Paul Waterhouse. The work itself was overseen by an honorary director, a position held by the architect Arthur Rutherford Jemmett until he became ill in 1919, and an assistant director. Additional research is required to establish in greater depth who the employees of the CSGL were – the minutes indicate 81 staff in total – but figures such as C. F. A. Voysey were employed for periods on the work.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, the project attracted a good deal of attention. Visits were paid to the working rooms of the CSGL by John Burns and Raymond Unwin, and letters of interest, some requesting help in setting up similar work, came from different parts of the country.<sup>69</sup>

The scope of the Civic Survey was ambitious. Consistent with the methodological recommendations given in earlier accounts of the method, they sought to gather information relating to a wide range of aspects of the conurbation's geography and social life. Figures 1 and 2 shows a table of classification developed by the CSGL to illustrate the hoped for scope of the survey and the systematic nature of their approach. A remarkable record of the project, the table identifies and groups subjects as categories of knowledge linked to sources of

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<sup>67</sup> This sum was calculated using the Bank of England's online inflation calculator (<http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/education/Pages/inflation/calculator/flash/default.aspx>). My thanks to Professor Chris Leishman for his advice about the best way to estimate this figure; errors will, without doubt, be mine. This was not the only source of funding for the Civic Survey, though further work is required to establish the amounts and sources of additional funds.

<sup>68</sup> A letter from Voysey, expressing gratitude for 'timely help' during a period of 'domestic and financial troubles,' was received by the CSJC in May, 1916 (Minutes CSJC, 11 October, 1916). The RIBA has attributed the symbol of the Civic Survey, which appeared on many of their maps and diagrams and is shown on Figure 1, to Voysey (Visitor's Book of the Civic Survey of London, RIBA Archive, VoC/4/11). Voysey is identifiable because his letter was recorded in CSJC minutes, but others working on the Survey are not easily traced. Indeed, the additional research required for an analysis of those working on the CSGL is complicated by a paucity of available evidence and, in particular, by the convention of referring to workers by number, rather than name, where work was attributed. Those included in the above discussion, therefore, represent largely the members of the management and executive Committee whose involvement was recorded in meeting minutes.

<sup>69</sup> For example, expressions of interest requesting help in establishing similar surveying work came from the Chester Architectural Association (Minutes CSJC, 11 Nov. 1915), Glasgow Institute of Architects (Minutes CSJC, letter dated 3 Dec. 1915) and the Devon and Exeter Architectural Society (Minutes CSJC, 13 June, 1918).



information in the form of a Linnaean diagram intended to signal the familial nature of the information sought. Just as specified in earlier codifications of the method, the work involved gathering, processing and converting into graphic form information relating to the topography and climate of Greater London, its position in the region, its transport and communications networks (Figures 3 and 4), open spaces, waterways, a range of services (Figures 5 and 6), the locations of cultural, educational and medical institutions (Figure 7), and the various jurisdictions operating across the area (Figure 8). Their sources of information were similarly varied. Some work drew on ordnance survey maps or maps drawn by local municipal surveyors and engineers. The Survey also went through a process of updating existing maps, particularly in relation to property and administrative boundaries, which involved direct correspondence with land owners, businesses and municipal offices. They drew on the resources of London's voluntary associations, consulting bodies such as the Royal Geographical Society and the London Topographical Society, the Royal Sanitary Institute and The London Society, to name a few. Railway companies, the Metropolitan Water Board and various government offices were all similarly identified and engaged as sources of information. The existing records of the project also contain numerous pieces of published information, such as timetables and information leaflets, that were carefully collected and grouped.

