Syracuse University

SURFACE

12-2012

Producing Edge City: Publics, Perceptions, and the Right to Life on the New Frontier

Ben Alan Gerlofs
Syracuse University

Follow this and additional works at: https://surface.syr.edu/geo_thesis

Part of the Geography Commons

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores Oak Brook, IL, an edge city (Garreau 1991) in the western suburbs of Chicago. A number of authors have advanced criticisms of edge cities (Beauregard 1995; Marcuse 1997), including that they are particularly exploitative and exclusionary. Some authors have claimed that edge cities are a "new frontier" (Garreau 1991), while others suggest that they are nothing new at all (Walker 1994). I address these concerns by way of an in-depth engagement with Oak Brook, Chicago's truest edge city. I ultimately argue that while edge cities have unique characteristics, they are part of a long heritage of capitalist urban geographies. Throughout the thesis, I use the case of Oak Brook to understand the exploitative and exclusionary dimensions of edge cities. I also examine how landscapes and perceptions of place impact life in edge cities, and how seemingly small changes in the landscape can have significant impacts to place images and to political economy. Seeing such changes and the struggles to realize them as part of a larger project to change urban life, I argue, is an important part of understanding edge cities within their metropolitan contexts.

PRODUCING EDGE CITY: PUBLICS, PERCEPTIONS, AND THE RIGHT TO LIFE ON
THE NEW FRONTIER

By

Ben Alan Gerlofs
B.A. Aquinas College, 2010

Master's Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts in Geography
in the Graduate School of Syracuse University
December 2012

I also wish to thank all of those who participated in this research in and around Oak Brook, whether they are named in this thesis or not. I am thankful to all of those who opened their homes and offices, who took time to share their stories and their perspectives with a green and eager graduate student.

I wish to thank my Gerlofs family in Hudsonville, MI for their love and support, and my Bero family in Batavia, IL for theirs. Most of all I need to thank my wife and partner, Marissa Bero, for her patience, her support, her friendship and her love. I will never forget what made this project and my degree at Syracuse possible. This thesis, as much as it is for anything or anyone, is for you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2009 I made several trips from my home in Michigan to Chicago's western suburbs to visit the family of my fiancée. On one of these trips, I ran into a deep traffic backup that kept me inching along for some while and allowed a murmuring call of nature to develop into a deafening roar. When traffic cleared, I exited the highway at first opportunity and searched frantically for a restroom. On first survey, I saw none of the vendors treasured by highway travelers: gas stations, fast food restaurants and convenience stores. In their place stood office towers with finely manicured landscaping, a sea of parking surrounding a collection of upscale retailers, a few hotels, some nice restaurants and wide streets full of expensive cars with impatient drivers. I was saved by the lone fast food restaurant for miles, McDonald's. Upon my exit from this refuge of the Interstate's afflictions, I surveyed the area from the parking lot. A wide boulevard lined by (mostly white) office towers followed the highway westward, and was surrounded by low-build development and a great deal of greenery. Nowhere near as flashy and outspoken as the towers of the O'Hare area, the buildings here were more uniform and the sparser landscapes were understated and perhaps more imposing because more austere (see Figure 4.4, page 96). I got back in my car, fumbled for change at the toll machine (I had not yet realized the only way to avoid a cacophony of horns was to buy an electronic pass) and went on my way. This was my first experience of Oak Brook, IL.

In the fall of 2010 during my first semester of graduate study, I remembered this experience while searching for a research project. At the suggestion of Mark Monmonier, I picked up Joel Garreau's *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (1991). Edge city seemed a perfect name for Oak Brook, and Garreau's discussion pushed my curiosity about the place in new directions. I began collecting information about Oak Brook from the U.S. Census, the local

historical society's website and other sources available online and quickly found that Oak Brook qualified as an edge city according to Garreau's definition. I also found that Oak Brook had what seemed to me to be a very small population (7,883 as of the 2010 U.S. Census), in addition to very expensive homes and the headquarters of several large corporations. I was insatiably curious about how this place came to have these qualities, and why it had developed so far from downtown Chicago. In time, this curiosity would solidify into a research project.

Though I found the available literature on edge cities useful and informative, many of my questions about Oak Brook remained unanswered. For one thing, much of the work I found on edge cities dealt with only part of Garreau's concept, specifically the quantifiable elements. This seemed to be leaving a great deal of the edge city story untold. I also found critics of edge cities who cited exclusion and exploitation at work in and through them, though I could find few empirical studies of such processes at work in edge cities. As I read the work of political economists such as David Harvey and Richard Walker, questions also began to arise about whether edge cities were in fact something new, or if they were simply a new face on well-worn spatial and social processes.

As I considered how I could address the questions I had about edge cities, an in-depth case study of Oak Brook seemed more and more appropriate. For one thing, this was the place that had inspired my curiosity in the first place. For another, as I investigated Chicago's edge cities, Oak Brook appeared to be the most appropriate single case (more on this in chapter two). Logistically, the Chicago area made sense for me, as I had some level of familiarity with the region, and family in the area made travel and housing inexpensive and convenient. This made the 'where' and the 'why' of my study quite straightforward. I had unanswered questions about

2

edge cities, and I would investigate them in Oak Brook, the place had that provoked my initial interest.

My project evolved a great deal over the course of my two years at Syracuse University. My initial research questions were:

- What is the discourse of planning in edge city?

- How was this discourse constructed, and how has it been maintained?

- What sorts of place images and geographical, cultural and political perceptions do people hold in and about edge city?

- What is the relationship between discourse and perception in edge city?

These questions, if nothing else, show how unfamiliar I was with crafting research questions and the tentativeness with which I approached this project. I came gradually to understand that what I was really interested in was not well represented by these questions. As my research and writing progressed, I arrived at a different set of questions:

- Though some authors claim that edge cities are really nothing new (Walker 1994), they do have specific characteristics that make them different from other forms of suburbanization (Marcuse 1997). What are these characteristics and how do they make edge cities different?

- Edge city critics (discussed in detail in chapter one) advance two major criticisms of edge city: that they exclude and exploit large populations. To understand these critiques, I formulated these questions:

  - What does exclusion look like in Oak Brook, and how does this relate to its being an edge city?

- How does exploitation work in Oak Brook, and how does this relate to its being an edge city?

- I was also interested in the roles that landscapes, the built environment and perceptions of place played in these processes. Though I did not fully develop any specific research questions that pertained to these concepts, they cut across and informed much of my research.

To address these questions, I developed an ambitious and eclectic set of methods. Chief among these methods was the semi-structured interviews I conducted with 32 individuals in 27 sessions. The shortest of these sessions lasted around ten minutes, while the longest took over three hours. These sessions took place in private residences, in restaurants, in corporate offices and at the facilities of the Oak Brook Park District. I offered participants the option of anonymity, and the option of being recorded. For those sessions I recorded, I later made partial transcriptions. In these interviews, I began with a set of very broad questions about Oak Brook such as: What kind of place is it? What kinds of things do people do there? And what sorts of relationships does it have with other places in the area? There are two reasons for the broadness of these questions. The first is that when I wrote them I had very little idea of what I wanted respondents to talk about. Asking these questions was a way of getting people to talk about Oak Brook. I generally let participants say whatever they had to say, asking follow-up questions about particularly promising topics. The second reason for asking broad questions is that I felt it would increase the chances that people would agree to participate in my study. I had a number of interviewees request a copy of my questions in advance, and some of these people later acknowledged that they agreed to participate in part because my initial questions did not relate to controversial subjects.

Many of my interviewees were 'elites' by one definition or another.[1] Some were executives or municipal employees with considerable power, while others were simply people with some measure of wealth. A vast literature has grown up around interviewing elites, as it has become a topic of increasing concern for geographers and other social scientists in recent years (Crang 2002). Many authors argue that interviewing elites is a vastly different experience from interviewing non-elites, highlighting especially the difficulty of gaining access to elites (England 2002). Cochrane (1998) argues that many elites make considerable effort to hide their power from plain view. Even those who can easily be named, Odendahl and Shaw (2002) explain, are often guarded by 'gatekeepers' such as secretaries, assistants, lawyers and security guards. Though I encountered many of these difficulties, I found (like England 2002) that persistence and flexibility can open a great many doors.

Cognitive maps were also a part of my original research plan. I intended to ask participants to draw maps of Oak Brook during interview sessions, then talk about what they had drawn and why. I hypothesized that these maps would indicate some of the scalar relationships considered important by participants (whether or not their maps included other places, and which ones, for instance), what locales participants considered important (and not important) in the village, and so on. These would be valuable insights, and I supposed that drawing would provide a different way of bringing them out in interview sessions. Actually having participants draw the maps, however, turned out to be a frustrating and less-than-rewarding experience. I asked several early participants to draw maps, and some seemed uncomfortable with the idea, despite my many assurances that 'accuracy' and 'artistic talent' are social constructions with which we need not

---

[1] For most authors who have written about interviewing elites, elite status hinges on the achievement of rank in business or politics (as in Herod 1999; England 2002; McEvoy 2006). It can at times be difficult to tell what constitutes an 'elite' for authors working in this vein of research. Lilleker (2002) defines elites based on "close proximity to power", a definition I use as a guide for understanding elites. As I envision elites, this power can be based in many different realms, such as political power, social power (including money) and many others forms.

concern ourselves. Those that did draw maps seemed eager to finish the experience as quickly as possible, usually basing their drawings on major streets and highways, and the conversations that followed these drawings were less insightful than I had hoped. I discontinued this portion of the project roughly one third of the way through my interviews, and did not use any of the maps I had collected as data for analysis.

I also collected and analyzed a number of historical sources. The President of the Oak Brook Historical Society, Kathy Maher, generously provided me with copies of two memoirs written by Oak Brook residents William Watson (2008) and Richard Barton (1990). She also allowed me to view an extended video interview with members of the Butler family conducted by former Village President Karen Bushy. I also gleaned material from several newspaper archives available through the Syracuse University library system. The local newspapers *The Daily Herald* and *The Alton Telegraph* were especially useful as historical sources. National newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Chicago Tribune* also provided information on several important topics.

As I was interested in the role of place and perceptions of place, I made efforts to soak up as much of the experience of Oak Brook as I could during my (roughly) six weeks of fieldwork. I spent a great deal of time in Oak Brook's restaurants, cafes, the Oakbrook Center mall, the Oak Brook Public Library and other places. I spoke informally with many people who did not wish to be formally included in my project, but who were happy to offer opinions on Oak Brook, on the people who lived and worked there, and on the image of Oak Brook around Chicagoland.[2] I also attended a homeowners' association's annual meeting, a Native American cultural festival, and

---

[2] The terms 'Chicagoland' and 'greater Chicago' are a regular part of common parlance in and around Chicago. I use these terms (and 'Chicago area') as shorthand ways of describing the metropolitan region. I use the more precise "consolidated metropolitan statistical area" (CMSA) of the U.S. Census when specificity is required, following a great deal of research conducted at the metropolitan scale, such as Hackworth (2005).

watched hours of video (publicly available on youtube.com) of meetings of the Village Board, the Plan Commission, and the Zoning Board of Appeals. I also spent countless hours driving around Oak Brook, viewing its landscapes and taking photographs. Some of those photographs provide context and visual evidence in the chapters that follow.[3]

This thesis proceeds as an investigation of an edge city, along the lines of the questions I have proposed. In the first chapter, I provide a conceptual introduction to edge city, along with an extensive literature review. I use the second chapter to assess the case of Oak Brook among Chicago's other noted edge cities, and to introduce Oak Brook through a historical and geographical sketch. In chapter three, I address the topic of exclusion in Oak Brook by examining struggles over 'the public' in the village's history. The fourth chapter deals with Oak Brook's landscapes and with popular perceptions of Oak Brook, examining the ways that these interact and influence life in the village. In the fifth chapter I question who has a right to Oak Brook, using the body of theory and practice known as 'the right to the city' as another way to understand how exclusion and exploitation work in edge cities, who benefits from these processes, and how this situation might be changed. This chapter also builds on the struggles to change Oak Brook highlighted in chapters three and four, as I argue that such struggles can be productively collected and organized under the banner of the right to the city. The concluding chapter assesses the evidence and arguments presented in the foregoing chapters against the research questions I have presented here. Throughout this thesis, my goal is to offer an interesting study of a particular place, and to connect that place with its broader contexts. A thoroughgoing engagement with Oak Brook will, I argue, provide a deeper understanding of life in edge cities.

---

[3] All photographs in this thesis were taken by me during June or July of 2011 and 2012.

CHAPTER ONE
EDGE CITIES: A NEW FRONTIER?

What's in a name?

Edge cities are interesting places. They appear as large agglomerations of commerce, people, concrete, steel and glass, usually at the convergence of two or more highways just outside of major cities. Though they are invariably populated by office towers and other large buildings, some are surrounded by cornfields or sleepy old villages and towns while others are embedded in a suburban milieu that spreads out as far as the eye can see. Despite these differences in site and situation, all edge cities have a great many things in common. They are home to companies and corporations, resources, jobs, and much else that used to be located in so many downtowns. The emergence of edge cities has thus in many ways come at the expense of central cities and their populations, and the political economic prominence of edge cities has changed not only how the city works, but what the city is and can be. Edge cities have fundamentally changed the American metropolis, and thus necessitated a shift in how the city is understood.

Edge cities began their histories at a pivotal moment in the global political economy, at the tail end of the post-WWII boom. Their inception rode the tsunami of suburban exodus from the downtowns of American cities and their massive growth went largely unnoticed while the social tensions and political and military conflicts of the 1960s raged in streets and congressional halls. Not until the sweeping reforms of neoliberalism had taken root did researchers begin to substantively question this new type of suburban agglomeration. Edge cities are, first and foremost, especially commercially vibrant (and often dynamic) suburbs. Baerwald (1978) referred to the growing allegiance of suburbanites to a new type of 'downtown' he called "suburban freeway corridors" (SFCs). Hartshorn and Muller (1986) cited the rapid growth and

increasing significance of "suburban business centers." Any number of other researchers

working within and beyond the social sciences branded these agglomerations with an equal

number of monikers, all of which spoke to some aspect of the phenomenon but none of which

was both spacious enough to cover all sides and zesty enough to win popular attention. Then, in

1991, *Washington Post* journalist Joel Garreau published *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*,

and people began to take notice.

Giving the phenomenon a name able to build and sustain a popular buzz was significant.

For one thing, Garreau's christening added an immense lay audience to the cadre of academic

observers already reading and writing urban geographies. His position as a journalist at a

prominent publication and the tantalizing title of his tome extended the academic discussion's

reach to book clubs and bed tables.[4] The act of naming has far greater significance, however. As

Walker (1994: 1) explains: "What we name the urban fringe has much to do with what we think

about it and how we conceive of the processes that gave rise to it." Naming, then, is a significant

part of framing, that is, "how individuals organize experiences or make sense of events" (Martin

2003: 733). Garreau used the term 'edge city' to collapse a great many previous names and their

attendant urban realities into one concept he supposed could contain and explain them. The

sustained popularity of his work suggests something about the success of this framing with both

academic and non-academic readers.

Walker (1994) notes the relevance of Garreau's work, but eschews Garreau's insistence

on the novelty of edge cities. Walker praises Garreau for his prominent inclusion of geography

(putting the 'edge' in edge cities), but for Walker edge cities signify nothing more than the

suburbanization of production in all or any of its forms at any time in history. Brooklyn, NY and

---

[4] His adamant praise of edge city development and his "ideology foreplay of liberal journalism about the virtues of individualism and choice" also probably bolstered his popularity (Walker 1994: 17).

Oakland, CA are two of his prominent examples of edge cities of bygone eras. Walker's own

framing of the concept is significant, as his deviation from Garreau's definition of edge cities

underpins his claims. Collapsing all suburbanized agglomerations (for production and

consumption) under one heading (as Walker does) is useful in that it highlights commonalities

apparent in processes of urbanization more broadly and the ways in which edge cities can be

seen as part of larger historical trends (as part of Walker's "suburban solution" (1977) for capital,

for instance). Much is also lost in Walker's account, however, specifically the unique social,

political economic, and physical changes edge city development has wrought in and on the

American metropolitan landscape. Though Walker is correct to ascribe the same 'capitalist

imperative' (Walker and Storper 1989) to edge cities as to previous waves of suburbanization,

edge city landscapes and their consequences are uniquely their own, for reasons time alone

cannot explain.

Walker's pronouncements have not noticeably quelled the fervor for edge city research.

In part because they sprouted well outside the parameters of existing cities, edge cities puzzle

researchers. While Walker (1994) explains that productive activities have long deserted central

cities for a variety of compelling reasons, edge city proponents (notably Garreau 1991) counter

that edge cities are different, not least because of the type of work performed in them (primarily

office and service activity). Geographers were particularly interested in edge development, as the

presence of edge cities seemed to signal a relocation of commerce from central business districts

(CBDs) to the metropolitan hinterlands. In a few short years (in most cases), edge city

developers had cultivated enormous gardens of glass, steel, and cement out of cornfields,

grassland, and scrub brush. As researchers attempted to understand and explain these changes in

urban geography, their efforts were frustrated by the fractured nature of their conversations and

the often narrow parameters of their research projects. Studies focused on single cases produced a literature full of idiosyncratic names and characteristics of little utility for understanding larger trends. As Garreau's book penetrated academic and popular discourse, however, previously disparate conversations and interests coalesced and a coherent research topic began to form. In the roughly two decades since the publication of *Edge City*, a fair amount of research that builds on, extends and challenges Garreau and his predecessors has been published.

The focus of this chapter will be to thoroughly examine the edge city concept and the literature that has grown around it. The remainder of the chapter proceeds in two major sections. In the first, I outline Garreau's edge city concept, exploring its inconsistently pliable boundaries and highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses of the attendant capaciousness of the concept. The second section includes an extensive literature review[5] and will introduce several critiques of the edge city concept, of its deployment in research, and of the material phenomenon to which it refers. A short third and final section will offer conclusions about the edge city literature and the potential for further research on the topic in light of the significant advances and critiques introduced in previous sections.

Garreau's edge city

Starting from Garreau's definition of edge cities rather than Walker's (or anyone else's, for that matter) is strategic, not deferential. One reason for this choice is that Garreau's notion is quite specific, relatively speaking, whereas Walker's is hopelessly broad. Another is that research on the topic has overwhelmingly favored Garreau and a 'five-part test' he proposed for delineating edge city status. Garreau is also explicit in his conceptualization, making his notion

---

[5] This review is *extensive* rather than *exhaustive* largely because of the disparate nature of the discussion of edge city issues. The number of terms used to explain all or part of what are now known as edge cities makes the idea of an exhaustive literature review quite untenable.

the most easily considered, applied, and critiqued. Despite his definition's tendency to undulate in the opacity between clarity and obscurity, edge city advocates, critics and most of the interested-in-between have followed Garreau and proceeded from his formulation of the concept. For these reasons, I will begin this review with Garreau's definition.

In addition to provoking a great deal of interest in edge cities, Garreau performed the difficult task of generalizing the edge city concept. He identified three main types of edge cities: "uptowns," "boomers," and "greenfields" (Garreau 1991). Uptowns are built upon and around an existing urban framework in a process that smacks strongly of gentrification. Boomers develop as a spontaneous, eclectic patchwork, often along a stretch of highway (Baerwald's (1978) SFCs are of this type). "A Greenfield," Garreau (1991: 116) explains, "occurs at the intersection of several thousand acres of farmland and one developer's monumental ego." Greenfields are planned and designed from the start; they are cultivated as edge cities. This classification went a long way toward reconciling the different types of edge cities cited by previous studies, but was itself inadequate to explain their common identity.

Helpful as this trichotomy may have been, its significance paled in comparison to that of Garreau's "five-part test." The tripartite classification illustrated the types of edge cities, but the five-part test connected these types, explained their generalizability and offered a framework for defining edge city status. The five-part test carved out a conceptual space for edge city, differentiating it from all other urban (and suburban) agglomerations. Under Garreau's (1991: 425) rubric, an edge city must exhibit the following qualities

- Five million square feet of leasable office space or more.

- Six hundred thousand square feet of retail space or more.

- A population that increases at 9 A.M. on workdays—marking the location as primarily a work center, not a residential suburb.

- A local perception as a single end destination for mixed use—jobs, shopping, and entertainment.

- A history in which, thirty years ago, the site was by no means urban; it was overwhelmingly residential or rural in character.

An immediate problem with this 'test' is that it can be quite difficult to apply. This difficulty comes primarily from the ambiguities, assumptions and inconsistencies of the various qualifications. Most obviously, while the first two parts of the test are quantitative measures, the remaining three require varying degrees of qualitative interpretation. Moreover, Garreau gave no indication of how his 'test' might actually be carried out, and, as Lang (2003) has noted, Garreau himself seems to have bent his own rules quite significantly in *Edge City*. A brief exploration of each of these five aspects from *Edge City* onward will illustrate how these and other issues have been negotiated in past research (for the purpose of working toward clarity on some of these matters), in addition to serving as a useful conceptual introduction.

The first two qualifications are quite similar in that they are both rigid, quantitative standards. They are alike also in that they are both aimed at differentiating edge cities from other suburbs based on the scale of their commercial activities. Edge cities are unique and important, these measures make clear, because a great deal of economic activity takes place in them. Having a massive amount of office and retail square footage, it is assumed, proves this metropolitan primacy. It is perhaps for this reason that these measures have received such a great deal of attention from edge city researchers. In fact, the majority of edge city research since *Edge City* has been quantitative in nature and has, as such, focused on one or both of these measures.

Forstall and Greene (1997), Greene (1997; 2008), McMillen and Lester (2003), Lee (2007), and Roberts (2009), for example, are all concerned with job concentrations. Lang (2003; and LaFurgy 2003; et al. 2006; et al. 2009) focus on office space in its own right.

If the first two qualifications are aimed at differentiating edge cities from other suburbs based on their immense commercial prowess, the third seeks to distinguish them based on their relatively small residential populations. The first two measures make it abundantly clear that a large number of people work in edge cities; the third explains that most of these people live someplace else. Perhaps more than any other, this is the characteristic that sets edge cities apart from other suburbs. For a place to be an edge city, it must have enough jobs to employ thousands of people. It must also have too few homes to house them.

It is also important that this population imbalance (between those employed and those housed) be significant. Unfortunately, Garreau's (1991: 7) wording is rather ambiguous and his "more jobs than bedrooms" requirement leaves room for sloppy interpretation. A city that employs 100,000 people during business hours but also houses 90,000 could hardly be considered an edge city, at least if edge cities are to be taken seriously. Walker's (1994) Brooklyn, NY and Oakland, CA would make for excellent examples of edge cities if this population imbalance (and the fourth qualification, discussed below) did not matter. Of course, edge cities do have residents, but, Garreau (1991: 7) explains, they are "primarily" places of work and not residence: "When the working day starts, people head toward this place, not away from it."