### **Exhibition, professional technique and the urban body**

Work continued on the Civic Survey of Greater London over the course of four years, but in July 1919 the Government Committee issued its final grant and activity was concluded in autumn. During November and December 1920, however, the maps and diagrams were placed on exhibition in the Galleries of the RIBA. As it was initially conceived, this exhibition would have been promoted in the press and opened to Londoners through an initial 'Public Ceremony' and a series of conferences on themes central to the project.<sup>70</sup> It is possible that those planning the Civic Survey Exhibition envisaged a finale that would create a popular spectacle, like the display of urban panoramas or, indeed, Booth's Map had done in the recent past.<sup>71</sup> Yet, in contrast, when it occurred, the display and consumption of the maps and diagrams of the CSGL was an overwhelmingly professional affair. The ambitious plans for the final exhibition were scaled back and rather than a series of conferences involving the public and resulting in press coverage, events were held only to mark the opening and the closing of the exhibition. At the first, addresses were given before 'a distinguished gathering' by architects Aston Webb and Ernest Newton and planner H. V. Lanchester.<sup>72</sup> At the latter, which took the form of a conference hosted jointly by the RIBA and the Garden City and

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<sup>70</sup> The proposals outlined in the minutes included keynote lectures at each conference from notable figures including W. R. Davidge speaking on the history and archaeology of London, Aston Webb presenting The London Society's Development Plan, Patrick Abercrombie introducing similar surveying work conducted in Manchester and John Burns discussing 'The Civic Survey Idea'.

<sup>71</sup> See T. Agathocleous, *Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, 2011, esp. 88; Bulmer, Bales and Sklar, 'The social survey,' 34.

<sup>72</sup> *The Builder*, 12 November (1920) 539.

Town-Planning Association, leading members of the planning profession appeared as discussants. Among those planners who spoke at that final event, Abercrombie's contributions stood out as reflecting some trace of the Geddesian commitment to citizenship, though even here the ambition was markedly retracted and the technique represented as a tool for helping the (male) citizen better grasp professional planning activity, rather than offering the potential for 'awakening a more enlightened citizenship' through participation and education. 'A survey,' he said,

'[i]s not merely required for the experts who were managing the city, but for the citizen himself in order that he might thoroughly understand the nature of the problems the experts were attempting to solve.'

The other accounts, given by Stanley Adshead, George Pepler and Raymond Unwin, refer to the civic survey as the exclusive tool of the professional, providing the town planner with the vantage point from which to see 'at a glance...the condition of the whole town.'<sup>73</sup> Further, reports of the event were largely confined to the professional press; a short notice of the final conference was printed in *The Times*, but it seems from the contemporaneous headlining of Abercrombie's Civic Survey of Sheffield (begun in 1919) as the 'First Civic Survey' and from the almost empty visitors book that the exhibition was notionally public, but in practice significant largely for its professional participants and audience.<sup>74</sup>

Recognizing that the CSGL was largely, if not wholly, absorbed within the sphere of professional planning has a number of consequences for its analysis. Firstly, and perhaps obviously, the method was appropriated within a professional field from which women were more or less absent and which remained largely the preserve of architects who had either the social and economic resources to fund their passage through the pupilage system or had trained at one of the few schools of architecture established at the time.<sup>75</sup> It was, therefore, both a gendered and an elite practice that functioned to corroborate and distinguish the dominant position of the male expert planner in the exploration and development of urban space.<sup>76</sup> Secondly, and relatedly, in its use of the cartographic view there can be little doubt that the maps of the CSGL engaged with and enlarged upon a mode of visibility that was characteristic of earlier examples of social mapping which were similarly tethered to professional interventions. Both Picon and Topalov have highlighted the particularity of the cartographic view in the cases they consider, Picon by arguing that the Parisian atlases of the 1880s and 1890s 'marked a new stage insofar as what was now at stake was an ability to see

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<sup>73</sup> Raymond Unwin, quoted in *The Builder*, 24 December (1920) 726.

<sup>74</sup> 'The First Civic Survey. The Example of Sheffield,' *The Times*, 28 October, 1920; RIBA Archives, VoC/4/11.

<sup>75</sup> See Quentin Hughes, 'Education and the Architectural Profession in Britain at the Turn of the Century,' *Journal of Art and Design Education*, 1 (1982) 135-144.

<sup>76</sup> There were plans for the final conference to include a lecture on 'The Civic Survey from a Woman's Point of View' by 'A Lady Speaker,' though there is no evidence that such a presentation was made.

and to control everything'<sup>77</sup> and Topalov pointing to the 'new language' established by Booth's technique, one that drew on the 'panoptic ambition of social statistics' and the 'zenithal view' of modern mapping techniques.'<sup>78</sup> This perspectival mode was, then, subsumed within the repertoire of modern forms of governmentality; it manifested the preoccupation with making urban life visible in order to make it susceptible to expertise, professional judgement and intervention. As Patrick Joyce conceives the aerial view,

'The abstract, and gendered, gaze of the map was literally superior: the view from above was detached, part of a visual rhetoric of modernity which privileged the observer with a vantage point separate from the observed.'<sup>79</sup>

In this context it is, perhaps, worth noting that Jacques Bertillon, author of one of the Parisian atlases that concern Picon, was the brother of Alphonse Bertillon, who was responsible for the systematising criminal records with the introduction of an identity card system in 1880s France. John Tagg has pointed to this innovation as one among a number of disciplinary mechanisms that developed during the period in close connection to the establishment of the social sciences and the new forms of professionalism that accompanied them.<sup>80</sup> For Tagg, new fields of expertise such as criminology, psychiatry and sanitation 'took the body and its environment as their field, their domain of expertise, redefining the social as the object of their technical interventions.'<sup>81</sup> Of course, what we find in the CSGL is a variation and application of both the cartographic perspective and the social scientific methodology in an attempt to establish the basis for planned interventions in the social life and space(s) of Greater London. The mode of viewing was powerful not necessarily by producing a clear effect in practice, but, following earlier urban mapping exercises, 'by framing the thought and actions of city improvers, shaping their particular urban imaginaries.'<sup>82</sup> And indeed, while Booth's work left a legacy for social reform and for academic sociology, the civic survey was adopted by architects and planners and, as such, it became the technique and the framing imaginary of a new professional culture with radical aspirations for socio-spatial intervention. For Britain's early planners, seeking to establish their discipline as one capable of diagnosing and remedying the ill effects of the piece-meal, unplanned spatial development of the previous century, it was crucial to find a mode of viewing that provided a convincing vantage point for expert knowledge of the urban landscape and a method for making space available for systematic intervention. The civic survey seemed to offer both. Indeed, the maps of the CSGL conform to and extend a key feature of modern cartography into the professional practices of twentieth-century planning. Joyce, has argued that 'the spatial dimension of "modern abstraction" was both isomorphic

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<sup>77</sup> Picon, 'Nineteenth-century urban cartography,' 148-9.

<sup>78</sup> Topalov, 'The city as *terra incognita*,' 398, 409.

<sup>79</sup> Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 35.

<sup>80</sup> John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation. Essays on Photographies and Histories*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1993), 5.

<sup>81</sup> Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, 5.

<sup>82</sup> Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 12.

and absolute.<sup>83</sup> In this reading, within traditions of modern Western philosophy, space was conceptualized as uniform and continuous in order to subject it to calculations of equivalence and Joyce's work documents the complicity of this mode of viewing space in techniques of governance. In the maps of the CSGL space was represented in a manner consistent with this account. The Greater London conurbation appears as a territory with no irregularities; distributions are plotted over an even area (Figure 7). The only divisions acknowledged are the conurbation's various administrative jurisdictions (Figure 8) and the terrain of the city is, therefore, fragmented only as a unit of, and thus by its susceptibility to, government. We glimpse through these maps, then, just how fully planning was predicated upon the spatial techniques of governance from its outset and how closely the planner's view of space aligned with that employed by the administration of the modern state.

The process of mapping space undertaken by the CSGL suggests other linkages with earlier modes of thought and practice. In Mary Poovey's account of 'British cultural formation' she, like Tagg, examines the ways in which visibility came to be theorized as a prerequisite for government. Visibility, sought through inspection, quantification and classification, brought the details of bodily processes into focus and rendered them more palatable to Victorian cultural tastes through abstraction. Individual bodies were obliterated by their inclusion within statistical categories, but in their place the city emerged 'as a giant body that required a physician's care.'<sup>84</sup> The government of the modern city, metaphorically transfigured, institutionalized certain ways of thinking about and managing urban space and life. In particular, the health of the urban body had well-established associations with free movement and circulation. This theme has been taken up by several writers, including Swyngedouw, who has suggested that 'modern urbanization, highly dependent on the mastery of circulating flows, was linked with the representation of cities as consisting of and functioning through complex networks of circulatory systems.'<sup>85</sup> Motivation for the development of the survey method, as for planning more broadly, lay, of course, in the conviction that Britain's Victorian cities were unhealthy and congested, a diagnoses closely connected to and conceptualized in terms of the image of the city as a social body. Turning again to the maps of the CSGL, this provides further cause to draw lines of continuity with earlier practices. Indeed, in the work of the CSGL we see precisely the kind of representation described by Swyngedouw, though developed on a new scale and by a nascent profession. The transport section of the CSGL was a major element of the study; Figures 3 and 4 provide an indication of the depth of detail involved in the Survey's investigation and representation of Greater London's transport infrastructure. The first map, shown in full, illustrates the distances from railway stations, tramways and omnibus routes at any given point across the whole of the Greater London conurbation. Shaded from light to dark, it offers a record and