Garreau's fourth measure also contains a fair amount of ambiguity, especially around the idea of "local perception." At face value, this qualification seems straightforward and easy to meet by way of interviews, questionnaires, or even casual conversations. Closer examination

reveals complications, however. The 'local' here is left free-floating, open to the utility-sapping quagmire of debate surrounding the idea of 'the local' within and beyond the discipline of geography. The question of who constitutes 'the local' is an important one (even beyond the scope of the five-part test) because it boldly forces the question of whose perceptions matter. Garreau's own determinations seem to be based on statements made by people who have some role in producing and using edge cities, such as developers, company executives, workers, shoppers, (etc.). For Garreau, these are the people whose perceptions make an edge city. This leaves his definition in a hopelessly circular state: those who make and use a place must see it as a place for it to be an edge city.

The utility of this measure is revived by an appeal to its intended purpose. Edge cities, as Garreau goes to great lengths to note, are often not incorporated municipalities. Sometimes they are not even given proper names. "This fragmentation has meant endless confusion for students of urbanism," writes Walker (1994: 22), adding that the "lack of significant names or coherent boundaries hides the reality of the new outlying metropolitan nodes, or edge cities, as Garreau has forcefully argued." In order to define an edge city, Garreau must therefore navigate between the Scylla of relying on traditional municipal boundaries and the Charybdis of accepting any set of imaginary boundaries drawn creatively enough to include the necessary office and retail space. The vehicle he chooses is his version of 'local perception.' Though they do not have to have agreed-upon names, Garreau insists that they be perceived as singular places.[6]

Garreau's fifth and final measure sets his idea of edge city apart temporally from previous urban forms. *Edge City* was published in 1991, so Garreau's thirty-year mark sets the standard for edge city conception at roughly 1960. This timeline should be understood as a

---

[6] Even "the 287 and 78 area" (referring to the convergence of two highways) is acceptable as an edge city, for instance (Garreau 1991).

guideline rather than a concrete cutoff. Garreau offers no clear rationale for this date, and his own examples do not always seem to follow it precisely. The "uptown" type of edge city, for example, is said to be built upon previous urban development. This flies in the face of Garreau's insistence that edge cities be built on sites that were "by no means urban" in 1960. Moreover, Garreau does not bother to define the ambiguous terms 'urban', 'rural', and 'residential', perhaps trusting his readership to rely on commonplace understandings. What is most relevant in this qualification is the date of origin that Garreau provides. If the rather confusing discussion of rural or residential versus urban landscapes is set aside, the sentiment that remains holds that to be an edge city, a place must not have begun to grow into its current urban incarnation before (roughly) 1960. This allows that some edge cities may have incorporated previous urban elements while others grew from scratch, but sets them apart from suburbs of previous generations.

Most authors writing after Garreau and concerned with edge city topics have adopted these criteria as offered in *Edge City*, negotiating the ambiguities discussed above in various ways. Despite their shared research topic, however, the goals, methods, and results of these researchers are incredibly different. The next section provides a review of this work.

<center>In the wake of *Edge City*</center>

The edge city literature can be divided and organized in a number of ways. Research could be separated based on empirics (or lack thereof), or according to geographical or temporal context. The issue that most effectively divides this literature, however, relates to how researchers write about edge cities. This question has to do with the various positions that authors take, or how they approach and respond to edge cities. While some are critical of

<center>16</center>

Garreau, of the edge city concept or of particular edge cities, others take a decidedly laudatory tone in their work. Still others espouse a seeming neutrality, often concentrating their efforts on description or prediction, aided by the tools of spatial science. I divide the edge city literature in this way because of the research questions I have chosen for this project (see introduction above). As I want to understand the exploitative and exclusive dimensions of the edge city form and concept, separating edge city's boosters from its critics is an important step. Accordingly, I have identified three common strands in the literature that correspond to the following three categories: (A) delineators; (B) reformers; and (C) critics of edge cities and the edge city concept. Examining each thread will provide a thorough understanding of this literature.

Delineators

Though edge cities have attracted a great deal of commentary, many authors have addressed them rather obliquely, noting their relevance only as evidence of a fragmenting metropolitan geography or suburbanizing production. Many of the researchers who have made edge cities a primary focus of their studies, however, belong to the first of the three categories noted above, those who delineate edge cities. This work has been primarily quantitative in nature, with researchers focusing on the share of metropolitan employment belonging to particular edge cities (Ihlanfeldt 1994; Hollar 2011; Greene 2008), suburban typologies and forms (Mikelback 2004; Vaughan et al. 2009) and the emergence of office space agglomerations (Lang 2003; Lang and LeFurgy 2003; Lang et al. 2006; Lang et al. 2009) or employment centers (Bingham and Kimble 1995; Henderson and Mitra 1996; Forstall and Greene 1997; Greene 1997; McMillen and McDonald 1998; Ding and Bingham 2000; Anderson and Bogart 2001; Shearmur and Coffey 2002; McMillen and Lester 2003; Anderson 2004; McMillen 2004; Lee

2007; Roberts 2009). This work has documented the emergence of edge cities in a number of different U.S. metropolitan contexts,[7] and has, in many cases, sharpened (or at least attempted to negotiate) some of the ambiguous areas of Garreau's definition. Despite its valuable contributions, however, this category also has significant deficiencies.

For one, this category of research has tended to support Garreau's notion of edge city.[8] Many have followed Garreau's definition explicitly, incorporating his five-part test into their studies, while others have implicitly accepted Garreau's concept as a part of larger formulations. Both types of studies, though, come together to form the broader tacit approval of the edge city concept characteristic of this vein of research. Indeed, one of the dangers for this group of researchers is that their work can be seen as part of a broader misrepresentation of the city/suburb relationship, as Harris and Lewis (1998) convincingly argue. Harris and Lewis, Walker (1994) and others argue that Garreau's claim that edge cities represent "the biggest change in a hundred years in the way we build cities" is based on a flawed understanding of the history of American cities. Uncritically accepting the novelty of edge cities, Harris and Lewis explain, perpetuates the long dominant but crucially deficient belief in a "fault line" separating increasingly impoverished American cities from the increasingly affluent, monolithic mass of suburbia. "Such 'discoveries'", they write, "affect the agenda of urban (and suburban) historians, goading them to show that suburban employment and immigrant settlement is not new" (Harris and Lewis 1998: 636). Wittingly or not, much edge city research has remained firmly in the shadow of an outdated and inaccurate paradigm, which has limited the potential of this research and of the edge city concept.

---

[7] A number of studies dealing with the emergence of edge cities in other national contexts, including South Africa (Michel and Scott 2005), Brazil (Irazábal 2006; Caldeira 1999), Canada (Shearmur and Coffey 2002; Dinovitzer, Hagan, and Levi 2009), India and Mexico (Audirac 2003) and England (Phelps 1998; Phelps and Parsons 2003) have also been published.

[8] With notable exceptions, especially Lang (2003).

Other limitations of this vein of research stem from its quantitative nature. These authors are primarily concerned with finding, mapping and predicting edge cities and their growth, so their privileging of quantitative data is not unreasonable. This work has tended to focus on only one or two of the five aspects of edge cities Garreau noted, however. Greene (1997; 2008), McMillen and McDonald (1998), Anderson (2004), Shearmur and Coffey (2002), and Roberts (2009), for example, all use employment data to study the growth of 'employment (sub)centers' or 'job concentrations', and all agree that metropolitan employment opportunities have undergone considerable decentralization in recent decades, a process that most expect to continue. Lang (2003; Lang and LaFurgy 2003; Lang et al. 2006; Lang et al. 2009) focuses instead on agglomerations (or lack thereof) of office space. Neglecting other aspects of edge cities, however, severely limits what such research can contribute to an understanding of edge cities.[9] This limitation could potentially be remedied even within the quantitative framework favored by these researchers. Though the above discussion notes several ambiguities in the latter three parts of Garreau's test, these could certainly be negotiated in practical ways (the use of survey instruments such as questionnaires could be one strategy). As it stands, this body of work does little to further an understanding of edge cities beyond their most obvious economic manifestations, office space and job counts.

The most serious limitation of this body of work, however, can be found in its treatment of edge city populations. Specifically, the primary concerns of this research (largely job counts

---

[9] This is not to say that the contributions of this research are not valuable. Lang's (2003) work in particular has shown an important limitation of edge cities. He uses the concept of the "edgeless city" to explain the large share of metropolitan economic activity not captured by edge cities or CBDs. It should also be noted that not all the research in this vein claims to be specifically addressing edge cities. As discussed above, edge city's many names often complicate this literature. It appears that some researchers use this nomenclatural quagmire strategically. Calling their object of inquiry an 'employment subcenter' rather than an edge city makes it clear that the researcher is interested in only part of the edge city phenomenon. Such authors often cite Garreau and use the name edge city early in their discussions, but adeptly transition to names like 'subcenter' or 'concentration' in a sleight of hand that alleviates the need to qualify their chosen agglomerations as edge cities or to address the remainder of the five-part test (see Greene 1997).

and office space) focus attention on the commuting populations of edge cities at the expense of edge city residential populations. As discussed above, Garreau's edge cities are places where people commute for work (and for shopping, recreation, etc.), not bedroom communities. Indeed, much of the empirical work in this vein of research has illustrated the large share of metropolitan employment that edge cities have come to command (Ding and Bingham 2000; Anderson and Bogart 2001; Greene 2008). To qualify as edge cities, however, these places must maintain residential populations considerably smaller than their commuting populations, as per Garreau's third qualification. Analyzing employment or office space data, then, implicitly privileges commuting populations. Thus the overwhelming majority of this research neglects residential populations entirely or severely lessens their significance.

Greene (1997) is one notable exception to this trend. Most of Greene's work involves detailing the economic significance of edge cities, but his 1997 piece stands alone in its consideration of residence. Greene (1997:190) is here interested in the significance of Chicago's edge cities to the location decisions of immigrants, and argues that the increasingly strong pull of edge city jobs has caused new immigrants to bypass traditional 'port of entry' neighborhoods closer to the CBD, leaving the latter with only the "indigenous poor", as affluent African Americans also flee for suburban opportunities. Apart from Greene (1997), this vein of research has largely neglected the smaller residential populations of edge cities, an error that severely curtails the analytical strength of this literature. What this first group of research offers, then, is a limited understanding of where edge cities are and how they are affecting metropolitan economies. The question of what life is like in edge cities is taken up in some detail by the next group, the authors that seek to reform edge cities.

Reformers

This category of edge city research is populated by studies quite different in tone and

objective than those that make up the first. One major difference is that the authors of these

studies are not beholden to quantifiable data (though some studies do incorporate them, notably

Garreau 1994), and are often less transparent in describing their methods. These researchers all

take the emergence of edge cities as a new and distinct urban reality quite seriously, and most

wish to both understand and improve edge cities. Though the work of these authors could

perhaps be combined with the edge city critics (the third category, below), there are crucial

distinctions. The authors I call reformers are definitely critical of edge cities, but their critiques

are often partial, locally focused and reform-oriented, as opposed to the larger, often structural

criticisms of the third group. These reformers recognize the problems of edge cities, but often

laud their unique successes and potentials as well.

Of major concern for these authors are the social and cultural components of edge cities

(or lack thereof). Garreau pioneered this concern in *Edge City* (1991), bemoaning the

placelessness and lack of urbane amenities in his edge cities. In the early pages of *Edge City*

Garreau (1991:8) conveys the popular perception of one edge city as "plastic", explaining that it

lacked "livability, civilization, community, neighborhood, and even a soul." These concerns

temper his enthusiasm only very slightly, though, as he attributes them to the growing pains of a

youthful urban form. Edge cities are entrepreneurial creatures, he explains, that with time will

thrive or die according to the creative maneuvering of their champions and the purging fires of

the inter-urban competition characteristic of contemporary capitalism (Harvey 1989). Indeed,

Garreau (1994:33) claims that the lack of edge city history and culture he cites as problematic

will form the pivot of this struggle in years to come: "The real competition will be over

intangible features like civilization, soul and community—the things that define quality of life."

This leaves a promising role for planners, governments and private interests in what Garreau sees

as the natural maturation process of edge cities. Ever the edge city champion, Garreau (1994: 33)

intones: "In edge cities, as in life, the essential task is to rethink, revitalize, and reposition. But

never to retreat."

Scheer and Petkov (1998), Barnett (2002), Page (2005), and Dunphy (2006) share

Garreau's concern over the lack of character and "soul" in edge cities. Scheer and Petkov note

the alienating nature of edge city landscapes, the vastness and sprawling character of the edge

city form, and the resilience of its growth trajectory. Though they argue that edge cities are

beyond hope for pedestrians and for those who desire the vibrancy of traditional urban

neighborhoods, they nevertheless suggest that planners "must come to terms with the existence

of the edge city, without nostalgia" (Scheer and Petkov 1998: 309). Edge cities are qualitatively

different from traditional cities, these authors argue, especially in scale. The only hope for

changing edge cities, they say, lies in controlling the size of individual parcels, which they argue

can only be accomplished through zoning changes. Barnett (2002) offers a different perspective.

Arguing that edge cities can in practice be turned into "real cities", Barnett illustrates the role

that the implementation of public transit and increased residential populations can have on

livability. Bringing housing into balance with jobs, Barnett argues, is an essential component in

the solution to the cultural problems of edge cities. The task of realizing Barnett's solution again

falls to local governments, through zoning and transportation policies (Barnett 2002: 13).

Dunphy (2006) also advocates broad changes in the layout of edge cities as a way to alter their

social character. Mixed uses are his answer to the woes of edge cities, as they "create critical

mass and a sense of place" (Dunphy 2006: 20).

In addition to zoning changes, Dunphy suggests changes to the governmental structures of edge cities to accomplish his livability goals, including the cultivation of public-private partnerships. Such partnerships are necessary, Dunphy reasons, because many edge cities form in unincorporated territories and their emergence is often not accompanied by appropriate municipal governments. Page (2005) also applauds the role of public-private partnerships. In his extensive qualitative study, Page is concerned with efforts to develop a "sense of place" in one of Atlanta's prominent edge cities, Perimeter Center. Page (2005: 4) considers this an essential task in making edge cities vibrant, livable places that are "meaningful to people". One of the more difficult problems faced by Perimeter Center is its lack both of an agreed-upon name and a municipal structure. Many Atlanta residents, Page explains, do not know the name Perimeter Center or do not use that name to describe the area where they work, shop and live. Into this void steps a public-private partnership, with the promotion of the Perimeter Center name as one of its primary goals. Despite his interest in the everyday users of Perimeter Center, however, Page ultimately argues that economic profit is and should be the goal of edge cities. The "sense of place" with which he is concerned thus becomes little more than marketing strategy in which "place has become a vital commodity" (Page 2005: 107). For Page, then, the goals of urbane character and broad recognition and valuation of place are the means by which edge city's investors should seek optimal returns.

A small group of authors have also explored the role of religion in filling the cultural void and mediating the everyday pressures of life in edge cities. Garreau (1991) suggested that church congregations could form one locus for community-building in edge city, though he also pointed to the rather precarious position of Christian values in the consumption-driven environments of edge cities. Subsequent researchers have noted the impact of religious groups and their meeting

places on the landscapes of edge cities and the contentious politics that (especially) non-Christian and non-western congregations have inspired in particular edge cities (Numrich 2000; Hardinghaus 2008; Shah et al. 2012; Dwyer et al. forthcoming). This research suggests that edge cities can present different opportunities for religious groups than those offered by central cities or traditional residential suburbs, but their presence in edge cities is perhaps as divisive and contentious as it is constructive or 'culturing.' Though Numrich (2000) details the contributions that religious institutions can make to edge city landscapes, he insists that their palliative value for the stresses of edge city life are profoundly individual and not social. Though these authors proclaim the potential for minority communities to establish regional religious presences in conveniently located edge cities, their work suggests that the role of religion in curing the social ills of edge cities seems limited, individual and extremely uneven.

This group of authors endeavors to understand and improve edge cities, qualifying them as reformers. Though all are critical of certain aspects, most champion the economic benefits of edge cities and their potential for job and wealth creation. A resounding critique that edge cities lack the soul of "real cities" is met with slightly different prescriptions for change from the authors in this category. Many see public transportation improvements (Barnett 2002), zoning changes (Scheer and Petkov 1998) and public-private partnerships (Page 2005; Dunphy 2006) as required components of a brighter edge city future. Such prescriptions, however, often reveal the development of "soul" and "sense of place" as mere strategies in an effort to sustain profitable investment in edge cities. It is thus unclear if livable urban environments are simply a means to an end (the accumulation of capital) or ends in themselves for edge city's producers and for those who study them. This is a primary topic for the third group of researchers, the edge city critics.

Critics

This third thread of edge city research is by far the most diverse and the most difficult to pin down. For one thing, edge city critics are not all concerned with the same things. Some are critical of the edge city concept, questioning whether it accurately captures the phenomenon in question or whether it has been accurately deployed in research (McKee and McKee 2001; 2004; Lang 2003; Lang and LaFurgy 2003; Lang et al., 2006; 2009; Vaughan et al. 2009). Others are concerned with capitalist urbanization and suburbanization more broadly and the ways that edge cities have become a part of accumulation strategies for capital (Walker 1994; Beauregard 1995; Dear and Flusty 1998; Hackworth 2005) or increasingly fortified and militarized enclaves of exclusion (Davis 1990; Marcuse 1997; Caldeira 1999; Low 2001). I consider the latter group (those critical of capitalist urbanization and the role of edge cities within it) the more significant to the edge city literature. These authors have focused their studies on how edge cities fit into broader contexts of urban restructuring (Marcuse 1997; Phelps and Parsons 2003), how they are used to materially and rhetorically ameliorate social concerns (Beauregard1995; Dwyer et al. forthcoming) and how they function as instruments for the accumulation of capital (Walker 1977; 1994). Their efforts have extended and broadened the edge city discussion in ways far more relevant to the study of urban geography than arguments about the appropriate usage of the term 'edge city' ever could.

A group of urban theorists interested in "postmodern urbanism" form one important strand in this thread (Soja 1989; Dear and Flusty 1997; 1998; Dear 2005; Dear and Dahmann 2008). Many of these scholars organize under the banner of an "LA school", positioning themselves against the "Chicago School" of human ecology developed at the University of Chicago in the early twentieth century. Edge cities, according to these postmodern urbanists, are

prominent examples of the many new exploitative features of the sprawling postmodern metropolis (Dear and Flusty 1997; 1998). The "LA school" has also received a great deal of criticism. Many have criticized postmodern urbanists for misunderstanding or misrepresenting the "Chicago School" (Lake 1999; Hackworth 2005), whose models and theories have been oversimplified and misused since the 1930s (Harris and Lewis 1998; Lewinnek 2010). In oversimplifying prior periods and theories of urbanization, some postmodern urbanists (especially Dear and Flusty 1997; 1998) appear to be knocking down the proverbial straw man (Sui 1999). While the debate around the utility and viability of postmodern urbanism (best exemplified by a 1999 forum in the journal *Urban Geography*) remains open, its recognition of edge cities as exploitative nodes within a complicated capitalist metropolis is a significant contribution to the edge city literature.

Specific means of exploitation at work in edge cities, however, find little explication in the work of self-proclaimed postmodern urbanists. For Arvidson (1999), exploitation is based on individual class positions in capitalist society (Marxian categories based on production of surplus value, appropriation of surplus value, and receipt of redistributed surplus value). According to Arvidson, then, mapping class involves 'placing' "exploitation and the distribution of its fruits" (1999: 153). Arvidson's mapping of those "directly exploited" versus those who occupy other categories of capitalist exploitation does little, however, to explain how geography matters to such exploitation. Putting the exploitation of residents on the map is a useful step, but understanding the exploitative qualities of edge cities (and other geographies) requires more than visualizing neatly classified census data.

A number of authors working within a Marxian framework have argued that urbanization should be seen as one result of capitalist exploitation,[10] as cities (including edge cities) are one strategy for absorbing surplus value garnered through capitalist production (Walker 1977; 1978; 1994; Harvey 2008; 2009). Accumulation of capital happens in cycles, Harvey (2006) explains, and the investment of surplus value in the built environment is, consequently, cyclical as well. Waves of this type of investment can be traced through the history of capitalist urbanization, and edge cities fit quite neatly into the explosive wave Walker (1977) describes as the "suburban solution" that emerged after World War II. Such solutions to the problems of the "overaccumulation" of capital,[11] however, are produced not only as absorbers of surplus but also as tools to facilitate further accumulation (Harvey 1978; 2006). Capitalist urbanization, these authors argue, should thus be seen to accomplish two goals: to absorb surplus value garnered in production and to create geographies amenable to the further accumulation of surplus value. As capitalist accumulation is an exploitative process, capitalist urban spaces should be seen, according to this view, as both the result of exploitation and a strategy for exploitation. A Marxian analysis would thus place edge cities squarely within this process.

Ascribing only economic motivations to edge city development, however, would be a mistake. "Edge cities are", Walker (1994: 17) cautions, "as much a consequence of the social and political order of the US as they are a product of economic forces." In addition to being a solution for economic problems, many critics contend that edge cities should be seen as an attempt to solve or mitigate the social and political ills of the city (Beauregard 1995) or to pacify the fears of the middle and upper classes (Low 2001). Beauregard (1995: 715) and others argue

---

[10] Exploitation is understood as a necessary component of capitalist production, measured by "the excess of the value that labourers embody in commodities relative to the value they require for their own reproduction" in a process known as "the exploitation of labor" (Harvey 2006: 23).
[11] Harvey (1978: 106) explains overaccumulation this way: "too much capital is produced in aggregate relative to the opportunities to employ that capital".

that social problems (such as "poverty, drug addiction, unemployment, racial tensions, fiscal distress and even homelessness") are inextricably linked and "intrinsic to the logic of capitalism", and, as such, "can be diminished but never eliminated." Building edge cities to function as safe havens from these ills, Beauregard (1995: 715) explains, "insulates privileged groups from the places where these consequences are sited, but does not abolish the contradictions that give rise to them." For some authors, understanding edge cities as pockets of protected privilege raises the issue of the "regional consequences" (McGovern 1998) that arise in the places that form the necessary 'other' to edge city growth (Lake 2003). Thus this research has illustrated the connections between the logics of edge city and the logics of contemporary capitalism, and has shown how edge cities have emerged as a spatial solution to a variety of social and political economic problems.

To be an effective solution to the social ills of cities, edge cities must provide a sense of security to their populations and their property, a requirement that, many researchers have shown, translates as exclusion in practice. For example, though edge cities require low-wage labor, this labor must be as invisible as possible, visually present only to the degree that it produces a sense of security (Beauregard 1995). Edge cities cannot include "the very poor, the unemployed, or the ghetto poor," Marcuse (1997: 314) explains, as their residents "wish to 'protect' themselves from a perceived danger from below". Segregation, exclusion of the poor or other 'undesirables' through architecturally or socially enforced spatial separation have thus been a recurrent theme in the work of edge city critics (Beauregard 1995; Marcuse 1997; Caldeira 1999; Low 2001). Others have illustrated the requirement of "automobility" (Featherstone 2004) as an exclusionary element in edge cities (Baerwald 1978; Barnett 2002). As edge cities are rarely served by public transportation, those who seek employment, residence, shopping or

leisure in edge cities must have regular access to an automobile. As discussed above, many edge

city reformers see the addition of public transportation and affordable housing as avenues for

improving edge cities (Barnett 2002; Dunphy 2006). Edge city critics counter that such

improvements would undermine the exclusionary objective of edge cities, making these and

other regionally-sensitive planning objectives "not a realistic political prospect at this time"

(McGovern 1998: 257).

Conclusions

Suburban agglomerations, employment centers and other forms of suburbanized

production and consumption are not new to American cities. As Walker (1977; 1994) illustrates,

they are part of a long and continuing history of capitalist urbanization that proceeds in waves

and cycles according to the logics and consequences of capital accumulation. Exclusionary

residential enclaves built to protect privilege are also not new, as places like Olmstead's

Riverside, IL (incorporated in 1875) should be sufficient to prove. Patterns and forms of

exclusion apparent in edge cities are built upon and blended with previous patterns and should be

seen as 'new' only in their "specific characteristics" (Marcuse 1997). Given the long histories

and extensive literatures on these topics, understanding edge cities would hardly be worth the

effort if they were nothing more than exclusionary enclaves or suburban employment centers.

Edge cities, however, are more.

The everyday significance of edge cities extends far beyond those who reside behind the

walls of their gated communities and staff the desks of their office towers. Edge cities employ

executives, accountants, attorneys, developers, janitors, nannies, nuns, machinists, teachers, dog-walkers, dishwashers and doormen, and their economic prowess and dynamism is documented by numerous empirical studies (Garreau 1994; Bingham and Kimble 1995; Bingham et al. 1997; Forstall and Greene 1997). Edge cities are also significant to the shopping, leisure, recreation, religious, and other activities of an increasing share of metropolitan populations. Some of the best in art, food, and heart surgery now exist alongside the manufacturing, logistics and command and control centers of major multinational corporations in edge cities. For these and many other reasons, edge cities soak up the time and efforts of huge numbers of people. Their fundamental elements may not be new, but edge cities are different from their predecessors. Their significance to so many lives makes understanding this difference a worthwhile and important task.

Garreau (1991) grossly overemphasizes the novelty of his new urban form, and his hopeful zeal and brazen nationalism are at times more than enough to nauseate the most ardent of boosters. His style and his editorializing need not distract from the significance of his work, however. The criteria he included in his "five-part test" form a more-than-adequate basis for beginning a study of edge cities and their "specific characteristics", despite the ambiguities discussed above. Indeed, these ambiguities should be seen as opportunities to hone the edge city concept and push the literature in new directions. Understanding edge cities and their contexts and consequences requires such refinement and debate.

The current literature on edge cities is robust in many areas, though lacking in others. In the review presented here, I identified three categories of research based on the treatment edge cities receive from different authors. The first group consists of those who delineate. These researchers are primarily concerned with the quantifiable aspects of edge cities, especially their

employment numbers and office and retail square footage. Though this work has served the important practical purpose of putting edge cities on the map in a variety of contexts, most studies in this vein of research ignore key elements of edge cities in their formulations. Most crucially, studies in this group have given little consideration to the residents of edge cities. Residents are a minority in edge cities by definition, and edge city housing opportunities are dwarfed by their employment opportunities (Garreau 1991; Page 2005). Focusing on job counts and office space has caused many of these researchers to ignore or neglect residential populations. Edge city residents, however, have been shown to have a great deal of power, often through "shadow governments" (Garreau 1991) such as homeowners' associations (HOAs) (McKenzie 1994), or more traditional municipal structures. Residents are thus a group that edge city research cannot afford to neglect.

The second group of edge city research consists of those I call reformers. Much of this work concerns the role of planners in edge cities. A substantial focus of the authors in this group is the lack of culture and the trappings of the urban lifestyle in edge cities. Several authors advocate increasing access to public transportation (Barnett 2002) and changes in zoning aimed at encouraging density and mixed uses (Scheer and Petkov 1998; Dunphy 2006), though McGovern (1998) has illustrated the political difficulty of advancing such changes. Some argue for the formation of public-private partnerships and the development of a "sense of place" as a marketing strategy for edge cities (Page 2005; Dunphy 2006). The work of these authors thus raises questions about how edge cities might change, and moreover about the motivations behind potential changes. While some authors in this vein are interested in the livability of edge cities (such as Barnett 2002), others are primarily concerned with the profits of investors (such as Page

2005). Researchers that have such different agendas are likely to continue reaching different conclusions and advocating different solutions.

The questions of why edge cities are built and for whom are taken on squarely by edge city critics. The work of this third and final group of researchers has illustrated two crucial and complementary aspects of edge cities: exclusion and exploitation. Postmodernist and Marxist authors have argued for greater attention to the role that edge cities play in processes of capitalist urbanization (Walker 1994; Dear and Flusty 1998). Marxian political economic frameworks developed by Harvey (1978; 2006) and Walker (1977; 1978; 1981) are particularly adept at explaining the exploitative dimensions of urban geographies. These authors argue that urban built environments must be understood as both the result of exploitation (of labor) and the means to continue such exploitation. Edge cities are thus but one flavor or expression of contemporary urban exploitation, one recurring nub in the topography of "the suburban solution" (Walker 1977). This exploitation is tied to the difficult work of exclusion in edge cities. Critics argue that edge cities should be seen as attempts to solve, mitigate or escape from the social and political economic problems of central cities, problems that many claim are inherent to the dynamics of capitalism (Beauregard 1995). Others note the significance of fear in producing edge cities (Davis 1990; Low 2001), revealing edge cities as attempted solutions to both real and imagined problems.

Edge city research should seek to build upon this literature, addressing especially the particular geographies of edge cities and the ways in which these dual aims of exclusion and exploitation are worked out in practice. As the large amount of empirical work on edge cities illustrates, context is significant to their development. As past and future research should also make clear, the consequences of edge cities are equally significant to shaping their particular

local and regional contexts. Edge cities are unique and interesting places, and it is the processes

and struggles that create them that future research should endeavor to understand. The remainder

of this thesis constitutes just such an effort.

CHAPTER TWO
AN INVITATION TO OAK BROOK

Introduction: Chicago's edge cities

Greater Chicago is home to several edge cities, most of them west of the central city.

Researchers disagree about the number and locations of these edge cities, however. Garreau

suggested in 1991 that there were four edge cities, but revised that number to six in 1994. This

discrepancy is probably based on the lack of precision in *Edge City* (1991). Chicago was not a

major focus in *Edge City*, and two of the four areas Garreau noted as edge cities in Chicago were

descriptively vague and far too large geographically to ever be considered one place (one of the

criteria for edge cities, as discussed in chapter one). Garreau's 1994 study refined these areas,

splitting them into two edge cities along the "Edens Expressway" north of the city and two along

the "East-West Tollway" (Interstate 88) to the west, in addition to the O'Hare and Schaumburg

areas (Garreau's 1994 map is shown as Figure 2.1 below). Lang (et al. 2006), who has criticized

Garreau's (1991) application of his own edge city standards, found four edge cities in the

Chicago area (Lang et al.'s 2006 map is shown as Figure 2.2 below): Schaumburg, Naperville, O'Hare and Oak Brook (Lang et al. 2006; Lang et al. 2009). Studies of employment numbers (Greene 1997; 2008; McMillen and McDaniel 1998; McMillen and Lester 2003) complicate the task of delineating edge cities because of their use of different terminology, but nevertheless illustrate the presence of edge cities identified by other studies. Despite their many differences, these studies agree on four edge cities in the Chicago area: Schaumburg, Naperville, O'Hare and Oak Brook. None of these studies, however, explicitly qualify their choices.

The Chicago Seven
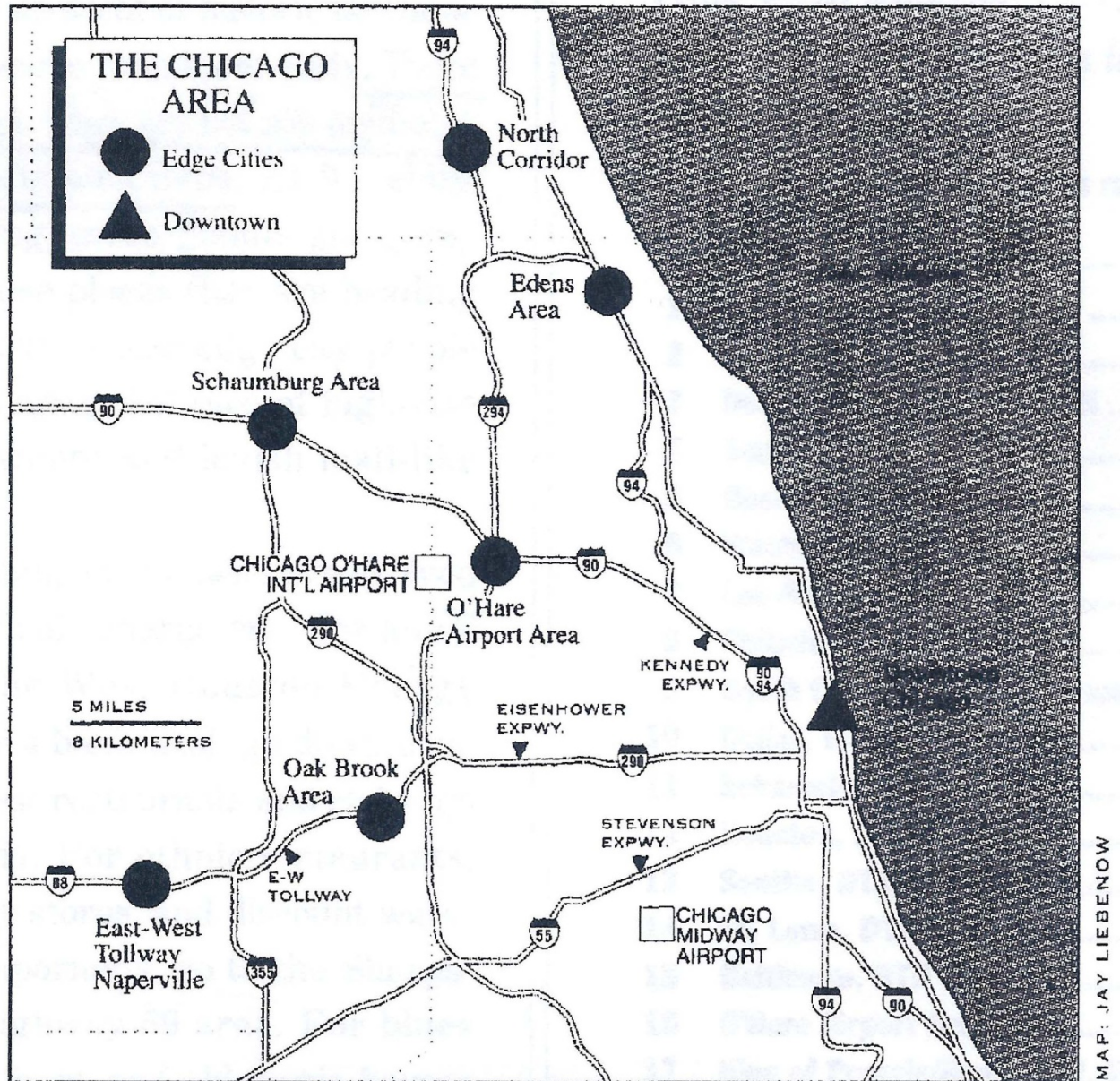
FIGURE 2.1: This map (from Garreau 1994) shows the six edge cities he identified in the Chicago area. This is a revision of his 1991 assessment, which listed four edge cities.

Chicago

(map legend)

Office Space Density
- Edge City Density
- Secondary Downtown Density
- Primary Downtown Density

Map labels: Lake, Schaumburg, O'Hare, Cook, Urban Envelope, Downtown, Du Page, Naperville, Oakbrook, Will. Highway markers: I94, I294, I190, I90, I290, I355, I88, I55.
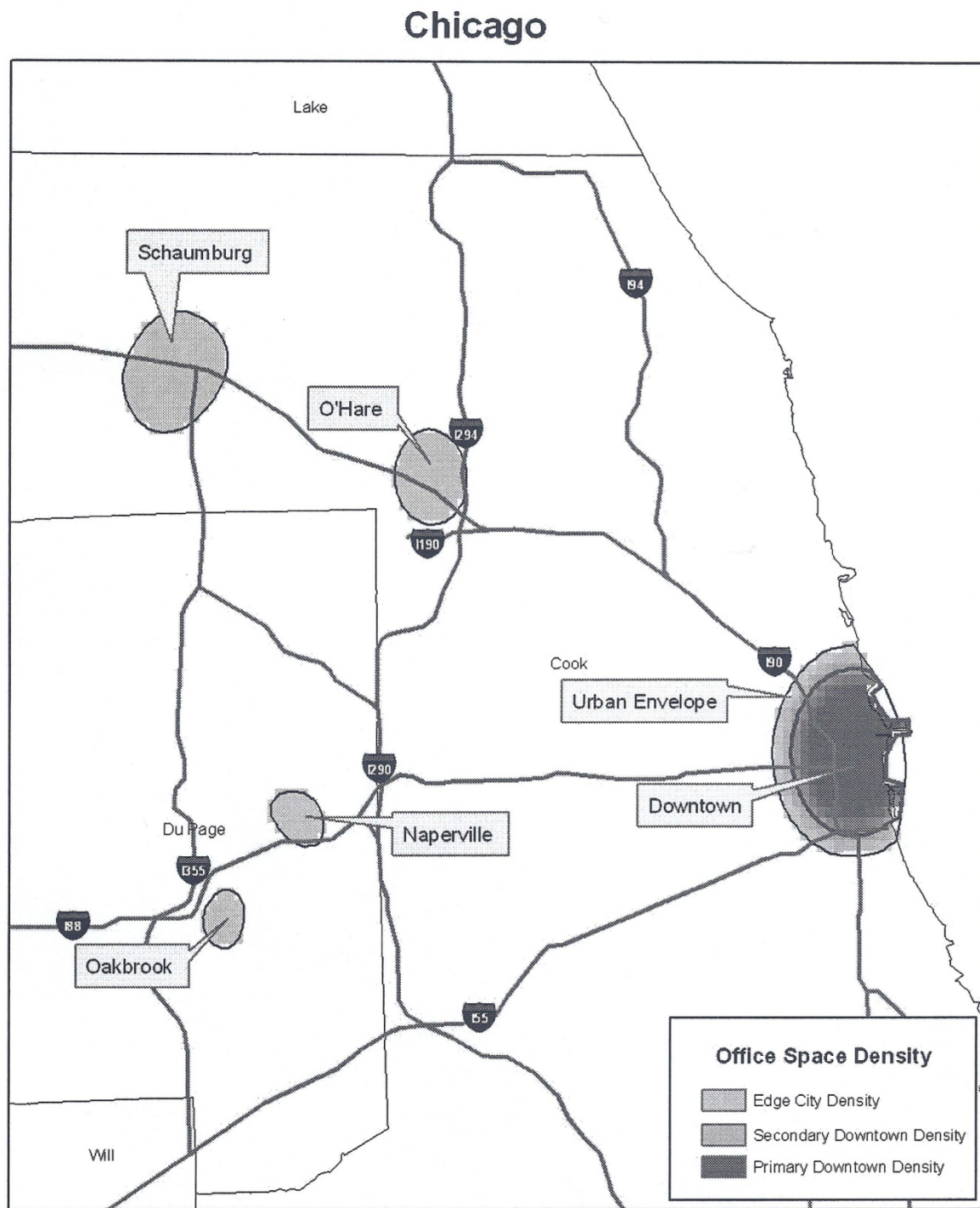
FIGURE 2.2: This map (from Lang et al. 2006) illustrates the four edge cities these authors noted in the Chicago area. Naperville and "Oakbrook" are notably mislabeled; each is where the other belongs. Absent from this map are the two northern edge cities Garreau identified in 1994 (shown in Figure 2.1 above).

36

I have chosen the Village of Oak Brook as the single research site for this thesis, for reasons discussed above (see introduction). Oak Brook has featured prominently in both edge city studies and broader suburban studies of Chicago. It is one of the four Chicago edge cities noted by Lang (2003; et al. 2006; et al. 2009), and one of six noted by Garreau (1994). Greene (1997) also noted Oak Brook as an edge city, though his later study (2008) no longer listed Oak Brook, instead including the neighboring village of Downers Grove. Bartlett, Draine, and Soot (2007) proclaimed Oak Brook a "2nd CBD" for Chicago as early as 1975, arguing that the village was uniquely situated with respect to the City of Chicago and the airports of O'Hare and Midway, and enjoyed a favorable mix of economic activities. Lang (2003; et al. 2006; et al. 2009), Greene (2008) and many others, however, illustrate a profound confusion about where and what exactly constitutes the Village of Oak Brook. Oak Brook and its neighboring cities and villages (especially its near neighbors Oakbrook Terrace, Downers Grove, and Lombard) are sufficiently visually similar in their commercial districts that many who commute to the area for work, shopping or recreation express some confusion about where each begins and ends. This confusion is mirrored in many studies where municipal boundaries are neglected (Greene 2008; Lang 2003; et al. 2006; et al. 2009), prompting the use of terms like "Oak Brook area" (Garreau 1994) or the unironic "Oakbrook" (Lang et al. 2006). McMillen and McDonald (1998) are the only authors who use the municipal boundaries of Oak Brook in their study of Chicago's edge cities. In the case of Oak Brook and its neighbors, however, there is no need to eschew municipal boundaries, despite Garreau's (1991) warnings that edge cities ignore such structures. Neither Oak Brook nor any of its neighbors are without municipal governments, making this area different from many other edge city contexts (such as those noted in Perimeter Center, GA, by

Page (2005)). Established boundaries, I wish to suggest, are a reasonable context and scale for edge city research in this part of metropolitan Chicago.

Considered according to its municipal boundaries, Oak Brook is without doubt an edge city by Garreau's (1991) standards. Lang's (2003; et al. 2009) confusing office space statistics and Garreau's (1994) and Greene's (1997) employment counts are nearly useless, as they are all based on unclear boundaries. According to Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce (which serves Oak Brook and its neighbor Oakbrook Terrace) President Tracy Mulqueen, the Village of Oak Brook has 8,596,874 square feet of office space, easily surpassing Garreau's first requirement (personal communication with Tracy Mulqueen, 6/27/2011).[12] Oakbrook Center, Oak Brook's massive upscale shopping mall[13] alone more than meets the 600,000 square feet of Garreau's second requirement, as it is estimated to have around 2,000,000 square feet of retail space within its confines (Elder 2002). McMillen (2003) reports Oak Brook's employment count as 78,810 as of 2000, a figure not disputed by local authorities. In my interviews and casual conversations, the "daytime population" (referring to those present in the village during business hours) was variously estimated between 80,000 and well over 100,000. The 2010 US Census reports Oak Brook's residential population as 7,883, however, an imbalance of residents and commuters more than sufficient to pass Garreau's third test. Indeed, the fact that the term "daytime population" is such a well-worn piece of the local lexicon should itself prove this imbalance.

The fourth qualification was more than proved to me by my time with local residents and commuters. People know of and speak about Oak Brook far beyond its borders. The village is a

---

[12] Oakbrook Terrace, incidentally, is reported to have 4,329,643 square feet of office space (personal communication with Tracy Mulqueen, 6/27/2011).
[13] Oakbrook Center describes itself as "the largest open-air premium shopping center in the country" (www.oakbrookcenter.com/about).

popular spot for shopping and dining, and its recreational grounds are the envy of most western

suburbs. Some of its notable corporate residents (McDonald's, Ace Hardware, Blistex, and

others) its exclusive proprietorships (Gibson's Steakhouse, Tiffany's, and, until recently, the

Drake Hotel) and famous and infamous residents (Chicago professional athletes and members of

the Calabrese crime family) add to the village's regional and national recognition. Garreau's fifth

test stipulates the area be (roughly) post-1960 in its current incarnation. Oak Brook was

incorporated in 1958, and its commercial and residential development substantively began with

the opening of Oakbrook Center in 1962.

Facts, figures and testimonies thus attest to Oak Brook's edge city status on Garreau's

terms. In fact, Oak Brook is the Chicago metropolitan region's truest edge city.[14] Unlike so many

edge cities noted by the reformers discussed in chapter one, however, Oak Brook has a thick

history and a highly developed sense of place. I will use the remainder of this chapter to outline

this history and to introduce Oak Brook's geographical context.