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<sup>83</sup> Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 35.

<sup>84</sup> Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 37.

<sup>85</sup> Erik Swyngedouw, 'Metabolic urbanism: the making of cyborg cities,' in: Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika and Erik Swyngedouw (eds) *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism*, London and New York, 2006, 29-30. See also Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone. The Body and the City in Western Civilization*, New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994.

an assessment of how fully the transport network had penetrated the area in 1916. A wide range of other representations of transport systems appear among the collection, including depictions of the railway network, tram routes, navigable waterways, unfinished efforts to map delivery routes, and assessments of journey times and costs (Figure 4). Similarly, other areas of infrastructural functionality and circulation underpin a tranche of maps that show various aspects of the city's utilities. There are, for example, breakdowns of gas and electricity supply areas (Figure 5) and examinations of the systems in place for waste disposal (Figure 6). Joyce has argued that free circulation emerged as one of the most enduring strategies of governance over the course of the nineteenth century,<sup>86</sup> thus, while this preoccupation with circulation and mobility was certainly not new, the maps of the CSGL offer a way of examining its extension into the twentieth century. Indeed, they signal the perpetuation of an image of the city that was particularly powerful in the context of nineteenth-century strategies of governance within one of the twentieth century's most dominant approaches to shaping urban space. Finally, this image of the city as a social body whose 'health' must be pursued through the prioritisation of efficient circulation was inevitably saturated by a raft of further analogical ciphers, including the physician-planner whose privileged view would provide accurate diagnoses and ameliorative prescriptions.<sup>87</sup> Again, therefore, the method seemed to reinforce the complicity of planning with tactics of governmental power and its reification of the professional and expert.

### **Final remarks**

In the years leading up to the passing of the first planning Act in 1909, and continuing until the outbreak of war in 1914, there was enormous optimism in the promise of planning. It was during these years that the method of civic survey was conceived, articulated and developed, and it was momentum generated during this period that resulted in funding for and commitment to the Civic Survey of Greater London. What is striking, given a project that lasted for four years, involved over 80 architects and planners, some leading their field, and resulted in over 300 maps and diagrams, is the obscurity in which the work has since rested. I suggest there are two clear reasons for this, though it may transpire there are others as well. Firstly, against the background of post-war economic stagnation and a political commitment to house-building under the banner of 'homes for heroes,' the planning agenda lost much of the force of its earlier momentum. Thus, the introduction of a wider program of civic surveying, like many of the ambitions of Britain's first generation of professional planners, confronted a significant setback. Secondly, the CSGL was a politically engaged spatial project that sought explicitly to promote planning across the Greater London area, rather than within the boundaries of the London County Council and the surrounding urban and rural district councils (which had been granted the power to prepare planning schemes under the 1909 Act). In pursuing this, the CSGL was part of a distinct and active campaign in favour of regional urban planning among those involved in the planning profession and

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<sup>86</sup> Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 11.