Paul Butler's Oak Brook

The Village of Oak Brook is situated in the southeastern part of DuPage County, near the

border with Cook County, home to the city of Chicago (see Figure 2.3, below). It is wholly

contained by York Township, which includes parts of the villages of Villa Park, Hinsdale, Glen

Ellyn, Westmont and Lombard and of the cities of Elmhurst and Oakbrook Terrace, all close

---

[14]Chicago's three other oft-cited edge cities, Naperville, Schaumburg and O'Hare, all have notable problems passing Garreau's test. Naperville and Schaumburg, though they have large employment counts, also have massive populations. Naperville's population was 141,853 and Schaumburg's 74,227 as of the 2010 US Census, while McMillen (2003) states their employment counts as only 34,197 ("Naperville-Lisle") and 82,092, respectively. Naperville thus cannot be an edge city, as it is overwhelmingly residential in character. Schaumburg, though more balanced, serves residential and economic roles in almost equal capacity, jeopardizing its edge city status. As for O'Hare, though it does have a very small residential population (11,956 in 2000, according to Seligman 2005) and a large number of jobs (61,527 in 2000, according to McMillen (2003)), it is fully incorporated into the City of Chicago, and thus lacks many of the important tax and residential attributes of other edge cities.

neighbors of Oak Brook. Significant neighboring communities also include the Village of

Downers Grove, and, further west, the cities of Naperville and Aurora. Oak Brook is slightly less

than twenty miles from the center of downtown Chicago, a trip of roughly thirty to forty minutes

by car. It is also roughly thirty minutes from the international airports of O'Hare and Midway.
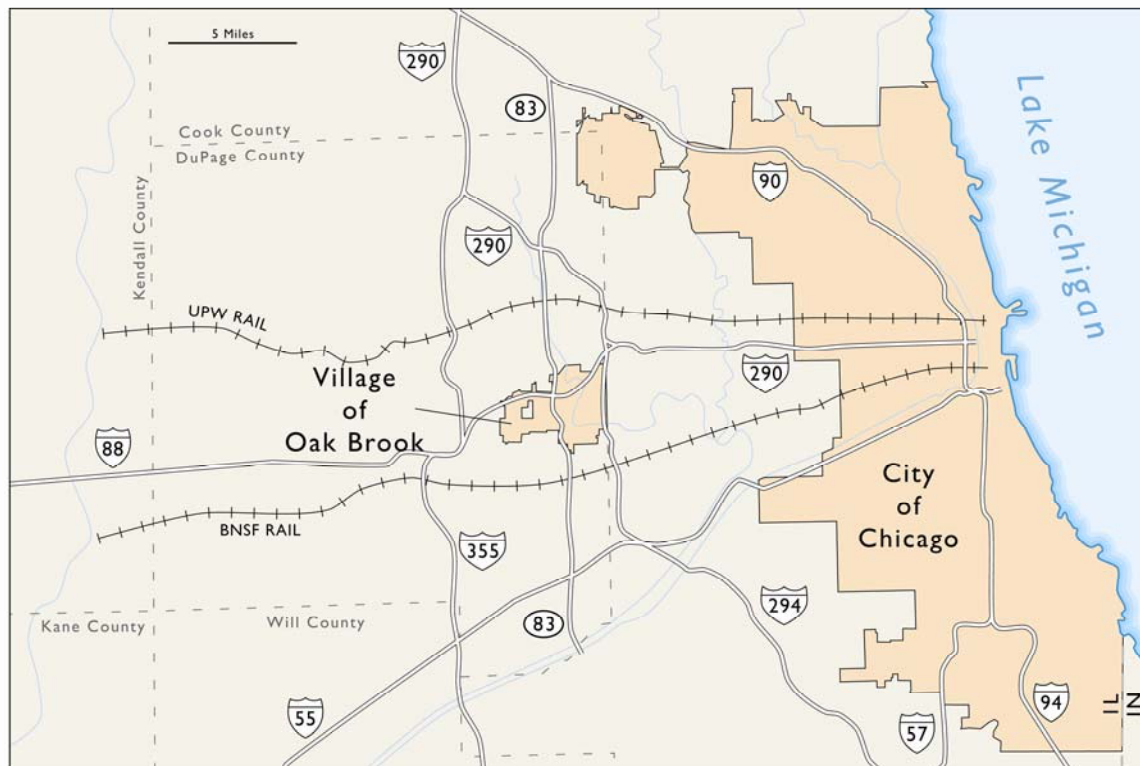
FIGURE 2.3: This map illustrates the current extent of the Village of Oak Brook and the City of Chicago, and some of the major transportation routes of the metropolitan area. Of note are the UPW and BNSF Railways, which are the two closest commuter rail lines to Oak Brook, and Interstate 88, the Ronald Reagan Memorial Tollway, which runs east-west through the northern portion of the village. State Highway 83 runs north-south through the village's center, and the village is roughly bounded east and west by Interstate highways 294 and 355, respectively. Cartography by author.

Residents and visitors to the area in the early decades of the twentieth century described

it as quiet and rural, spotted here and there with a few residences, most of them old farmhouses.

It was known locally as a place for recreation, especially the genteel pursuits of golf, polo and other equestrian activities.[15] According to the Oak Brook Historical Society, the first use of the name 'Oak Brook' belonged to Paul Butler's Oak Brook Polo Club (opened in 1922), which offered equine escape for locals and celebrities alike. An acquaintance in the area grinned while he told me about the dates he took to the polo grounds as a youth. His family connection to the Butlers allowed him to transcend his normal social station and mingle with local elites, if only to impress a companion and perhaps have a laugh. The influence of Paul Butler and his family, however, would extend far beyond bringing polo to the western suburbs.

Paul's father Frank Butler had passed on some land holdings in the area, specifically the land surrounding his Natoma Dairy. The head of a dynamic collection of business interests (including the Butler Paper Company[16] and Butler Aviation), Paul Butler began to expand his Oak Brook Real estate in the 1920s. "He would quietly tell his neighbors that he would match any serious offer received", Barton (1990:1) explains, a strategy that significantly increased Butler's acreage.[17] His interest in acquiring these properties was twofold. First, Butler had a special affinity for the area as a home and a place for recreation. Second, he was interested in the area because it had all the qualities a visionary developer desires: large swaths of available, open

---

[15] The Village of Oak Brook retains some vestiges of this sporting heritage. Formally, the Village owns and maintains the Oak Brook Bath and Tennis Club, which was donated by Paul Butler. Though the Oak Brook Park District was, by all accounts, a robust organization at the time of Butler's donation of the Bath and Tennis, personal reasons only speculated upon by current residents and officials led him to bestow this gift upon the Village and not the Park District. Some recent negotiations reportedly show early progress toward transferring administration of the Bath and Tennis to the Park District (Interview with anonymous official, 7/11/2011). Informally, loose association with golf, polo and other 'white collar' sports were prevalent in both my interview sessions and my casual conversations with people in and around Oak Brook. In 1962, Paul Butler and a young Oak Brook were the subject of a *Sports Illustrated* article that boasted of the area's recreational facilities. Though the association of Oak Brook with genteel sports appears to have diminished slightly in recent years, a casual association remains in the local popular consciousness.

[16] Paul Butler's son Michael Butler's online biography (which can be read at orlok.com) claims that the Butler Paper Company is the oldest family owned business in the city of Chicago (the Butler Paper Company has been sold several times, including to forest products giant Georgia-Pacific (*The New York Times* 1993)).

[17] Estimates of Butler's property (at its peak) range from 3,400 acres (Barton 1990) to 5,000 acres (Buursma 1990).

land, a developing highway network only a stone's throw away, and no municipal government. These are the factors that pave the way for an edge city.

Butler's plans for Oak Brook were nearly thwarted, however, by the very highway that made his property so attractive. In the late 1950s, plans for Interstate highway 88 were drawn that cut diagonally through Butler's property, an arrangement that would have created many wedge-shaped parcels in the areas Butler planned to develop as commercial and residential lots. Barton (1990) explains that while it would have been lucrative for Butler to sell his land to the Illinois Tollway Commission in this arrangement, unwieldy parceling and division would have made remaining land harder to sell and, perhaps as importantly, would have lessened Butler's ability to conveniently execute his already forming vision of Oak Brook. Butler met with officials from the Commission shortly thereafter, intending to make a deal to save his plans. As a result of this meeting, the Commission agreed to reroute the highway to run parallel to Cermak Road, and in exchange Butler offered the Commission a piece of land (free of charge) along the new route that could be used to build a headquarters. This arrangement maintained the rectangular shape of most of the parcels of land Butler planned to sell, in addition to establishing his reputation as a clever and effective negotiator.[18]

The movement of the highway was the first step in the development of Oak Brook. The planning and construction of Oakbrook Center (the shopping mall) was the crucial second step. Indeed, the Village of Oak Brook owes its existence in part to Oakbrook Center. "Oak Brook", Barton (1990: 2) explains, "was incorporated…essentially as a defensive reaction." Paul Butler

---

[18] The story is cloudy for many, as if Butler simply strong-armed or sweet-talked the Commission. The fact that Butler had the highway relocated and realigned is firmly entrenched in local lore. Paul Butler has become something of a local legend, and it can at times be difficult to separate legend from history when discussing these events. He is remembered, perhaps above all, as a man with a remarkable ability to get things done. Some attribute this to his extensive business, social and political connections ("his rolodex was very large", a family friend remarked), others to his winning personality, his humility (or at least his distaste for the limelight) and his willingness to listen to and reason with those with whom he disagreed.

had been dealing with the Urban Development Company to develop the mall, in what was then

unincorporated DuPage County. The young City of Utopia, which bordered the planned

development, changed its name to Oakbrook Terrace (to match the proposed name of the mall)

and annexed the land in an attempt to gain the tax revenue such a property would undoubtedly

provide (Barton 1990).[19] Butler had courted the mall property's developers with an eye to

exactly this revenue, and was unwilling to forfeit his prize. His associates quickly filed papers

for the incorporation of the Village of Oak Brook, despite the presence of only 250 residents.[20]

By all accounts, this was the midnight ride of Paul Butler and his crew. They collected the 50

required signatures and filed the paperwork within days of the Utopian annexation. Once the

Village was incorporated and a government organized, a petition was filed that de-annexed what

was to become Oakbrook Center from the City of Oakbrook Terrace, simultaneously annexing it

instead to the Village of Oak Brook (see figure 2.4 below). Municipal government thus arrived in

Oak Brook in 1958, and with it came the right to the significant tax revenues[21] of Oakbrook

Center.

Retaining the right to this revenue was no small achievement, as Butler envisioned a

community in which no municipal property tax would be required. Commenting on Butler's own

'utopia', a friend remarked: "Taxes are not Paul's idea of perfection" (quoted in Furlong 1962:

50). This lack of municipal property tax remains a strong pull factor for homebuyers, as residents

---

[19] Barton (1990) adds that the City of Utopia had struggled financially since its incorporation, and sorely needed the property's revenue to shore up its tax base.

[20] This figure is gingerly asserted, and comes from the memoir of William, R. Watson, Jr., a longtime resident of Oak Brook and owner of one of the first properties to be annexed to the Village of Oak Brook in 1959. Watson (2008: 3, original emphasis) explains that he and his wife, as a result of the annexation of his property, "had increased the population of Oak Brook by two."

[21] The Village is allotted 1.5% of the 7.75% sales tax, revenue that has hovered around $15,000,000 annually since 1995, and was projected as $15,542,800 for 2012 (Neimeyer and Dangles 2012). This revenue accounts for nearly 35% of the Village's 2012 budget, followed by water sales (at just over 13%), utility and telecommunications taxes and charges for Village services (both roughly 10% each), and several other smaller revenue sources (notably the user fees for the Sports Core property (7%) and interest on assets (nearly 6%). Thus while other taxes and fees are important, sales tax revenue is the crucial component of the Village's budget, a point confirmed many times in my conversations with current and former Village officials.

of Oak Brook can save tens of thousands of dollars per year on their homes, compared to residents of similar homes in neighboring communities. Taxation has also become a contentious political issue in the village, especially as the recent recession has squeezed tax revenues and prompted adjustment to expenditures. Despite the battles waged over this issue and the many times it has been proposed in the decades since incorporation, however, Oak Brook has remained stalwart in its refusal to levy a property tax. Retaining control of a small portion of Oakbrook Center's sales tax revenue was the crucial factor in establishing this privilege for residents.
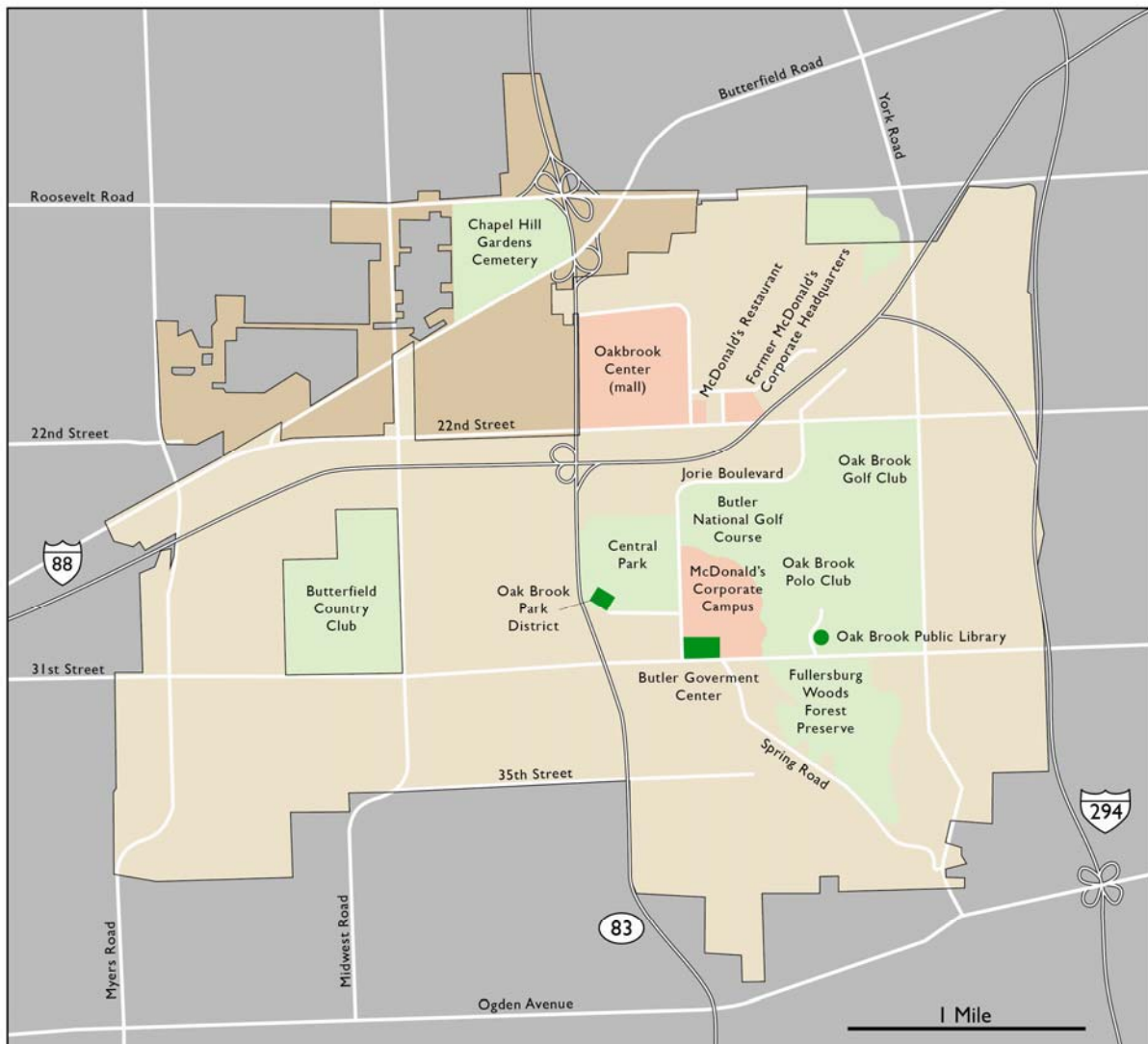
FIGURE 2.4: This map illustrates the current extent of the Village of Oak Brook (shown in beige) and the City of Oakbrook Terrace (shown in brown). Parks and large open areas are shown in light green, municipal and park district facilities are shown in dark green, and the McDonald's properties and Oakbrook Center are shown in pink. Butterfield Country Club on the west side of the village is surrounded by but not incorporated into the Village of Oak Brook. The country club, I was told, wishes to remain in the jurisdiction of DuPage County because this allows its bar to remain open until four o'clock a.m., while Oak Brook establishments must close at two o'clock a.m. Cartography by author.

This was to be the beginning of an interesting relationship between Oak Brook and Oakbrook Terrace, neighbors that are close enough to make their borders utterly confusing even to long-time residents, and in some ways visually close enough to confuse even the astute observer. One commercial corridor, 22nd Street, forms the jugular vein of both municipalities, and also forms part of the boundary line that separates one from the other (see figure 2.4 above). Several issues beyond the struggle for Oakbrook Center also caused tension in the relationship between the young municipalities. The first of these was the formation of the two park districts, which came hot on the heels of the initial border dispute. Barton (1990) describes being asked to a meeting with Paul Butler and the lawyers of Sears, Marshall Field and other interested parties. At this meeting, Barton was informed that Oakbrook Terrace's lawyer[22] had organized the Oak Brook Terrace Park District (significantly so named), and included in this district not only all of Oakbrook Terrace but also all of unoccupied Oak Brook, including, significantly, Oakbrook Center (Barton 1990). As Barton (1990) explains, no legal measure for de-annexation existed for park districts in the way that it did for municipal boundaries, so a hasty counterattack was quickly financed and formulated, though the untimely death of the Oakbrook Terrace lawyer, the inadequacy of his successors, and a significant move by the Illinois General Assembly made this

---

[22] Alternately referred to as "Husegh" and "Husagh" by Barton (1990).

entirely unnecessary. In an unexpected (and, for Oak Brook, serendipitous) move, the legislature added a de-annexation measure similar to that used in Oak Brook's incorporation, and in 1962 this measure was used to create the South Oak Brook Park District (the name would be changed to the Oak Brook Park District in 1965). The leadership of the current Oak Brook Park District is in the process of crafting a written history of the organization. This history explains that the "original purpose for the creation of a park district in Oak Brook was to establish jurisdictional boundaries so no other park district could annex lands into their jurisdiction" (*History of the Oak Brook Park District*, 2011). The formation of this governmental body was entirely a reaction to the threat of taxation, and for some time thereafter served little other purpose. Barton (1990: 8) explains that two of the first trustees of the Park District were assured by Paul Butler "that their duties would be minimal".

The struggle to control Oakbrook Center and the drama of the dueling park districts created a rift between Oak Brook and Oakbrook Terrace. Months later, a third conflict would deepen this rift into a chasm. In late 1962 and early 1963, just after the park district issue was concluded, Ted Mohlman, the first president of Oak Brook,[23] was working with the mayor of Oakbrook Terrace on a plan to dissolve the City of Oakbrook Terrace and annex its land into the Village of Oak Brook (Watson 2008). With voter approval, all the properties of Oakbrook Terrace would have become part of Oak Brook and Oakbrook Terrace would have ceased to exist. The plan was approved by the voters of Oakbrook Terrace in 1963, but rejected by the voters of Oak Brook later in that same year. This vote made the 1963 ballot a significant event in

---

[23] Mohlman was selected for the job by Paul Butler, and he also worked as Butler's business manager. Watson (2008) is particularly critical of Mohlman's administration and the total control it gave Paul Butler in Village affairs. Indeed, it seems that Mohlman largely did Butler's bidding as Village President, though he kept a sense of humor about this relationship. In an interview with the Oak Brook Historical Society (OBHS), Adam Butler related a story in which a resident referred to Mohlman as "nothing but Paul Butler's yes man." "That's not exactly true," Mohlman is reported to have joked, "because when Paul says no, I say no" (Interview with Michael Butler et al., OBHS).

the history of the Village of Oak Brook, as it was the first major decision made by voters that differed from the intentions of Paul Butler and his appointed president.

Butler had always been careful about fostering the right kind of residential development in Oak Brook. The original zoning ordinance disallowed multi-family dwellings and had a minimum lot size of one-quarter acre (Barton 1990), measures meant to protect against density and especially apartments (this will be discussed in detail in chapter three). Butler's plan was for a village with a small enough population to be sustained by the revenue produced by its limited commercial area (north of the highway, including Oakbrook Center)[24] and posh and exclusive enough to attract the wealthy, especially the upper-level management and ownership of Oak Brook's corporate residents (Furlong 1962; Interviews with Kathy Maher 6/9/2011 and Karen Bushy 6/17/2011; 6/21/2011). Butler never intended Oak Brook to be the kind of place where lots of people could afford to live; it was planned and marketed as a place for people who appreciated the finer things in life and could afford to pay for them. Even now residents of Oak Brook explain what Butler was looking for in potential residents with ideas like 'caliber', 'quality' and 'character'. Refusing to take on the residents and properties of Oakbrook Terrace was an important part of maintaining this identity and preserving the exclusivity of Oak Brook. Oakbrook Terrace, several interviewees explained to me, was and is a "very different kind of community", on issues as diverse as zoning, finances, "attitude", and "their view of the reason for having village government" (Interview with Karen Bushy 6/21/2011). The housing opportunities in the two communities, I was told, are an especially apparent difference.[25] Though

---

[24] 10,000 residents was the rough 'limit' that Butler and others agreed would preserve the revenue situation (Interview with Karen Bushy 6/21/2011).
[25] As of the 2010 US Census, the median value of Oak Brook homes was $845,400. The median value of Oakbrook Terrace homes was $340,400. The percentage of renter-occupied housing units in Oak Brook is 1.7%, while in Oakbrook Terrace it is 52.1%.

Oak Brook and Oakbrook Terrace now share a chamber of commerce,[26] the effort to wed the two municipalities has never been resurrected.

It is significant that this move to set Oak Brook apart from its neighbor, and to firmly establish its public autonomy in the hands of its residents, came in 1963, five years after incorporation. Kathy Maher, President of the Oak Brook Historical Society, explains that Paul Butler's direct involvement in municipal affairs lasted roughly five years. "For the first five years or so," Maher told me, "he kept a pretty good reign on it. Then, once people started moving here, and it was the caliber of people that he had hoped, then they started to self govern, and he backed out" (Interview with Kathy Maher, 6/9/2011). Some in Oak Brook, such as Kathy Maher and Karen Bushy, characterize Butler's retreat from direct control of village affairs as a quiet bowing out. Other accounts emphasize a struggle between many parties (including Butler) to establish control of the village's political scene. Whatever his motivations, Butler did cede direct control of the village to its growing residential population and its elected officials around 1963, though he would remain intimately involved in land development and other important areas of village life.

Watson's (2008) history of this transition (from Butler's direct control to elected officials) emphasizes the involvement of a powerful type of 'shadow government,' (Garreau 1991; McKenzie 1994) the Oak Brook Civic Association. Originally organized for civil defense during World War II, the association soon came to be involved in many social and political arenas such as zoning, taxes, fire protection and "equestrian law and order" (Chapek 1985). Watson (2008: 10, original emphasis) describes the Association as a "quasi-governmental body," stating that though it had "no real legislative power," it nevertheless often "acted as though it

---

[26] Some Oak Brook residents feel that even this is too much sharing, as the business communities of Oak Brook and Oakbrook Terrace are said to be too different to have commensurable interests.

<u>was</u> the local government." In 1962, Watson became the president of the Association. He later explained to a friend that the Association "functioned in the village…as a 'watch-dog' at all the public meetings" (Watson 2008: 36). In 1968, the Civic Association created the Oak Brook Caucus for the purpose of selecting and assessing candidates for village offices. The Civic Association in many ways nurtured the autonomy of Oak Brook's voting public, and continues to play an active role in political and social affairs in Oak Brook.

One of Paul Butler's later contributions to Oak Brook was his involvement with the McDonald's corporation, which moved its headquarters to Oak Brook in 1971. The original headquarters were located in the white complex shown in Figure 2.5 (below), on the north side of 22nd Street.

A McDonald's executive described the move to Oak Brook as a change motivated by a desire to attract a different kind of staff and a desire for a more quiet, serene and rural environment (Interview with anonymous commuter, 7/6/2011). Proximity to several interstate highways and two major airports were also powerful factors.[27] This person also explained that when the headquarters building was finished, McDonald's occupied only two of its eight floors. Soon enough, however, growth of the company and Paul Butler's desire to sell considerable acreage converged, and a long battle began in which McDonald's fought for re-zoning and for zoning variances. Much of what is now McDonald's campus on Jorie Boulevard (see Figure 2.2 above) had to be re-zoned for business use. Both Watson (2008) and Barton (1990) claim that no single issue in Oak Brook's history divided the residents as much as the concerns over the McDonald's proposal. Residents' concerns related mostly to the threat of increased traffic in a largely residential area of the village and the encroachment of commercial uses into land reserved for residential development. Butler and McDonald's ultimately emerged victorious, and the corporation built a world class campus on the site. The campus (which McDonald's proudly claims as the design of the grandson of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe) was completed and operational in 1983 and includes a Hyatt Lodge and the famous "Hamburger University," a training facility for McDonald's managerial staff (Interview with anonymous commuter, 7/6/2011). Despite the tension these and other events created between McDonald's and the Village of Oak Brook, the two entities are now reportedly on good terms.

---

[27] Interestingly, site selection included helicopter flights over many urban and suburban regions in the United States (Interview with anonymous commuter, 7/6/2011).

Paul Butler did not live to see the completion of the McDonald's campus, as he was accidentally struck and killed by an automobile while walking home across 31st Street at dusk in 1981. He is remembered locally as much for his philanthropy as his vision. He donated the land for the village's first church, Christ Church of Oak Brook, and for the Butler School and the Butler Government Center (where the Village Hall and the Police and Fire Departments reside). The eccentricity and exaggerated lives of his family, however, have clouded the Butler legacy for some. His son Michael has led one of the more colorful lives in recent American history, having had romantic affairs with the likes of Audrey Hepburn and Candice Bergen and holding close friendships with John F. Kennedy and Prince Charles (Kogan 1996). Michael has also been a successful producer, hitting it big with *Hair* in 1968. Paul Butler's daughter Jorie and her husband Geoffrey Kent have operated a safari company and several other business and philanthropic ventures for many years. Michael and Jorie both ran into problems while trying their hands at residential development in Oak Brook. Jorie lost a landmark discrimination case (taken up in detail in chapter three), and Michael was forced to declare bankruptcy in 1990 (Buursma 1990b).

More than anything, perhaps, current residents remember Paul Butler as a dreamer and a doer whose vision of Oak Brook still haunts the place heavily. Though he died long before Garreau proclaimed the arrival of edge cities, Paul Butler knew what he had created. Karen Bushy, who, in addition to being a past president of the Village was a personal friend of Butler, told me the following story about his relationship with Oak Brook. One evening in the late 1970s after having dinner with some guests at his home, Paul stood looking toward 22nd Street near sunset. The lights from the office buildings, corporate headquarters, highway lamps and retail establishments had just begun to glow against the deepening dusk. As he looked across the open

green spaces and exclusive residential enclaves he had largely engineered, toward the busy hub of commerce that supported their every municipal comfort, he quietly and with obvious satisfaction confided, "I think we've built us a city on the edge of a city" (Interview with Karen Bushy, 6/17/2011).

The curious case of Oak Brook

Of Chicago's commonly cited edge cities, only Oak Brook easily meets all of Garreau's criteria. It is home to a great deal of commercial activity and has the required population imbalance of residents and commuters. It was rural and unincorporated in the 1950s, and is definitely perceived as one place by the local and regional population. Unlike many other edge cities, however, Oak Brook has a rich history and a genuine 'sense of place', both of which are very important to residents and boosters. Oak Brook's history and its present politics offer significant insights into the logics of edge city development. The village also offers an interesting vantage point for understanding the exploitative and exclusionary dimensions of edge cities noted by the edge city critics discussed in chapter one. The following chapters will build on the historical sketch provided here and investigate these issues in greater detail.

CHAPTER THREE
PRODUCING THE PUBLIC

Introduction

Aside from being new (post-1960 or thereabouts), edge cities have one crucial, distinguishing feature: the disparity between their residential and commuting populations. This is the factor that sets edge cities apart from the ever-expanding cornucopia of suburban types. There is nothing natural or inevitable about the small residential populations of edge cities, however, despite the neoliberal claims of 'consumer choice' and 'voting with your feet' that underpin contemporary suburban expansion (Peck 2011). As noted in chapter one, some authors have suggested the importance of exclusion in keeping edge city populations low (Beauregard 1995; Marcuse 1997). Fear of real or perceived dangers to the safety of persons or property values has spurred unprecedented growth of gated communities and other exclusionary enclaves in the U.S. (Low 2001), of which edge cities are but one face.

Efforts to keep Oak Brook's population manageably small and of a certain class character are visible from its early history, as discussed in chapter two. Such efforts are only part of the exclusion apparent in the village's history, however. In fact, many important struggles for inclusion have shaped Oak Brook's short history. In these struggles, participants from inside and outside of the village have arranged themselves in many different combinations and coalitions in order to stake claims on parts of village life or to combat such claims. Public life in Oak Brook (in all its constituent parts) is the product of these contests. While some struggles have resulted in a more accessible and inclusive Oak Brook, others have limited the access of certain populations to residence or visibility in the village, to the village's resources or simply to the ability to be present in the spaces of Oak Brook. In this chapter I will present four such contests in Oak Brook's history, four moments (some longer than others) in which process are at work to

produce Oak Brook's public. These scenes, as I call them, comprise the section immediately following this introduction, which is the bulk of this chapter. In the third section I offer some concluding thoughts on producing the public in Oak Brook and the significance of this issue to the study of edge cities.

My use of 'the public' follows Staeheli et al. (2009: 634), who define the/a public as "a sociopolitical collective that is constructed through dialogue and action and that engages strangers or people not directly known to the speaker/actor." For Staeheli (2010: 71) also, publics are formed and shaped through address, through dialogue and debate and "the development of some feeling of commonality or shared experience." It is significant that these authors argue that that both discourse and action are constitutive of publics.

As publics struggle to form and jockey for political position, they make use of any number of strategies. Visibility is one important factor, though it functions as a double-edged sword. While emerging publics can use visibility to promote their images and further their causes (through public address and dialogue, for example), marginalized groups who with increased publicity also become visible to authorities and to dominant social groups (Staeheli et al. 2009). While emerging publics often need publicity, the consequences of unwanted attention can be severe. Importantly, authors also note the dual significance of exclusion in the formation of publics (Iveson 2007; Staeheli et al. 2009). While emerging publics seek to combat exclusion (when 'a' public seeks inclusion in 'the' public, for instance), publics may also employ exclusionary tactics to maintain certain identities (such as an immigrant group) or to create safe spaces for dialogue or other public activity (such as in Iveson's (2007) work on the exclusion of men from a women's beach in Sydney). Staeheli and Mitchell (2008: 542) also point to relations of property as a crucial factor in the emergence of publics, as "access to private property

conditions access to the public realm." The legal structure that governs property relations (both public and private), these authors argue, is thus quite significant to the politics of who can be included in the public.

Several authors have argued against notions of a monolithic public, choosing instead to emphasize the multiplicity of publics that compete for access to the public realm and to public space (Robbins 1993; Staeheli et al. 2009). Discussing 'the' public as opposed to 'a' public, some argue, can place undue emphasis on one group at the expense of others: "whenever one [public] is addressed as *the* public, the others are assumed not to matter" (Warner 2002, quoted in Staeheli 2010: 73). Using the definite article 'the' to describe a public, then, assumes that the public in question is in a position of power over other publics. Staeheli (2010) therefore argues that positioning any public in relation to other publics (with the use of the indefinite article 'a') is important, as it highlights the relationships and the power at work in the formation of publics. Staeheli et al. (2009: 644) explain that conceptualizing multiple publics "allows for agonism as the basis of politics." This argument foregrounds the importance of struggle between publics, or between social groups to gain access to 'the' public.

In unfolding the four moments that follow this discussion as a process of producing 'the' public, however, I am asserting rather than assuming that a certain level of power and privilege is held by certain people in Oak Brook. 'The public' as I consider it here is not the only public physically present in Oak Brook, nor is it the only group present in the political life of the village. On the contrary, as the history I relate below will show, alternative publics often rub against 'the' public in Oak Brook, and this has been one of many important catalysts for political strife. The public as I conceive of it here is thus the group with relatively more power and access to the spaces and resources of the village of Oak Brook. This group is made up chiefly of

residents, but its boundaries extend beyond residents in some important ways, as the scenes below will show. Delimiting these boundaries with any semblance of precision is quite difficult, as empirically observing any public is (Staeheli et al. 2009). The historical vignettes I will relate below, I argue, bring the boundaries of this public into view as they are struggled over in particular moments. This approach is intended to offer something like the "genealogical" view of publics that Staeheli (2010) calls for, wherein the changing nature of Oak Brook's public is shown by reference to its most intense moments of negotiation.

Producing the public: four scenes

Scene one: 1960s

In 1963, Village President Ted Mohlman suggested that the zoning ordinance in place since incorporation had become outdated and needed revision.[28] Accordingly, Mohlman and the Village hired a local planner, the firm of Carl Gardner (who had drawn the plans for Park Forest, IL, south of Chicago), to construct a new ordinance. As construed by Oak Brook's chroniclers, Mohlman's attempt to pass this ordinance was a rather clandestine affair. Only one copy was made available for public scrutiny at the "on your honor library" (Watson 2008), and only a select few influential residents were able, after some difficulty, to borrow another copy of the ordinance for thorough examination (Barton 1990). This small cadre of critics (three) were connected through the Oak Brook Civic Association, and agreed to divide the document into

---

[28] Barton's (1990) account of these events emphasizes the role of a certain unnamed developer who desired the "unzoning" of Oak Brook, presumably in order to take advantage of the proposed changes at a later time, for, as Barton explains, this developer owned no property in Oak Brook at the time a new ordinance was proposed. Barton supposes that Paul Butler knew little about the proposed ordinance and the effects it could have had on Oak Brook, but Barton paradoxically insists that Mohlman did his best to force its passage, despite the widely held belief that Mohlman was acting under Butler's direction. Barton and his committee ultimately guessed that Butler was persuaded to allow the unnamed developer to influence zoning changes in exchange for an agreement to buy and develop some of Butler's extensive land holdings (Butler, according to several accounts, was more inclined to sell residential areas to developers than to develop them himself). Butler must have directed Mohlman to push the developer's changes through without considering the consequences, Barton (1990) reasons.

sections and carefully scrutinize its contents. Upon inspection, the three found the proposed ordinance lacking in protections and overly generous to developers, and quickly mobilized a campaign against its passage.

Richard Barton, an attorney by trade, was the most outspoken critic of the ordinance (Watson 2008). Barton's concerns ran the gamut of issues covered by the zoning changes in the document, and he and the two other members of the Oak Brook Civic Association's "Zoning and Annexation Committee" attempted to spread the news of its dangers to Oak Brook's citizenry. Barton's (1965) editorial in *The Doings* newspaper explains many of his concerns. Barton cited the ambiguity of many areas of the proposed ordinance as its prime danger. Especially concerning was the loosening of restrictions on residential lot sizes, especially in areas zoned "R-4" or quarter-acre. These lots would have been allowed to shrink by as much as twenty percent below a true quarter-acre under the new ordinance (Barton 1990). Another concern was the addition of a planned unit development (PUD) provision not included in the previous ordinance, which would allow for subdivisions of large tracts of land in exchange for the construction of amenities. Barton (1990: 9) argued that this exchange would be "hardly worth the bonus afforded [to] the developer." Another problem was the creation of a new class of "Open Land Reserve," an allegedly unclear distinction that could have been read to allow any number of development options, most notably apartments (Barton 1965). What made these ambiguities (especially the "Open Land Reserve" category) particularly dangerous, it seems, was both what they permitted and what they failed to restrict. Barton and his committee were leery of the loosening of the R-4 restriction and the PUD provision because of the density these measures would allow (Barton 1965). Density is despised in Oak Brook, perhaps even beyond the normal distaste for density witnessed in most edge cities (as discussed in chapter one).

In Oak Brook, density is forever chained to another dirty word, apartments. "The proposed ordinance," Barton (1965) explained, "will permit intermixing of residential and business uses. 'Townhouses,' 'garden apartments' and high rise apartments may be constructed under the proposed ordinance." Further, these apartments "will not be restricted as to minimum lot size, height or closeness to each other, and the minimum floor area per family unit is so small that substandard, low income slum apartments would be permitted" (Barton 1965). No apartments of any kind were permitted under the then current ordinance, Barton explained, and it was in the best interest of residents to maintain this ban. Not only would greater density place a "burden" upon the school system and drive down property values, but would, most importantly, inflict "damage to the general quality and prestige of the Village of Oak Brook" (Barton 1965). Watson (2008:49) concurs, explaining that the ordinance "would have created a far different Oak Brook than what the residents wanted and had anticipated when they were annexed in 1962!" Watson (2008: 49) goes on, "Imagine: apartments, town-homes, increased commercial and industrial areas, almost no height limitations on industrial buildings, lower housing standards, and a greatly increased population that could only result in increased taxes." In light of the committee's findings, Barton wrote editorials slamming the new ordinance in local newspapers and the Civic Association spread the word to residents that this plan was certainly not for them. The fear of apartment-dwellers, of falling property values, stress on services (due of course to the increase in "needy" populations) and the specter of taxes were more than enough to mobilize Oak Brook's residents.[29]

In January of 1965, a horde of concerned residents descended upon the public meeting devoted to the discussion of the proposed ordinance. Carl Gardner and Ted Mohlman's rollout

---

[29] It is interesting to note that in Oak Brook, voters have (time and again, as chapters four and five will also show) fought the exact changes that many edge city reformers advocate, such as increased density (Scheer and Petkov 1998) and mixed uses (Barnett 2002; Dunphy 2006).

58

was met by such overwhelming and outspoken public opposition from the residential community that the meeting had to be halted and the issue removed from the ballot of the 1965 municipal election (Watson 2008). Richard Barton, champion of this victory, was instrumental in the careful crafting of a new zoning ordinance more in line with residents' expectations (and property values). The ambiguities and lessened restrictions on parcel size were carefully addressed during the drafting of the new ordinance, a process that took four years of work by all three of the concerned bodies of the village, the Village Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Plan Commission (twenty-one members in all). The new ordinance, "crafted by the residents themselves," was overwhelmingly accepted after many iterations and line-by-line discussion (Watson 2008: 51).

At the time of this debate, Oak Brook had a very small residential population, and the cities and villages that surround it had not begun to encroach upon each other as they do today. Oak Brook was not yet the booming employment center it would soon become, and none of the corporate headquarters the village now boasts had yet been built. As such, the 'counterpublics' that might have materialized to argue against Oak Brook's residents (such as potential residents who could only have afforded to live on smaller parcels or in apartments) were represented only by Ted Mohlman, the firm of Carl Gardner, and perhaps a few supporters of the first proposed ordinance who history has forgotten. The two sides thus argued about whether Oak Brook's residents should be allowed to maintain the value of their homes (via exclusionary zoning) and the 'quality' and 'prestige' of their 'community,' or whether Paul Butler and his development partners should be allowed to sell more homes and (presumably) make larger profits.

Zoning has long been recognized as a means to control the class structure of communities, and continues to be a crucial component in determining the class composition of

59

sprawl and suburbanization (Rudel et al. 2011). In this episode of Oak Brook's history, zoning was the vehicle residents used to determine who would be allowed to belong in the village, based on what type of home they could afford. The rhetoric used to mobilize residents against the proposed ordinance shows that economic considerations (home values, taxes, etc.) and class considerations (fear of those who would damage the 'prestige' of the village) motivated the use of the zoning ordinance as an exclusionary device.

Scene two: 1980s

In 1980, William Phillips, who owned a chain of carwashes in the Chicago area, placed an offer to buy a home in the Hunter Trails subdivision, a gated community (Figure 3a below) on the south side of Oak Brook.

Figure 3.1 (previous page): This photo shows the entrance to the Hunter Trails subdivision from across 31st Street.

Phillips's offer of $675,000 was accepted by homeowner Dennis Broderick, and Phillips and his family subsequently sold and vacated their home in Homewood, IL (Cubbage 1981). Weeks passed without any news of trouble, and the Phillips family prepared themselves for life in Oak

Brook. Three days before they were to move, however, they were informed that the Hunter Trails Community Association had invoked its "right of first refusal." This right allowed this homeowner's association (HOA) to pool its resources and purchase the property itself. The HOA then sold its purchase option to Paul Butler's daughter Jorie Butler-Kent, who paid $10,000 plus the price William Phillips had offered to purchase the home (Associated Press 1981). The Phillips family, suddenly homeless, insulted and angry, filed a civil suit in federal district court citing violations of the Civil Rights and Fair Housing Acts (Associated Press 1982; "William J. Phillips…" 1982).

Phillips, in addition to being the owner of a car wash chain, was black. "When I began to look into the situation," he told Ebony magazine in 1982, "it seemed that the only reason for what was happening to us was racial discrimination" (Leavy 1982). Judge Prentiss H. Marshall found in favor of the Phillipses, awarding them not only the right to purchase the property but also substantial damages for what he called a "flagrant violation" of civil rights (*Jet* 1980). The Phillipses were awarded $288,691 in actual and punitive damages, legal fees and costs, then the largest settlement ever in a housing discrimination case ("William J. Phillips…" 1982; *New York Times* 1981). After roughly a year of litigation, the Phillipses were able to move into their mansion in Hunter Trails (without incident) in 1982. The family reached a post-judgment settlement with Butler-Kent, and the HOA appealed the court's decision on its own.

The HOA's appeal also ended in defeat in 1982 ("William J. Phillips…" 1982). Several pieces of evidence were particularly crucial to Judge Marshall's decision in the intitial case and the subsequent appeal. The first was the fact that Jorie Butler-Kent had toured the home early in 1980 and declared no interest in purchasing it. It was only when the HOA courted her interest

and made her aware of their plight (a black family invading "lily white Oak Brook"[30]) that she

agreed to purchase the property.[31] Both the HOA and Butler-Kent defended their actions,

claiming they acted in defense of property values alone (the home was sold well below its list

price). This defense convinced neither Judge Marshall nor the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals.[32]

Another was the particularly damning comments of Robert Steinbock-Sinclair, the attorney hired

by the Hunter Trails HOA to help them block the Phillipses' purchase. An acquaintance of

Steinbock-Sinclair testified that the attorney had casually commented that Hunter Trails was "an

exclusive community, and that doesn't include niggers or car wash operators" (*The New York

Times* 1981). Witnesses also described the somewhat clandestine meeting at which the HOA

strategy was discussed as having an ugly atmosphere of racial animus ("William J. Phillips…",

1982). Despite the best efforts of both the HOA and Mrs. Butler-Kent, the courts decided that

racial bigotry was absolutely the reason for their actions.

   Oak Brook's residents were and continue to be embarrassed by this series of events.

Some argue that race was decidedly not the issue in the case, that Oak Brook is home to many

black residents, and moreover that racial discrimination is not a problem in the village

(Interviews with Karen Bushy, 6/21/2011; John Baar et al., 6/9/2011).[33] Oak Brook is in fact

home to 155 black residents, making Oak Brook exactly 2% black, a significantly smaller

---

[30] Oak Brook was reportedly nicknamed "lily white Oak Brook" early in its history due to its requirement that all commercial structures constructed in the Village be white. Barton (1990: 6) describes his company's move to Oak Brook and their struggle to gain permission for a different color building under the tongue-in-cheek heading, "Breaking the 'Color Barrier'".

[31] "The Association has argued that Mrs. Butler's willingness to accept the assignment was a serendipitous event (Br. 7; App. 40-41) but Judge Marshall found (App. 33, 39, 41) to the contrary, and the Association has not convinced us that this was error" ("William J. Phillips…" 1982).

[32] Especially important in this decision was Broderick's testimony that he had lied to the HOA about the final price all along, inflating his agreement with Phillips by $175,000 ("William J. Phillips…" 1982).

[33] The relatively large number of south-Asian immigrants in Oak Brook has been a frequent topic of conversation with respect to racial diversity and inclusiveness in Oak Brook. Walter Barber, whose half-Indonesian child grew up and attended schools in Oak Brook, described his family's experience this way: "When he stood up in the classroom at the schools he was, color-wise, right in the middle of the class. This is a very mixed community" (Interview with John Baar et al., 6/9/2011).

percentage than the Chicago CMSA at 17.4% (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). It may be true, however, that racial discrimination has decreased significantly in recent decades, as many in Oak Brook claim,[34] and it would be a mistake to ignore the role of class in this affair. While it is clear that Hunter Trails objected to the Phillipses' race, it is equally clear that William Phillips's profession was also considered objectionable. As per Steinbock-Sinclair's comments, William Phillips was unwelcome in Oak Brook not only because of his race, but also by virtue of his status as a "car wash operator." These comments in fact point to the multi-faceted and complex nature of identity in Oak Brook's residential public, especially the strange nexus formed by the intersection of class and race. Eve Lee, former Board Member of the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities (a regionally and nationally prominent housing advocacy group until its recent closure), also confirmed the changing face of discrimination in Oak Brook. "It is my opinion that it is much better today, from a discrimination point of view," Lee explained, and went on, "Actually, I'm going to tell you this, I think it has shifted from racial to socio-economic" (Interview with Eve Lee, 6/15/2011). While racial animus may be less a problem now than in the past, this form of discrimination has been transformed and complicated by class and potentially other factors, all of which combine in an identity politics that can prove quite difficult for potential residents to understand and navigate. What remains true, and what the Phillipses' case illustrates, is that such issues matter to Oak Brook's public and those who fight to shape and reshape its identity.

---

[34] Jim Lazzarini commented on this change, specifically with respect to the Italian community in Oak Brook: "There used to be a distinctive division between the WASPS and then the Italians, and the 'other'. And over the last few years, they've kind of started working together, which really ultimately I think will benefit the community. Unfortunately, there were a lot of Italians that moved to Oak Brook that were of questionable character, and they created issues for other hardworking Italians that did come into Oak Brook. When I first moved here, I heard a few things, remarks were made by people about Italians that I didn't care for. But, actually, the longer I lived here the more I realized that they were right. Because the people that did move here were really the bottom of the barrel. But now it's totally different" (Interview with Jim Lazzarini, 6/10/2011). Lazzarini's statements are representative of a perceived change in the inclusiveness of Oak Brook.

The Phillipses' case is important for several reasons. Most notably, the case was a considerable victory for the cause and advocates of fair housing and anti-discrimination. The case made national news, garnering attention in fair housing literature, popular magazines such as *Ebony* and *Jet* and national news outlets such as *The New York Times*. This regional and national significance is matched by the local significance that the Phillipses' case had for Oak Brook. Though this case of course did not and could not instantly do away with racial discrimination in the village,[35] the large sum of money the Phillips won and the bad press the HOA and Jorie Butler-Kent received undoubtedly served as effective deterrents to at least some overtly discriminatory acts. Discursively especially, Oak Brook was forced to become a place where black "car wash operators" were as much a part of the public as wealthy white heiresses.