<sup>87</sup> See Poovey's discussion, *Making a Social Body*, 40-41.

those concerned more broadly with the development of the capital.<sup>88</sup> In doing so, however, the CSGL was implicitly questioning the existing tiers of administration, including the London County Council. Indeed, the LCC area appeared as a vacant space in many (though not all) of the CSGL maps, and though there was a late suggestion that the LCC might ‘fill in the blank space,’ it seems likely that for both political and economic reasons the interests of the Council did not lie in supporting a continuation of the CSGL.<sup>89</sup>

The history of surveying practice in Britain did not, however, end with the CSGL. In fact, there is clear evidence that civic surveying was adopted and developed by Britain’s planners in a variety of different towns and cities during the first half of the twentieth century. The work on Greater London was not conducted in isolation. The original scheme put forward to the Government Committee had sought further funding for surveying work in South Wales, Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland, the Potteries, Lancashire, Greater London, Lanarkshire and Staffordshire.<sup>90</sup> The terms of the initial Government grant restricted the civic survey to Greater London, Lancashire and Yorkshire, but this nevertheless meant that work was funded and conducted outside Greater London throughout the period. The maps and diagrams that resulted from the work outside London are yet to be traced, but the civic survey went on to become a feature of professional planning during the 20s, 30s and 40s.<sup>91</sup> In addition, other surveying traditions that developed during the first half of the twentieth century share common points of origin. The regional survey movement that was led by some of Britain’s early sociologists through the Le Play House has received the most attention to date, but the land-use survey, developed and shaped by geographers, particularly Dudley Stamp, is also notable in this context.<sup>92</sup> There is no doubt, therefore, that though its centrality in the history of British planning and urban geography has been unexplored up to this point, the CSGL stands as an important early example of more sustained activity that took place over the following decades.

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<sup>88</sup> I deal with this more extensively in another article: ‘Towards a greater urban geography: regional planning and associational networks in London during the early twentieth century,’ *Planning Perspectives* 26 (2010) 551-568.

<sup>89</sup> H. V. Lanchester was reported as saying that ‘The County Council would have no difficulty, by adding further data, in filling in the blank space and so making the maps and diagrams complete to the centre’ at the opening of the Civic Survey Exhibition, *The Builder*, 12 November, 1920, 539.

<sup>90</sup> Letter from Ernest Newton, president of the RIBA and chairman of the CSJC, 15 November, 1915, Minutes CSJC.

<sup>91</sup> I count, so far, two dozen civic surveys between 1911 and 1954.

<sup>92</sup> On regional survey see particularly David Matless, ‘Regional surveys and local knowledges: The Geographical Imagination in Britain, 1918-1939,’ *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 17 (1992) 464-480; David Matless, ‘The uses of cartographic literacy: mapping, survey and citizenship in twentieth-century Britain,’ in: Dennis Cosgrove (ed) *Mappings*, London, 1999. On Stamp’s land-use survey see Simon Rycroft and Denis Cosgrove, ‘Mapping the modern nation: Dudley Stamp and the Land Utilisation Survey,’ *History Workshop*, 40 (1995) 91-105.

## **Captions**

Figure 1. The Civic Survey of Greater London comprising Middlesex and parts of Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey, 1915-1920. London Metropolitan Archives, Acc/3582/049.

Figure 2. Section of The Civic Survey of Greater London comprising Middlesex and parts of Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey, 1915-1920. London Metropolitan Archives, Acc/3582/049.

Figure 3. Civic Survey of Greater London. Plan showing distances from railway stations, electric tramways and omnibus routes, c August 1916. London Metropolitan Archives, Acc/3582/05.

Figure 4. Civic Survey of Greater London. Plan showing railway stations and season ticket rates to city stations, 1916. Section shows train routes and rates from Middlesex and Surrey to the city. London Metropolitan Archives, Acc/3582/06.

Figure 5. Civic Survey of Greater London. Electricity supply and distribution areas and prices per unit for light and power. Section shows detail of districts in Middlesex and Surrey. London Metropolitan Archives, Acc/3582/09.

Figure 6. Civic Survey of Greater London. Collection and disposal of refuse. Section covers Western part of the conurbation. The key used in this map indicates the method of refuse collection and the body responsible for its removal. London Metropolitan Archives, Acc/3582/09.

Figure 7. Civic Survey of Greater London. General and other hospitals, infirmaries, sanatoria, dispensaries, convalescent and other others. London Metropolitan Archives, Acc/3582/08.

Figure 8. Civic Survey of Greater London. Police Divisions. London Metropolitan Archives, Acc/3582/09. Sections shows area of Greater London from Wembley and Hornsey in the north to Wimbledon and Mitcham in the south and includes part of the London Council County area.