Scene three: 1990s

Thirty years after Oak Brook's first zoning battles, the Village's class character and its associated zoning ordinance would again come into question in a battle as instructive as that in the 1960s. In 1993, The Institute in Basic Life Principles (IBLP) filed plans to construct residential buildings on its 223 acres of property (see Figure 3.2 below) straddling the border of Oak Brook and Hinsdale (Hodson 1994). The IBLP is a religious organization founded by Bill Gothard in 1961 under the name "Campus Teams" (iblp.org). The IBLP runs seminars and publishes literature for those looking to change the world after the order of Bill Gothard. The Institute's plan reportedly called for the construction of dormitories and staff homes and the conversion of much of its property into a college-style campus (Hodson 1994). The plan

---

[35] Eve Lee explained to me that instances of racial discrimination persisted even after the Phillips case, citing one specific instance from the late 1980s. The victim in this affair declined to pursue litigation, however, as he held an important position in a large corporation and did not wish to jeopardize his employment (Interview with Eve Lee, 6/15/2011).

established a 25-year timeline for the proposed development of its 223-acre campus. Some of

this development would occur in Oak Brook, and some in Hinsdale.[36] The Oak Brook portion of

this plan consisted largely of dormitories and staff homes, whereas the Hinsdale portion

consisted largely of office buildings and a large hotel with a 3,000-seat auditorium (Hart 1993a).

---
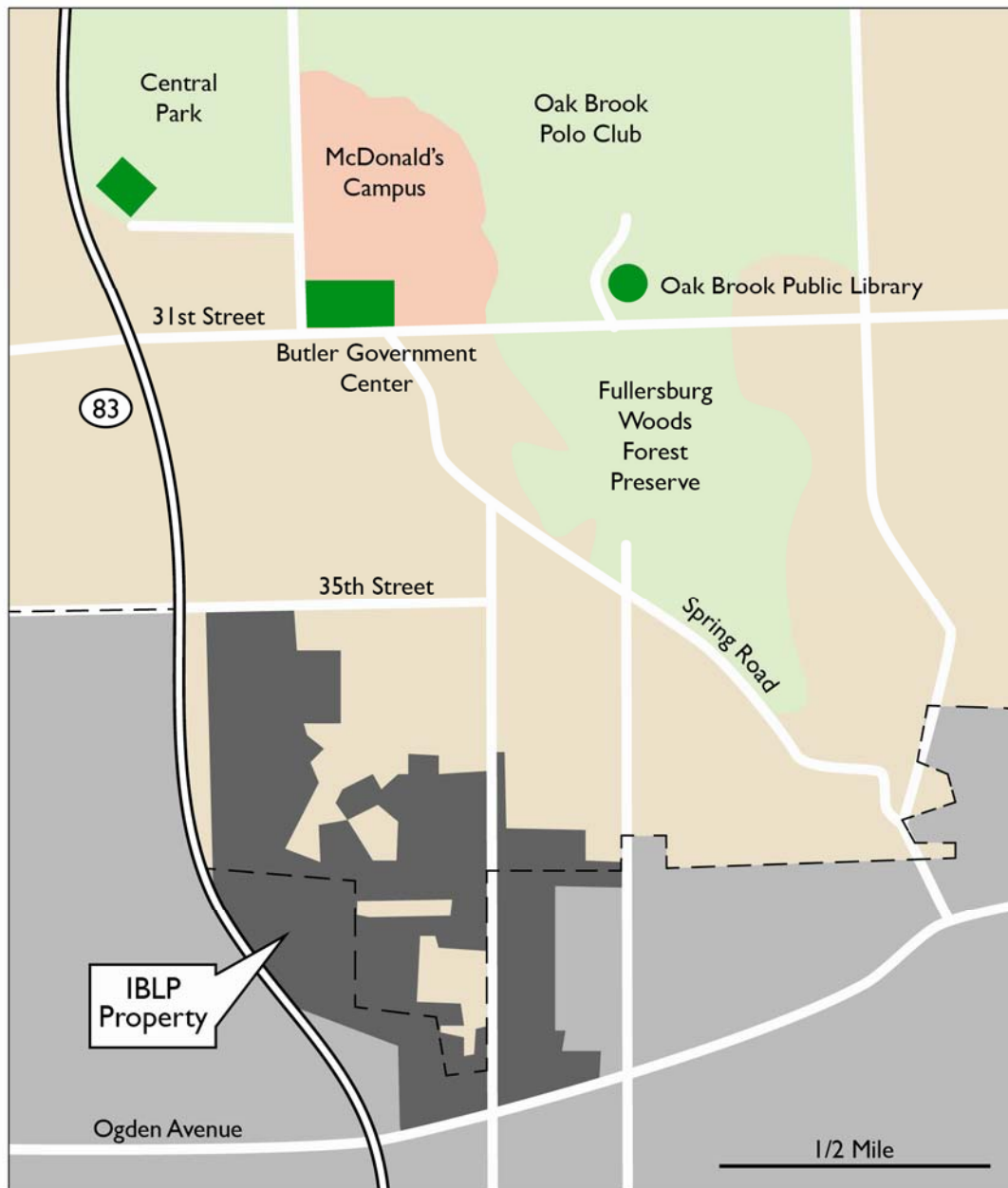
[36] Indeed, it should be noted that residents of Hinsdale reacted in a similar manner to those in Oak Brook, and the two groups reportedly cooperated on the matter (Hart 1993a).

As news of the IBLP's plans spread through Oak Brook (through print media and the social networks of the Civic Association, the Oak Brook Women's Club and other organizations), a counteroffensive began to take shape. The emerging coalition of resistance soon became what the staff of the *Daily Herald* called "enthusiastic opposition" and the IBLP's attorney referred to as a "groundswell of misinformation" (Hart 1993b). Residents were quick to distance the issue from religion and place it firmly within the bounds of law. "This is a zoning issue," remarked long time resident and former Village Trustee Joe Rush. "It has nothing to do with religion, or lack of it. It has nothing to do with what they teach" (Hodson 1994). Rush, of course, was correct. This issue had little to do with religion, per se, but neither did it have much to do with zoning. The opinion of Constantine Xinos, a powerful resident and president of the Briarwood Lakes homeowner's association, makes this quite clear. Xinos "feared the development would lead to the creation of a powerful, single-minded voting bloc of 2,000 to 3,000 voters" (Hodson 1994: 3). The students at the IBLP would, according to Xinos, "likely vote the way their director wants and could end up running Oak Brook" (Hodson 1994: 3). The right to vote on Oak Brook's municipal affairs is granted to anyone who can prove thirty days of residence in the village. Thus even students who spend only a portion of the year in Oak Brook for classes or extended seminars could easily meet this criteria, a prospect that made the IBLP's plans seem especially dangerous to Oak Brook's residents.

In response to the effective mobilization of residents, the IBLP requested that their

presentation to the Oak Brook Plan Commission be delayed by three months, stating that they

would be happy to meet informally with any concerned parties to "clear up rumors" about their

plan and dispel the fears of Oak Brook's residents (Hart 1993b). This move was met with

cynicism and dismissal from many prominent residents. Resident Don O'Neil told the *Daily*

Herald, "It's a good tactic, and if I were in their position I'd do the same thing to pull the plug on

our enthusiasm" (Hart 1993c). O'Neil and others characterized the IBLP's postponement as a

stalling tactic, a political maneuver, and accused Bill Gothard of counting on interpersonal skills

to quell the residents' opposition (Hart 1993c). Joe Rush also questioned Gothard and the IBLP's

motives, accusingly stating that Gothard "can be very persuasive one-on-one" and that the delay

was "strictly a divide-and-conquer technique" (Hart 1993c). The IBLP would be granted two

more continuations, and the ultimate date for presentation of the plan (October 18th) would not

be set until May 17th of 1993 (Hart 1993d). Eight days later, residents of Oak Brook and

Hinsdale received a letter bearing Gothard's name, a sort of written olive branch intended to

build some modicum of support for his plan among residents. Many residents characterized this

letter as misleading and encouraged neighbors to carefully scrutinize both the letter and the

IBLP's plan before drawing conclusions (Hart 1993e).

When meetings finally began in October of 1993, residents appeared in force, voicing

their concerns about the potential for increased traffic, an increased number of voters and the

deterioration of property values, among other issues. A series of seven meetings stretched on

until early in 1994, when the Oak Brook Plan Commission voted unanimously to deny the IBLP

permission to pursue its plan (Kutz 1995). After this defeat, the IBLP went to the Oak Brook

Zoning Board of Appeals (OBZBA) in 1995, after slightly changing the tone of their proposal.

Residents again aggressively campaigned against the plan, which now called for "homes" for

students, as opposed to "dormitories" (Kutz 1995). The Zoning Board of Appeals took several

months to consider the IBLP's plan. The public meetings the OBZBA held were unusually

formal, and included such elements as "a court reporter, witnesses' testimony and cross-

examinations as well as labeled evidence" (Kutz 1996a). The chief objection raised by those

opposed to the IBLP's plan in this round of debate was that Gothard's Institute was not a college,

at least not by any conventional definition. In response, Gothard conceded that the IBLP was not

traditional, that instead his curriculum focused not only on academic instruction but also on

moral training and his own version of biblical living (Kutz 1996a). The IBLP's arguments fell on

deaf ears.

In April of 1996, with the outlook as bleak as ever and the opposition of the residents

remaining stalwart, the IBLP withdrew its plans from consideration. Once again, Gothard

addressed the residents personally with a mass-mailed letter, stating in part that the IBLP no

longer required the expansion (Beatty 1996). As Gothard had vigorously and publicly defended

the necessity of the plan only months before, this explanation was probably little more than a

face-saving measure. The residents of Oak Brook had shown up in force time and again over the

several years of this struggle, and had fought to stop a proposal they feared would damage their

property values and more importantly their voting power. Bill Gothard and the IBLP had sought

to "dispel rumors" and appeal to the village's legal system, but as Gothard prophesied in early

1993, "sometimes fears are beyond fact" (Hart 1993a).

Indeed, the fears of the residents were not assuaged by this seeming victory. Though the

initial surge and several successive rounds of legal contest had been won, some residents felt that

the time was ripe to put the issue to rest for good. Rather than wait and see what the IBLP might

have in mind down the road, these residents proposed changing the zoning ordinance to disallow colleges and universities from operating in land zoned for residential purposes (Kutz 1996b). This was the language of the zoning ordinance that had allowed the controversial plan to be heard in the first place, and, if removed, could forestall the necessity for any similar battles in the future. Even this change would not end this saga, however.

Though I uncovered no evidence of collaboration between the residents of Oak Brook or Hinsdale and the DuPage County Forest Preserve Commission (DCFPC), their interests in the matter of the IBLP property certainly coincided. In 1999 and 2000, the DCFPC condemned large portions of the IBLP's property. The DCFPC had been attempting to purchase 65 of these acres to create what it called a "buffer" for Route 83, and was already locked in litigation with the IBLP when it condemned another 50 acres of its property (Kadin 1999; Wallace 2000). After several years of costly litigation, the IBLP agreed to sell 50 acres to the DCFPC at a price of $200,000 per acre (totaling $10 million) in January of 2003 (Wallace 2003). This sale effectively ended the protracted contest surrounding the proposed expansion of the IBLP.

An absolutely crucial aspect of this story was buried in comments made during the process of litigation between the Forest Commission and the IBLP, however. Though it thwarted, perhaps forever, the expansion plans of the IBLP, the victory won by the DCFPC elicited mixed emotions from both Oak Brook residents and DCFPC Board Members, though for very different reasons. Some in the DCFPC were disappointed that it acquired less than half of the land it had fought for, having agreed as part of this settlement to discontinue litigation toward the other 65 acres of property it had initially condemned (Wallace 2003). Some of Oak Brook's residents, however, were disappointed that it acquired any land at all. The DCFPC is, after all, a public entity. As such, any land it acquires immediately becomes public property. As the public served

69

by the DCFPC is all of DuPage county, this development opened up a quiet part of Oak Brook to a much larger public than that served by the Village. Then-Village President Karen Bushy explained: "When land comes into the public domain, people don't always realize the public then has access to it" (Wallace 2000). Bushy's concern was born of sustained complaints about trespassing, fishing in areas not recognized or understood as public or damage to private property inflicted by forest preserve users.

Oak Brook's residents, it seems, would have been happy only with maintenance of the status quo with regard to the IBLP land. They vigorously opposed the construction of dormitories and staff homes, but they also had concerns about the public nature of its conversion into forest preserve. In the former instance, Oak Brook's public appeared under attack from an invasive, transient population not required to conform to the scripted process of real estate purchase in order to gain villager status, including voting rights. In the latter, Oak Brook's public ran the risk of having its private space (the hallmark of and requisite for public status) impinged upon by a broader notion of public space, one carried and embodied by its own public. Indeed, what the sale of the IBLP land to the DCFPC brought about was a confrontation of two publics, insofar as these publics are 'the' publics served by different levels of state authority.

Some authors have been critical of this conceptualization of the public (as coterminous with the state), indicating that publics entail more than this static (but important) factor of public identity (Staeheli et al. 2009). This critique is important, and is indeed evidenced by the IBLP affair. While the interaction of levels of the state and their attendant publics are quite visible, more subtle material and discursive differences blur these lines considerably. While the DCFPC draws its revenue from the taxpayers of DuPage County, its properties are open to anyone able to

70

drive to its grounds and pay for its services.[37] Whether cognizant of this or not, some members of Oak Brook's public were distressed by the prospect of this development because it opened their village to strangers from anywhere, outsiders who they supposed may not respect established property relations or behavioral norms. Such ideas and the discourses that develop around and in tandem with them are as much a part of producing the public as the material presence of state authority and its attendant public property.

In the case of the IBLP, the residents were victorious in their efforts to prevent the construction of dormitories and staff homes, and thus to protect an important right of the public in Oak Brook, the right to participate in the public realm through voting. Their victory, however, came at the cost of private exclusivity with the transfer of the property into the public domain and the granting of access to a far larger population. These events maintained one exclusive democratic privilege of Oak Brook's public even while they allowed significant inroads into this public's spatial privileges. Thus exclusion from the public was maintained at one level and eroded at another through the IBLP affair.

Scene four: 1990s

In the mid-1990s, village officials and community groups (most notably the "Friends of the Library") began to seriously consider plans for constructing a new library. The old public library (housed in the aging Butler School) had become so cramped and outdated that residents were reportedly taking their patronage to neighboring suburbs (Nickerson 1996). In November of 1996, residents voted yes on a non-binding advisory referendum asking whether or not the village should construct a new library on "Sports Core" land it had purchased via bonds from the

---

[37] Rentals and permits are slightly more expensive for those who reside outside of DuPage County.

late Paul Butler.[38] Early in 1997, however, Briarwood Lakes HOA President and ardent library

opponent Constantine Xinos filed a lawsuit against the village, claiming that its proposed library

violated the Sports Core property's deed (Nickerson 1997). Only recreational uses were

permitted on this land, so Xinos (a criminal defense attorney by trade) and the village entered

into a court battle to decide whether or not a library should be considered a recreational venue.

"Some people say, 'My recreation is gambling,'" Xinos reasoned, "Are we going to put up a

gambling hall?" (Nickerson 1997). After an extensive legal battle, the Village Board voted to

move forward with plans to construct the library on the Sports Core property in early 1999

(Ahmed-Ullah 1999a).

Figure 3.3: This photo shows the front of the Oak Brook Public Library's new facility, open since 2002. The statement mounted on the wall to the right of the entrance reads: "If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need. –Cicero".

---

[38] This sale was equally a gift to the Village, I was told, as the price Butler asked for the property was extraordinarily low (Interview with Kathy Maher, 6/9/2011).

Even after the $5.2 million[39] facility (see Figure 3b above) was constructed, however, ire toward the library's piece of Oak Brook's budgetary pie continued to smolder among some residents. Oak Brook has always had a vocal anti-library minority who believe that a public library is not a worthwhile municipal expense (Interview with Karen Bushy 6/21/2011). The economic recession of the past several years has created political room for these residents to question the need for a public library at all and thus attack its funding. In 2009, Xinos and others waged a campaign that ultimately succeeded in stripping the library of some of its staff. The head librarian (reportedly earning over $98,000 a year) and several other staff members were fired, leaving the library with a relatively skeletal crew (Constable 2009). At a subsequent Village Board meeting, an eleven year old girl made a passionate appeal for the staff, breaking into tears as she explained why the library and its personnel were important to her and other children. "It will never be the same without the people you fired," the child explained (Constable 2009). Xinos then stepped to the podium and delivered a passionate statement of his own. "I don't care that you guys miss the librarian, and she was nice, and she helped you find books," a smirking Xinos retorted, "Don't cry crocodile tears about people making $100,000 a year wiping tables and putting the books back on the shelves" (Constable 2009). "I wanted that kid to lose sleep that night," Xinos later told the *Daily Herald*, "the lesson, you folks who brought your kids here, is if you want something, pay for it" (Constable 2009). The faction of Oak Brook residents that Xinos represents advocate a course of privatization or closure of the public library, one of precious few truly public spaces[40] in the village.

---

[39] There was also intense debate over the cost of the project, and the final number floated between $3 million and over $5 million from design to completion. The Village even hired a firm to "trim fat" from the then $5.3 million project, at a cost of $20,000 (Ahmed-Ullah 1999b).

[40] I again follow Staeheli et al. (2009:634), who characterize public spaces as "physical spaces that are relatively open to a range of people and behaviors." Though the library has certain behavioral requirements (such as speaking quietly), it is *relatively* open to people and behaviors.

Those in favor of privatization or closure cite two main concerns. First, not all of Oak Brook's residents have need of a library. Library patronage, according to this line of argument, is a private affair and should not be supported with public money. The other major concern is that the library is used by people not from Oak Brook. When the new library opened in 2002, 13% of its cardholders were not residents of Oak Brook (Grondin 2002). These two considerations have been effective rallying cries for those opposed to Oak Brook's public library. Though this opposition has succeeded in forcing massive staff and budget reductions, the library remains open, and village officials have not as yet engaged in any serious discussions of closure.

The objectives of the participants in this contest were both material and discursive. Though both sides maintained that it was material things that were struggled over (the library, its staff and its budget), the arguments made by both sides show this struggle to be equally aimed at delineating the public in Oak Brook. For the library's proponents, Oak Brook's public valued such a public space and argued that it should be entitled to its use. Some of these proponents even felt that the public served by the library should extend beyond the residents of Oak Brook, allowing people from outside the village's boundaries to have access to the public in this one small way. The library's detractors counter that the only public that should have any right to public revenues in Oak Brook is made up exclusively of residents. As such, the library should serve only this public. Equally importantly, some of these opponents have argued that many residents of Oak Brook have no need for a public library, either because they have no interest in libraries or because their considerable means allow them to privately own and enjoy any of the public property the library might make available. These arguments thus have to do with who the public is understood to be in Oak Brook. Many of the advocates of library privatization or closure see no purpose for a public library in Oak Brook precisely because the public they

74

envision simply does not need one. Attempts to curtail village spending on the library and to privatize or close it, therefore, are all also attempts to constrain any understanding of the public that extends beyond Oak Brook's residents. In Oak Brook, library opponents declare, residents are the only public that matters.

Edge cities and the public

Defining and observing a public in any context is difficult, and Oak Brook is certainly no exception. Publics are created in part through a "feeling of community or shared experience" (Staeheli 2010:71), and thus a sense of belonging. This can make publics very tricky to pin down in research. Publics are produced through dialogue and action, Staeheli et al. (2009) argue, often through contentious political processes. Inclusion and exclusion in any public can be contested, making publics potentially quite dynamic. During such contests, however, the boundaries of any public come into view (however partially) as they are tested and renegotiated. In this chapter, I have presented four scenes in the history of Oak Brook, all of which shed light on the boundaries of Oak Brook's public and the processes by which it has been produced. I use 'the' public intentionally, in light of Staeheli's (et al. 2009; 2010) discussion. I treat the public this way in order to illustrate the power and access to Oak Brook's resources that this group has in relation to other groups (or other publics).

The lens of the public offers a valuable perspective on processes of exclusion and struggles for inclusion in edge cities. An important component of edge cities is the population imbalance between residents and commuters that they necessarily exhibit. In Oak Brook, this imbalance was carefully managed by the village's early residents and their leaders, notably through zoning (as discussed in scene one). Zoning aimed at controlling the density and

character of housing in the village effectively limited who could afford to reside in Oak Brook. Maintaining low-density development and separated uses kept Oak Brook from turning into a "real city" (Barnett 2002).

Residents are an important part of the public in Oak Brook. They alone have the right to vote in municipal elections, and they have access to Oak Brook's resources in ways that other people simply do not. Defending this power and access (especially the right to vote) was a major part of residents' fight to defeat the IBLP's proposed expansion. Though residents are perhaps the strongest and most stable part of the public in Oak Brook, the public is not made up exclusively of residents. The conversion of IBLP land into DuPage County forest preserve and the preservation of the public library are two examples of how the public can be broadened in particular ways, making Oak Brook a more inclusive edge city. The Phillipses' case also offers an example of how exclusion from the public can be countered through the legal structure, actively broadening the public by asserting a right to belong.

The contests I have related in this chapter offer a window onto processes of exclusion and the ways they have been combated in Oak Brook. It is through these struggles and negotiations that publics are produced in edge cities, and everywhere else. The forces of exclusion mustered in the scenes presented in this chapter are evidence of the exclusionary impulse that Marcuse (1997), Low (2001), and others have attributed to edge cities. Indeed, as a key feature of edge cities is their small populations, exclusion is built into the logic of their development. Thus exclusion makes edge cities what they are, places where many desire to live but where few are able. The production of Oak Brook's public also affects other areas of greater Chicago, as most of those who work in Oak Brook must make their homes someplace else. Oakbrook Terrace, with its high percentage of renter-occupied housing units and its less expensive homes, is an

obvious complementary expression of this process. Producing Oak Brook's public cannot happen without places like Oakbrook Terrace, where those left out of Oak Brook's public can reside and find access to resources. For any edge city to develop there must be a number of places like Oakbrook Terrace, places for those who are excluded to call home.

CHAPTER FOUR
PERCEIVING EDGE CITY: LANDSCAPE, PRACTICE, AND PLACE

The previous chapter was concerned with the production of Oak Brook's public. This chapter will build on that analysis to explore its implications for the visual, physical and practical 'culture of place' that has developed in tandem with and in many ways in response to the production of Oak Brook's public. This analysis will proceed along several lines, its evidentiary material largely taking the form of interview data. The argument that will be advanced in this chapter is that perceptions of Oak Brook's public and its physical environs play a significant role in crafting the general perception and understanding of the place. This understanding actively works in the minds of residents and commuters to shape the possibilities of acceptable practices in Oak Brook. The landscapes of work, play, home and others are also fundamentally altered as a result of this process, developing alongside and in response to perceptions of Oak Brook. I will also discuss and analyze recent changes in the village, as it is in these changes and struggles for change that new possibilities are shown to exist in how Oak Brook might be used and understood.

This remainder of this chapter is divided into three sections. The first provides a brief introduction to the study of cultural landscapes in Anglophone geography. This conceptual history builds toward a framework for understanding the complexity of landscapes and their interactions with understandings of place. The second section then takes up the question of how people (whether residents or commuters) come to understand Oak Brook through its landscapes. Oak Brook is invariably described as very different from its neighbors and from other places in the metropolitan region, and I argue that this perception of place is heavily influenced by experiences of Oak Brook's landscapes, including both the built environment and the populations present in Oak Brook (especially its public, as considered in chapter three) at any

78

given time. This section also deals briefly with the ways in which understandings of place impact

notions of acceptable practice in Oak Brook. By practice, I essentially mean what can be done

where, by whom, (etc.). In the third section, contrasting perspectives are presented on some of

the fundamental elements of the landscape discussed in the second section, highlighting changes

to the village in recent years and the potential points of change to come.

<center>The Public and the Landscape</center>

Recognizing the relationship between Oak Brook's visual and physical elements

(including its public) and perceptions of place requires that particular attention be paid to the

village's landscapes. In order to uncover these connections, I adopted an equally particular

methodological stance toward the concept and the materiality of landscape. This approach is

firmly rooted in a long tradition of cultural landscape study. Some exploration of this field and

the changes it has undergone is thus warranted.

Developed most fully by Carl Sauer and other scholars of the "Berkeley School," cultural

landscape study was a favored methodological apparatus for the bulk of the mid-twentieth

century in Anglophone cultural geography. This approach has sustained several major revisions

and amendments through the later decades of the twentieth century, however. In particular, the

orientation of researchers toward the object of study has changed considerably.[41] In the 1980s,

prominent cultural geographers such as James Duncan, Peter Jackson and Denis Cosgrove (three

members of what would later come to be known as the "new cultural geography") began

criticizing traditional cultural landscape approaches for their treatment of the landscape.

Traditional cultural geographers, they maintained, looked upon the landscape as a treasure trove

of naively given material evidence, with landscapes in the present seen as inevitable

---

[41] See Mitchell (2000) for a concise but thorough appraisal of the development of this field.

developments of prior events to be subjected to straightforward interpretation and analysis. Moreover, the very notion of culture implicit or explicit in the work of 'Berkeley school' cultural landscape geographers (characterized as superorganic and reified by its detractors) was said to sacrifice any notion of culture as process, seeing instead only culture as product in the physical landscape (Schein 1997; Mitchell 2000). While the insights of the "new cultural geographers" had obvious merit, their work was later critiqued for its proclivity to cultural idealism and its tendency to throw out the baby of materiality with the bathwater of static notions of culture and outdated methodologies (Walker 1997). Some later work in this field has emphasized the process of creation and the struggles ossified in or written out of landscapes (Mitchell 1996; Inwood and Martin 2008) and the dialectical relationship between the ideological and physical properties situated in landscapes.

Through all of these developments, landscape has come to mean very different things. In its early, positivist and empiricist expressions ('Berkeley school' and later), the landscape was understood as the material record of cultures. Some members of the "new cultural geography" strayed too far in the opposite direction, treating landscape as only ideology, as representation or any number of other idealist guises. Some recent work has emphasized discourse as a constitutive element in the landscape (Schein 1997; Martin 2003). What the development of this field makes clear is that while landscape is a complex concept, it has undeniable components. Mitchell (2003a) synthesizes many of the field's developments, arguing for a view toward landscape able to account for its ideological and discursive components yet deeply engaged with its material reality and the contentious social relations of its production. In the analysis presented here, I attempt an account of Oak Brook's landscapes based on thorough consideration of the various elements of landscape and the myriad processes of its material and discursive production,

striving for the type of socially engaged, empirical project called for by Mitchell (2003a) and offered by Schein (2009).

Though understanding the relationships between Oak Brook's public and its landscapes became one of my central goals, I also wished to extend my analysis further in order to understand the ways in which the landscape and the public operate as organizing, structuring frameworks in the minds of both residents and commuters (working to shape acceptable practice in Oak Brook). As such, some emphasis is undoubtedly placed on the perceptions of landscape and the public offered by my respondents. Lest this emphasis be cast as idealist, however, visual and physical elements of the landscape and the contest waged over the production of particular landscapes in recent village history play a prominent role in this analysis. Inwood and Martin's (2008) study of the University of Georgia Campus proved an insightful model in this regard. While understanding the University's manipulation of the landscape to suggest a certain historical narrative at the expense of others is paramount in their work, these authors also shift focus from traditional landscape analysis to analyzing the perceptions and interpretations of their research respondents while touring the campus in what they called "roving focus groups" (Inwood and Martin 2008). Though my study incorporated no such methods, interviewees often referenced particular areas of Oak Brook or neighboring towns in their responses. Interviews at offices or in restaurants sometimes included pointing onto the street or gesturing toward a distant area in praise or derision of landmarks or eyesores. Interviews conducted far from Oak Brook often included descriptions of spectacular parts of the village (the mall, Oakbrook Center, in particular). These offerings indicate perceptions of place and of landscapes, and I will argue here that such insights are fundamentally important to understanding not only the production of edge

cities, but also the behaviors and practices considered possible or appropriate by virtue of their landscapes.

Considering only perception, however, is insufficient to the task of understanding Oak Brook's landscapes. It has now been decades since Harvey's influential work on the processes of urban geography and their connection to capital accumulation (especially Harvey 1978; 2006). An important and now largely taken for granted insight from this work is the notion that investment in the secondary circuit of capital (the built environment, the consumption fund, etc.) shapes the trajectory of and eventually inhibits further capital accumulation. Capital's own geographical creations come to dominate its practice, simultaneously offering and forestalling possible routes for further development. In time, these geographies become too obstructive, and entire landscapes of production and/or consumption must be destroyed, reinvented (as in gentrification), or deserted in favor of others (as in the now familiar process of deindustrialization). Just as landscapes of production and consumption come to dominate possible practice for capitalists and firms, so too do particular landscapes structure the possible social practices of everyday life. Physical, visual and cultural boundaries, rules and norms written into and erected within cultural landscapes come to dominate perceived opportunities for political, recreational or any other common, everyday use (Schein 1997; Mitchell 2002).

I explored these issues with interviewees through many different avenues, usually focused around questions such as "What do people do in Oak Brook?" and "What do you do in Oak Brook?" (referring perhaps equally to what *one might do* and what *individual respondents actually do*).[42] Other entrées included the questions: "What kind of place is Oak Brook" and "Is

---

[42] The ambiguity of these questions, admittedly, was both strategic and accidental (as discussed in the introduction to this thesis). On the one hand, it was certainly interesting and I argue advantageous to leave space for respondents to interpret these questions in different ways, to ask for clarification or express frustration, to provide several answers or to use this ambiguity as a way to steer our conversations. Such reactions often made possible and

82

there a sense of community in Oak Brook? What does this entail?", among others. These questions yielded interesting responses, responses that illustrated the connections between population, landscape and place among both commuters and residents. Once these conversations got started, however, respondents often led me in interesting and unanticipated directions. Village officials, developers and representatives of Oak Brook's businesses highlighted the importance of physical and visual elements of the village (such as foliage, signage and physical infrastructure), indicating some of the differences of opinion and in some cases heated political debates that have controlled the changes in these elements in recent decades. Many residents, especially long-time residents, referred to the standby factors of ideal suburban life: family, open space, safety, privacy and the like.[43] The commuters I interviewed discussed some of these same physical and social elements, though their preferred lines of discussion understandably differed somewhat from those of residents. The remainder of this chapter will explore how residents and commuters experience and perceive Oak Brook and their places in it, paying special attention to the aesthetic and political ramifications these perceptions have for the two groups.

Perceiving Oak Brook

As discussed in chapter three, Oak Brook's residential population is the product of concerted efforts and continuous contestation, and is an important part of a process I refer to as producing the public. Although I argued in chapter three that 'the public' is not entirely embodied by Oak Brook's residents, they are the most stable and powerful, and also, as this chapter will argue, visible contingent. In conversations with these residents, the idea of 'the

encouraged more undigested, spontaneous and perhaps arguably more telling answers. On the other hand, however, this ambiguity was often not planned to elicit such responses and was as often a product of hesitant research design as intentionally probative strategy.

[43] Residents also expressed a great deal of interest in the 'character' of their community, by which they usually meant the public (as considered in chapter three).

public' was often used to refer to only to Oak Brook's residential population. Oak Brook's residents have a very well developed understanding of who belongs in and to Oak Brook, in part because they have worked hard to craft the boundaries of this population. This explanation does little to explain why commuters would share this view of Oak Brook's public, however, as the 19 commuters I interviewed largely did. These people offered assessments of Oak Brook and its residential population informed by a wide spectrum of experiences and incredibly different levels of interaction with residents. Nevertheless, these assessments had much in common and fit nicely with the image of the public and of Oak Brook that residents have sought to maintain. Conceptions of the village and its public and the ways they are transmitted to a metropolitan audience are crucial to understanding perceptions of place in Oak Brook, as the two appear to be closely intertwined. In other words, perceptions of Oak Brook are heavily informed by both the idea and the physical presence of its public, which in popular parlance often contracts to refer only to Oak Brook's residents.

The use of the word perception here is important for several reasons. The term perception is useful in part because it is the word used by many respondents in talking about their own ideas and about general or popular notions they believe to exist among broader groups. Statements such as "I think the perception is that Oak Brook is a wealthy place" were quite common in my interviews. This word is also important because it describes not truth, fact or even knowledge, but rather experiences arrived at by the sensuous interactions of daily life. Analyzing perception thus encourages not a static interpretation of place or of landscape, but a view toward the dynamic interactions of lived experience described by interviewees and the connections between these experiences and understandings of place. Place, after all, is a relative conception of space that requires a measure of human meaning to be understood (Smith 2008). Perception is as

dynamic an idea as place itself, and the two are intimately bound together. With respect to the edge city literature, perception is important because it forms the basis of one part of Garreau's "test." An edge city, Garreau (1991: 7) explains, must be "perceived by the population as one place" (as discussed in chapter one). Edge cities are places imbued with meaning and understood as singular entities, and it is perception that informs and shapes this meaning. Understanding place (and understanding edge cities as places), then, requires engagement with perceptions of the authors and users of edge city landscapes. This section will focus on the three aspects of Oak Brook cited by commuters and residents. Though these were far from the only descriptors of Oak Brook offered by interviewees, they were by far the most common and also, I argue, the most important for understanding popular perceptions of Oak Brook.

Affluence

Wealth, opulence and the lack of want among Oak Brook's residents hold a place of descriptive primacy in the popular discourse of the village. Without question, the most common attribute of Oak Brook mentioned by both residents and commuters was affluence. One interviewee described her lifelong desire to have her wedding in Oak Brook precisely because of this image: "There was this perception that the fairy tale wedding would happen in Oak Brook…I wanted that kind of classy, dreamy feel of looking like a lot of money, and it ended up having that feel" (Interview with Jodie Koslow-Martin, 6/14/2011). For many, this affluence is seen to be embodied by people in and from Oak Brook. This can be a tricky issue to parse, because for some interviewees, there seems to be an overestimation of who exactly belongs to the residential community in Oak Brook. Asked what kind of place Oak Brook is, a local café manager told me without hesitation that it is very "snobbish" (Interview with Leo Tubon,

6/6/2011). Customers' consciousness for brand names and the tendency to display them boldly, their tendency to make several expensive purchases per day at his establishment and their attitudes, which were far more demanding and condescending than he had experienced working in the same capacity at other locations in metropolitan Chicago, had given him this impression. "I have no idea what people who live in Oak Brook do. They count their money, I don't know," said a laughing resident of a neighboring suburb who had once held a temporary job in the Village (Interview with anonymous commuter, 6/14/2011). A woman who had worked in an ice cream store in Oakbrook Center during high school and college gave a similar appraisal of the clientele of Oak Brook's businesses. She offered the following example:

> So scoops of ice cream were a buck forty then, and people would try to pay with hundred
> dollar bills for a scoop of ice cream, and we couldn't make change for that. We didn't
> carry that much cash in the register. So we had to have a little sign that said that on the
> register. And to me that was always very symbolic of the Oak Brook experience"
> (Interview with Jodie Koslow-Martin, 6/14/2011).

Of course, people who shop in Oak Brook are largely commuters, raising the question of how these and other service providers could possibly distinguish those shoppers who live in Oak Brook from those who do not. The answer of course is that they cannot. When people comment on Oak Brook's population as affluent in this way, they must be understood as describing a far larger population. It is crucial to note, however, that only those customers who appear affluent based on their spending habits, appearances and attitudes at Oak Brook businesses were assumed to be from Oak Brook by interviewees.

Those interviewees who are in a position to know residents from non-residents confirm this notion of embodied affluence. Village officials and representatives of businesses, all of

whom have personal relationships and/or direct interaction with voters, committees and the like composed solely of residents, echo the sentiments of other commuters.[44] "We have a certain type of people that if they want to live in Oak Brook, they can afford to live here," I was told by Community Development Director Bob Kallien (interviewed 6/3/2011). The idea that people in Oak Brook can afford the high price of residence, and indeed that they can afford many other expenses based on that assessment, is also prevalent. Many residents complained that contractors and service providers from outside the village raised prices for services performed in Oak Brook based solely on the assumption that people in Oak Brook can afford to pay. Jim Lazzarini (interviewed 6/10/2011) described his experience of comparing prices on similar driveway paving jobs with a close friend. He had been charged ten thousand dollars more for the same job. A senior executive at McDonald's Corporation, also an active leader in the Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce, explained that area restaurants sometimes offer discounts or run promotions for Oak Brook residents, adding, "not that they need it" (Interview with anonymous commuter, 7/6/2011).

Some of this perception is undoubtedly influenced by the political and social presence of Oak Brook residents in local and regional news and high society. After all, Oak Brook is the place where Prince Charles, Ralph Lauren and many other famous polo enthusiasts rode their ponies during the height of the Butler family's fame in the early years of the village. It has also been the home of many infamous members of Chicago crime outfits in recent decades, such as the Calabrese family.[45] Several of Chicago's professional athletes have also lived in Oak Brook over the years, perhaps most notably longtime White Sox first baseman Frank Thomas. These

---

[44] At the time of my research, all but one of the Village staff (excluding the president) were themselves commuters.
[45] Frank Calabrese Sr., a longtime resident of Oak Brook and notorious Chicago racketeer, was sentenced to life imprisonment and a share (along with codefendants) of $27.2 million in forfeiture and restitution for his role in 14 area murders and other crimes (Lee and Sardovi 2010).

87

prominent personalities certainly influence perceptions of the place's affluence, as do the public statements and political campaigns of Oak Brook's more outspoken residents. Constantine Xinos, whose local reputation for incendiary polemics more than precedes him, provides the most flamboyant example of this publicity. Speaking on his opposition to a plan to convert a vacant historic building into an assisted living facility (with a small number of 'affordable' units), Xinos is reported to have reasoned that "people who can afford $6,000 a month in rent won't want to live near those who need subsidized housing" (Pierce 2002). In isolation, this statement may appear rather innocuous, but it should be understood as but one example of an Oak Brook resident making a public statement that mobilizes a vision of affluence and exclusivity in the village. Thus whether famous, infamous or simply boisterous, many of Oak Brook's residents have made their way into the popular consciousness in the metropolitan region, and the affluent image they have displayed has translated quite effectively into perceptions of Oak Brook as a place of and for affluent people.

Landscaping, the built environment and other elements of the landscape also influence the perception of affluence. Early Village administrators used the zoning ordinance, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Plan Commission to ensure an "upscale" appearance in the commercial areas of the village, especially near 22nd Street, the village's main commercial corridor. In the early years of the village, commercial structures had to be white, for instance. If a company wished to locate in Oak Brook, its leadership had to be willing to build or occupy a white building. It was Richard Barton's Chicago Bridge and Iron Company that finally "broke the color barrier" in 1961, a move that required a great deal of effort and the permission of Paul Butler (Barton 1990). Maintaining an affluent image continues to be an important component in deciding what types of establishments Oak Brook will allow. Former Village President Karen

Bushy explained the Village's decision not to allow business like Home Depot to locate in Oak Brook with the following comments:

> Because we're selling an image here. About 94% of what's sold in Oakbrook Center can be bought in any other shopping center around. Far less than 10% of this merchandise is unique to Oak Brook. Well, what makes them want to come here? There's an ambiance, an atmosphere, a what? Well, you've got to protect that. You can't let that diminish (Interview with Karen Bushy, 6/21/2011).

Protecting this image, Bushy explained, meant not subjecting patrons of Neiman Marcus to a view of Home Depot shoppers across the parking lot.

Residential landscapes are also important to the perception of affluence in Oak Brook. Of course, the high property values the Village boasts have a large role to play, as it is no secret that homes in Oak Brook cost a great deal of money.[46] Many commuters noted the visual prominence of grand entrances to gated communities, the sprawling yard space and immaculate exteriors of homes visible from (especially) 31st Street, Myers Road and Jorie Boulevard as also contributing to this view. One resident of a neighboring suburb commented: "And you just see, as you go through the Oak Brook area, to get onto 31st and then down 31st, it's just enormous mansions and places where there are giant fences. Enormous yards, ponds, and you just go, 'Yeah, that's not the same as the rest of the towns'" (Interview with anonymous commuter, 6/14/2011). As this person noted, the size and style of lots and homes in Oak Brook impact these impressions. The image below (Figure 4.1) shows a house (vacant at the time of my research) quite visually prominent near the intersection of 31st Street and York Road (right in the heart of the area described by the anonymous commuter cited above). Though this style of home is by no means

---

[46] As discussed in chapter two. It should also be noted that Oak Brook's neighbor Hinsdale has a very similar profile of home values, according to the American Community Survey of the 2010 US Census.

the norm in Oak Brook, it is one of the most visible homes in Oak Brook due to its position on a major thoroughfare and its lack of concealing foliage characteristic of similar homes in the area. As such, this and other large, opulent homes play a role in shaping the perception of Oak Brook as a place of affluence.

Figure 4.1: This photo was taken near the intersection of York Road and 31st Street (a major intersection near the southeastern corner of Oak Brook.

Oak Brook's landscapes thus provide an exemplary evidence of Schein's (2009) suggestion that landscapes present opportunities to constitute belonging (or lack thereof) in a community. It is significant that the factors noted above create a sense of place in which only people of obvious wealth are assumed to belong, as residents, to Oak Brook. It is exactly this

perception that many of Oak Brook's residents and officials have sought to produce and protect through manipulation and management of Oak Brook's landscapes.

Health

Interviewees also describe Oak Brook as a healthy place, or a place where a healthy appearance is important. In this case as well, much of this perception comes from those thought to be Oak Brook residents (correctly or not) by interviewees. People in Oak Brook were said to display a healthy appearance, a term with multiple components. Some interviewees used this idea to refer directly to medical health and its direct translation to physical, bodily appearance among residents. This perception cannot be unhinged from another popular notion, that Oak Brook is full of doctors.[47] Several interviewees made the connection between healthy physical appearance among residents and the large population of physicians in the village. One respondent described Oak Brook as a place where people care about "self improvement," and went on: "whether they're paying for relaxation, whether that be a kind of spa experience, or trying to make themselves feel better medically. I don't know, I have that impression of Oak Brook, that it's…If I was going to go somewhere for laser surgery, I would go to Oak Brook" (Interview with Jodie Koslow-Martin 6/14/2011). Much of this discussion about the 'healthy' image of people in Oak Brook boils down to the perceived significance of appearance among residents. While not everyone present at any given time in Oak Brook displays the polish and vigor that interviewees described, the ones that do tend their appearances are assumed to be

---

[47] Comments such as, "My mom always says that a lot of doctors live there" (Interview with anonymous commuter, 6/14/2011) were relatively commonplace in my conversations with commuters. This perception is not necessarily incorrect, as a number of high-profile physicians do in fact call Oak Brook home. Oak Brook's current President Gopal Lalmalani, for instance, is a practicing cardiologist.

residents of Oak Brook. Whether residents or not, the fact that "people in Oak Brook" are seen as healthy and attractive contributes significantly to popular perceptions of the place.

A healthy and attractive appearance is also a focus of efforts by Oak Brook's businesses and the Village government, as both see this as an incredibly important part of Oak Brook's image. Interviews with residents and commuters confirm that the dynamic aesthetics of the built environment impact their view of the place as healthy and attractive. This appearance is comprised of many components. One of the most important elements is the perception of economic vitality, which most interviewees equate with (residential and commercial) vacancies or the lack thereof. Many residents touted both their own subdivisions and the village generally as having sustained very few sales or foreclosures during the recent real estate downturn, a success they often contrast with surrounding suburbs. This is offered as evidence of a financially healthy and responsible residential community. Commercial vacancies are looked upon as a plague by both business (through entities such as the Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce) and government in Oak Brook, and both understand attracting new business to quickly fill unused space to be a primary mandate. Residents and commuters pick up on this as well, noting the lack of commercial vacancy as a major indicator of health and vitality for Oak Brook. Vacancies in residential or commercial properties are sometimes cured by demolition and construction. Community Development Director Bob Kallien noted a recent increase in teardowns of homes and predicted the same for both commercial structures and infrastructure in the near future, a process he likens to a "normal life cycle" (Interview with Robert Kallien, 6/3/2011). Tearing down the old to make way for the new is thus largely seen as part of the growth dynamics required to keep the village healthy.

Keeping the village attractive is equally important to residents, government and business interests. Factors of the perception of Oak Brook as an attractive place overlap to some degree with the perception of Oak Brook as a wealthy place, but the former perception has unique components as well. The most important of these unique elements may be the prominence of nature in the design of residential and commercial landscapes. When asked what they liked about Oak Brook, many residents and commuters responded with such phrases as, "all the green," "the open spaces," "the green space" or, more straightforwardly, "being in nature." These sentiments match romantic ideas of nature that have accompanied American suburban growth since its beginnings,[48] and the ways that greenery and foliage have been incorporated into the boulevards and residential and commercial landscaping are also nothing new among suburbs. Substantial setback requirements, curvilinear streets, restrictions on yard fences and other trappings of suburban design since the development of Riverside, IL in the 1870s (Kunstler 1993) are also influential in Oak Brook, as are the several sprawling polo fields, golf courses and Park District facilities, most notably Central Park along Jorie Boulevard. Equally important, however, are less common aesthetic requirements and restrictions, such as Oak Brook's continued refusal to allow outlots[49] on its commercial properties and their longstanding sign ordinance. Protecting against outlots has, I was told, kept Oak Brook free from the visual assault of fast food establishments and small, tacky shops that tarnish the image of a community. The sign ordinance accomplished a similar function, as it required that signs be of a rather non-descript character and be placed no higher than the third floor of commercial structures. Businesses interested in moving to Oak Brook have long complained about this portion of the zoning ordinance, as many suburbs allow signage to be placed at the top of commercial buildings, an especially useful advertising venue

---

[48] See Smith (2008), Anderson (2010).
[49] Outlots are the small parcels usually allotted to fast food restaurants and the like on the edges of larger parcels such as shopping centers or big-box style establishments.

along highways and major thoroughfares. For decades, Village administrators defended the

restrictive ordinance, arguing that to allow gaudy signs would cheapen the image of the village

and destroy the essence of Oak Brook's uniqueness (Interview with Karen Bushy, 6/21/2011). In

fact, some argue that the regulation of aesthetics on commercial properties is the major

difference between Oak Brook and its neighbors in the western suburbs. I was told that the north

and south sides of 22nd Street west of Route 83 was the best place to visually observe the

difference, as the north side of the street is in Oakbrook Terrace and the south side is in Oak

Brook (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3 below).

Figure 4.2: Looking west along 22nd Street, this photo shows Oakbrook Terrace on the right and Oak Brook on the

left. At the time of this photo, 22nd Street was being widened, hence the presence of the reflective barrels and rubble.

As stated below, the aesthetic difference between the two sides appears minimal. Of note, however, is the difference

between the foliage and the signage on the two sides. The foliage on the south side of the street hides parking,

whereas on the north side it does not. The signs on the south side are relatively uniform in size and hue, whereas

those on the north side vary wildly.

Comparing the two sides, Karen Bushy commented:

And you look at how close they are to the road and all their neon signs and pink dancing

sombreros and ladies and whatever the hell it all is, squished all together. And on the

other side, you see it's set way back, and there's flowers and planting and the schmutz

and the this and the that and then some parking and then the stores (Interview with Karen

Bushy, 6/17/2011).

The two sides of the street do indeed appear different, though to the casual observer the

difference is perhaps hardly noticeable. To many, however, this small visual difference is

everything. Seeing shrubs and trees as opposed to "dancing sombreros" is what separates Oak

Brook from the endless sprawl of indistinguishable, soulless suburbia and lends it its healthy,

attractive aura.

Figure 4.3: This photo (looking northeast) shows some strip-mall establishments on the north side (Oakbrook

Terrace) of 22nd Street. These are the aesthetically displeasing retailers and signs that Oak Brook is commonly said

to disallow.

Dedication

A third recurring theme in discussions of Oak Brook might best be described as

dedication, a concept with several important components. The first sense of this word applies to

the human element of Oak Brook's landscapes, as they are understood to have a purpose and a drive to fulfill it. Oak Brook's residents are largely seen as achievers, as people who have made something of and for themselves through determination and perseverance. This discourse is prevalent among residents, who often attempt to distance themselves from other wealthy areas of the metropolitan region (such as the north shore or even their close neighbor Hinsdale). Oak Brook is different because people there have made their own fortunes, I was told, as opposed to people in other affluent suburbs who may or may not have inherited their wealth. The popular view that many of Oak Brook's residents are professionals and executives with advanced degrees and training is also a part of the 'self-made' image that many residents value quite highly. People who live in Oak Brook, I was told, are made to feel that they can achieve success without regard to their background. "It's not a pedigree, it's an attitude," Karen Bushy explained, "That meant a lot" (Interview with Karen Bushy, 6/21/2011). The idea of dedication in Oak Brook applies also to the idea that people in Oak Brook dedicate themselves to particular activities at certain times and in certain places. Oak Brook is a place where people live, work, play or do any number of other things. People undertake these activities with dedicated attention, leaving aside other parts of their lives in the process. This is largely why, I was told, participation in Village affairs must be voluntary, because many Oak Brook residents do not wish to disturb their residential lives. Some residents work long hours in high-pressure positions, and would rather enjoy a quiet martini at home than have to engage with neighbors. Work and home lives occupy different times for most in Oak Brook, a truth reflected in the lives of residents and commuters.

This dedication to purposeful, productive ends and the separation of social and professional life among residents leads consequently to the division of spaces dedicated to these parts of life. The separation of spaces of home and work is prominent in the visual and

96

perceptual landscapes of Oak Brook. The most obvious example of this division is the visual difference of 22nd and 31st Streets (see Figures 4.4 and 4.5 below).

Figure 4.4 (previous page, above): Looking west, this photo shows 22nd Street from a position roughly one hundred feet west of the Interstate 88 overpass. **Figure 4.5 (previous page, below)**: Looking west along 31st Street, this photo shows the visual contrast between 22nd and 31st Streets at roughly the same time of day.

As it is the main commercial corridor, many of Oak Brook's businesses (including those of Oakbrook Center) are located directly on or just off of 22nd Street. It is lined with imposing facades and filled with traffic throughout the day.[50] 31st Street, by contrast, is quiet at nearly all times of the day and night. Though many vehicles travel this road during the day, it is lined with dense foliage and residential enclaves (themselves full of and lined by foliage). This street is picturesque, being carefully manicured and maintained throughout the year by the Village and by various homeowners' associations. The difference between the two, despite their close proximity (the streets are exactly one mile apart), illustrates both the success of Oak Brook's founders and the interesting accomplishment of edge cities generally. Edge cities have taken businesses and commercial activity away from city centers to locate in suburban agglomerations. In Oak Brook, a part of Chicago's business activity was successfully appropriated, but its confinement to a small area and its spatial separation from the residential community it supports has allowed the remainder of the village to maintain most of its pastoral, idyllic appearance.

Another important component to the idea of separated spaces in Oak Brook is the privacy and separation of activities caused by the necessity of automobile travel in the village. Oak Brook is very nearly without sidewalks. This situation is decried by those without cars or who prefer not to drive everywhere and lauded by those who appreciate the privacy and limited interaction it enables. Some interviewees from the business community dislike this very much, as patrons are not able to walk from one establishment to the next but instead must drive to each

---

[50] It is toward this area that Paul Butler looked when making his twilight comment that they had built "a city on the edge of a city" (see chapter two).

location they wish to visit. Residents, by and large, appreciate the privacy and seclusion the lack of sidewalks affords them.

This separation of spaces designated for specific activities is not so different from that in found in most cities, except perhaps for the degree of separation achieved in Oak Brook. There are no apartments mixed into the commercial and retail areas of the village, like those found many cities and suburbs. There is also very little opportunity to alter the functions of particular spaces by moving through them, as nearly all destinations in the village require travel by car or bus. This dedication of spaces to single uses mirrors the dually dedicated nature of people in Oak Brook, who are said to understand their places in the Village. Oak Brook is not a place where people go to wander around (except in the confines of Oakbrook Center, the mall). It is a place to work, to live, to play, to shop and to dine. These activities are physically separated from one another, and the spaces given over to these activities are occupied by people who know how to use them in the prescribed manner.

The popular perception of Oak Brook, then, is a place where people know what they are supposed to do, and do it. This involves the designation of spaces dedicated to home (residential areas of the village), work (largely the commercial areas) and play (including leisure and consumption, as at Oakbrook Center, or recreation, as at polo grounds, golf courses and the facilities of the Park District). There are of course areas of overlap, as in the case of workers who tend the landscaping or clean the interior spaces of residential areas, but these activities follow quite tightly monitored patterns. There is even a space for protest in Oak Brook, and it does get used perhaps once a year. Groups like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) have visited Oak Brook to protest the practices of the McDonald's Corporation, and their gatherings have been conveniently contained to the small corner of public space occupied by the Butler

Government Center at the intersection of Jorie Boulevard and 31st Street.[51] This is one of the

very few areas of public space in the Village, and efforts to protect the public space and public

funding of areas like the Oak Brook Public Library have been met by powerful, organized

resistance in recent years, as discussed in chapter three. Aversion to the possibilities of public

space and efforts to constrict public space in the village are complicated, with some objecting

more to the expenditure of public funds, some to the possibility of use by non-residents and some

to the opportunity for unscripted or unwanted activity. These various attitudes are all related,

however, to understandings of place in Oak Brook. Contests over practice (whether these take

the form of zoning debates, issues related to the library, or the siting of new businesses) are also

shaped by such understandings of what Oak Brook is and to whom it belongs. Ultimately, many

of these contests are decided either by residents (by exercising their right to vote and make their

voices heard in public or private forums), through court battles or through negotiation with

residents and/or Village officials (as in the case of the rezoning of the McDonald's campus

property in the late 1970s (Barton 1990)).

The three aspects of Oak Brook discussed here were by no means the only qualities

attributed to the village by interviewees, but they were the qualities most consistently cited in

these interviews. They are also perhaps the most important aspects of the overall image apparent

in Oak Brook's landscapes. The most important visual elements of the landscape, Oak Brook's

populations (especially its public) and its built environment, influence popular perceptions of

Oak Brook as a place of affluence, a place that is healthy and attractive, and a place where

---

[51] These protests have caused very little irritation and had no measurable impact on the village or McDonald's. Village officials describe the groups who stage these protests as being very peaceful and organized, having always sent notice of their proposed activities to the Village in advance and not gone outside the bounds of their allotted area. Their protests are thus a fine example of the routinization of protests and their consequent ineffectiveness elucidated by Mitchell and Staeheli (2005). The protesters are given a space far from the vibrancy of 22nd Street, and are thus exposed only to the light traffic of 31st Street and Jorie Boulevard.

dedication (of people and of space) to specific ends is observed. These elements come together

with others to shape the general perception of Oak Brook, creating the dynamic meanings that

designate it as a particular place in the metropolitan region. This culture of place then influences

or determines the possibilities of practice in the village, a process largely controlled by residents.

New directions

Oak Brook has experienced a great deal of change in recent years, and many Village

officials cite omens of the change to come. Many of these changes relate to the elements of the

landscape discussed above, and their alteration is already beginning to have an impact on the

image of Oak Brook. Perhaps the most notable of these changes was the rewriting of the portion

of the zoning ordinance that controlled signage in the village. As noted above, the original

ordinance called for rather recessive signs slung low on commercial structures and no billboards

along the highway, restrictions that were a constant complaint of prospective businesses for

many years (Interview with David Neimeyer, 6/6/2011). New Village administration and

increasingly well-organized pressure from the Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce and

prospective businesses finally coalesced with enough force to push the issue forward and loosen

the restrictions. Specifically, signage is now allowed far above the former height restrictions and

is significantly less restricted as to size (Baeb 2010). This is considered a major victory by many

business leaders and Village officials, and has helped Oak Brook attract a number of new

businesses. Rasmussen Inc., the parent company of Rasmussen College (a for-profit higher

education company) was probably the straw that broke the camel's back, as the company would

likely not have relocated its headquarters to Oak Brook without the amended ordinance (Baeb

2010). Among Rasmussen's first priorities was tattooing the top floor of its new home in the Oak

Brook Regency Towers with a large sign displaying its name, which can easily be seen from

Interstate 88 (see Figure 4.6 below).

Figure 4.6: This photo looks northwest from Interstate 88 and shows the prominent Rasmussen College sign discussed above. I took this photo from the passenger seat of a car on the highway.

Olivet Nazarene University (a private liberal arts school in Bourbonnais, IL) also recently leased space in Oak Brook along Interstate 88 (see Figure 4.7 below). I interviewed two of its administrators, who explained that its presence had little to do with Oak Brook but much to do with its ability to advertize along the tollway (Interview with Jeremy Alderson and Dave Pearson, 6/16/2011). Proponents of the new ordinance have thus been proven right that new business would follow from its passage.

Figure 4.7: This photo shows the prominent placement of the Olivet Nazarene University sign along Interstate 88. This photo, like Figure 4.6 above, was taken from the passenger seat of a car on the highway.

Former Village President Karen Bushy, however, was sad to see the old restrictions go. Her concern over this change is twofold. First, she and others fear that gaudy signs damage the visual landscape in Oak Brook, tarnishing its image and making it essentially no different from other suburbs along the tollway. She also fears that Oak Brook gave up much with this

concession and earned little in return. In response to the claim that the change has brought in new businesses, Bushy quickly counters that these particular businesses produce no sales tax, the largest single source of revenue for the Village (as discussed in chapter two). "If you do that for somebody that's not a sales tax producer, what are you going to have to do for one that is?", Bushy asked, "Well, what's that going to benefit anybody? You've set a precedent now and where's it going?" (Interview with Karen Bushy, 6/21/2011). Indeed, the recruitment of businesses that do not directly benefit the residents of Oak Brook through sales tax is an increasing concern among some residents.[52] There is a possibility that some of this change in recruitment is due to the split affinity of the Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce, which also serves Oakbrook Terrace. Whatever the causes, however, the changing character of Oak Brook businesses and the amendment of the sign ordinance are already having an impact on both the visual landscape and the perception of Oak Brook among residents and commuters.

Another major change has come on much more slowly. When Oak Brook was founded and began its fledgling commercial corridor along 22nd Street, it was the only game in town. No surrounding suburbs had developed shopping centers or office towers, and Oak Brook's founders had little competition for the types of 'upscale' corporations and retailers they endeavored to attract. Oak Brook's neighbors (many of which were incorporated roughly a century before Oak Brook) wasted little time in emulating the village's success to the best of their abilities, and Interstate 88 is now home to many office towers and commercial and retail concentrations, stretching for miles west of Oak Brook in a nearly continuous visual assault through Aurora. Though there is no area of the western suburbs that can match the oft-cited cachet of Oak Brook,

---

[52] Some residents, like Bushy, worry that recruiting businesses without regard to their potential to generate such revenue signals a diminishing understanding of the relationship between a property tax and the sales tax in Oak Brook (most agree that robust sales tax revenues protect residents from the need for a property tax). If the trend continues, these residents argue, the privilege of a property tax-free village may disappear.

the village's aging office and technical infrastructure and the availability of space in neighboring suburbs (especially those that are close enough to cash in on the Oak Brook name by proximity alone, like Westmont, Lombard or Downers Grove) have increased competition for new businesses (Interview with David Neimeyer, 6/6/2011). This has forced Village officials, many feel, to be more nimble and flexible in their stance toward business interests in recent years, a change that fits neatly into Anderson's (2010) discussion of suburban landscape dynamics in the neoliberal (post-1973) era in nearby Kendall County. Anderson places changes in the "American dream" discourse at work in Kendall County's suburbanization in the context of the "flexible accumulation" of neoliberal capitalism (Anderson 2010). The neoliberal "American dream" discourse Anderson analyzes uses fear of mobile capital to inspire malleable local governments, ensuring or easing the process of capital accumulation. Quite similar changes in especially aesthetic demands by Village government are becoming quite apparent in Oak Brook.

These and many other changes to the village in recent years signal a changing political and social climate in Oak Brook and the potentially diminishing dominance of residential interests. Increasingly, Oak Brook's business interests see themselves in a favorable position vis-à-vis residents, I was told by several business leaders. "When I first came here," a McDonald's executive told me, "it was very pro-residence." Things have changed in recent years, he explained, adding that on the part of the Village government, "there's been a little bit more flexibility on their part to be able to welcome more communities in" (Interview with anonymous commuter, 7/6/2011). The influence of Oak Brook's business leaders appears to be growing, and this influence has prompted them to push for further changes in the landscapes of Oak Brook, such as the extension of the PACE bus system[53] and the building of a larger network of public

---

[53] PACE is the suburban extension of Chicago's public busing system run by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). The Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce and the Village government have been conducting research

transportation proposed by Village officials and the Chamber of Commerce (Interviews with David Neimeyer, 6/6/2011; anonymous commuter, 7/6/2011).

What Anderson's (2010) arguments about the changing discursive regime of suburbanization and the subtle sea change in the political climate of Oak Brook illustrate most clearly is the necessity for contextualized interpretations of landscape. The seemingly small shifts in position on issues like the aesthetics of signage and the construction of sidewalks that Oak Brook's government has witnessed in recent years should be understood in the context of larger trends in dominant discursive regimes and, even more importantly, political economic realities. The threat of competition and the reality of mobile capital created the political pressure required to necessitate these shifts in position. Some such changes, like the changing of the sign ordinance, the recruitment of businesses and the increasing support for sidewalks discussed here, stand to have revolutionary impacts on the landscapes of Oak Brook. These changes have already had profound impacts on the kinds of tenants Oak Brook attracts, the aesthetic appeal of the village and potentially the perceptions of place held by residents and commuters. Though it was at times difficult to separate sentiments about Oak Brook from those aimed at younger generations or societal changes in general, I was struck by the frequency with which older interviewees cited the sliding perception of the village and the impact they thought this would have on its prestige and economic vitality. "It's not the town it was," an anonymous resident of more than three decades told me, "Fifty years ago it was one of the elitest towns in the whole country, now it's just another ho-hum suburb" (Interview with anonymous resident, 6/7/2011).

Perhaps the most crucial insight to be taken from these changes is that Oak Brook does not exist in a vacuum and that over time external pressures can force or at least encourage

---

and brainstorming with PACE officials in an attempt to increase public transportation access to Oak Brook, a system that is said to be cumbersome and ineffective for public transportation users who work in Oak Brook.

significant change. The Village and its boosters have long courted businesses for one of two reasons: either to increase the prestige of the village or to produce revenue for the Village (preferably both, of course). This was a tenuous balancing act, to be sure, but business and government leaders increasingly see themselves in a more difficult position. As neighboring municipalities develop as competitors, Oak Brook is no longer able to be as choosy in its recruitment of businesses. Indeed, many officials now claim that if the Village is to survive it must adapt. Changing the sign ordinance, wooing new types of businesses and making Oak Brook more accessible by foot and by bus are crucial to remaining competitive, some argue, as are beautification projects, infrastructure overhauls and significant upgrades to office spaces and other commercial properties. In other words, for a time Oak Brook enjoyed a certain degree of separation and distinction from the rest of Chicagoland, but this could not last. In order to maintain its eroding legacy as the best place for business in the western suburbs, some of the old guard's most carefully guarded restrictions have gladly been laid upon the alter of progress by the Village's new leaders. Something had to give in Oak Brook. The lucrative tax arrangement was threatened by the maintenance of restrictive aesthetic ordinances, but the loosening of such ordinances does not necessarily translate to more revenues for the Village, and indeed may itself threaten the Village's image and appeal. Even the most exclusive of edge cities, these developments suggest, cannot easily remain so forever, at least not at the expense of the metropolis.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE RIGHT TO EDGE CITY: ON THE METROPOLITAN QUESTION AND THE RIGHT
TO LIFE ON THE NEW FRONTIER

Introduction

In chapter one, I introduced the idea that edge cities exploit the labors of metropolitan

populations (and indeed even larger populations) through the work of edge city critics such as

Dear and Flusty (1997;1998), Arvidson (1999), Walker (1994), Beauregard (1995) and Marcuse

(1997). The Marxian political economic framework developed by Harvey (1978; 2006) discussed

in chapters one and four offers a productive way to understand the exploitative dimensions of

urban geographies, including edge cities. In this framework, exploitation is a necessary

component of the accumulation of capital, and thus inherent in capitalist urbanization. As all

kinds of urban geographies are built upon this fundamental exploitation of labor power, edge

cities can be said to be cut from the same cloth as pre-war suburbs, old downtowns, and all other

expressions of capitalist urban form.

The Marxist conception of the exploitation of labor power thus falls short of explaining

edge city exploitation (in the broader sense of one group taking advantage of another) in its

specific characteristics, at least on its own. A fuller explanation can be reached with the aid of

additional concepts, however. In Oak Brook, exploitation is accomplished in part through

expropriation. The concept of expropriation can be tricky, as its usage varies across geographical

and disciplinary contexts.[54] I use the term here to refer to the use of state authority to claim

private funds through taxation. In Oak Brook, the revenue that the Village receives from sales

tax collected within its borders is the most obvious expression of this expropriation, as the State

of Illinois takes a small portion of the sales revenues of Oak Brook merchants for itself, offering

---

[54] Ghosh and Robertson (2012), for instance, use the term to refer to business activity that takes place outside the
law (such as unpaid wages or piracy), while Attig (2007) compares the legal rights of publicly traded corporations in
Quebec and other Canadian provinces to expropriate the stock of small investors.

an even smaller piece of these appropriated funds to the Village of Oak Brook (as discussed in chapter two). Expropriation through taxation thus allows the Village of Oak Brook to exploit very large populations by taking a portion of the money spent in the village. Exploitation here is considerably broader than the exploitation of labor power (though this remains significant), and involves a small group (residents of Oak Brook) taking advantage of a much larger one (nearly all people who spend money in Oak Brook). As discussed, the revenue that the Village receives from sales taxes is widely believed to protect residents from the need for a municipal property tax.

Also necessary to capital accumulation, and thus inherent in capitalist urbanization, are the many processes of alienation. Ollman (1976: 135) explains alienation as "the splintering of human nature into a number of misbegotten parts." Ollman's Marxian theory of alienation holds that under capitalism, people are separated from each other, from the products of their labors, and from many other parts of human life because of the splintering forces of alienation. Alienation, like exploitation, has many expressions, such as the division of labor and the separation of society into classes. Spatial solutions to the social ills of cities and the contradictions of capitalist urbanization, of which edge cities are but one face, also provide contemporary examples of this alienation.

In Oak Brook, processes of exploitation and alienation can be seen in several guises. The efforts of residents and officials to exclude individuals and groups from the public (as discussed in chapter three) have at times been explicitly aimed at exploitation, as when residents sought to maintain the exclusivity of their lucrative tax revenue arrangement. Oak Brook's landscapes and its carefully maintained sense of place can certainly translate to alienation, as workers, shoppers and others from outside Oak Brook come to perceive themselves as 'others' who do not belong

109

(these were common sentiments from commuters in my interviews). Significant gains have been made by those who have struggled against specific instances of these processes at work, as argued in chapters three and four, though these efforts are rarely connected to any notion of a larger movement. In Oak Brook, efforts to combat exclusion, exploitation and alienation have been fragmentary and disparate.

One body of theory and practice that aims to address these and other issues of social and spatial justice is gathered under the heading of 'the right to the city.' In this chapter, I will outline the contours of this movement, including its theoretical lineage and some of its current incarnations. The right to the city, I will argue, presents a useful frame for gathering together the previously disparate struggles against exclusion, exploitation and alienation in Oak Brook, building toward a movement that could struggle for a right to edge city. In the first of two major sections to follow, I review the right to the city in its theoretical and practical developments. I will attempt in this section to draw out the valuable insights that the many perspectives collected under the heading of the right to the city can lend to the struggles over edge cities, noting also some of the problems faced by these theories. In the second section, I will outline several key tenets of what a right to edge city could look like in theory and in practice, using Oak Brook as an evidentiary case. I will conclude with some thoughts on the relevance of a right to edge city in and beyond Oak Brook.

The right to the city

Henri Lefebvre penned *The Right to the City* (1996 [1968]) amidst the heightening political tensions and burgeoning civil unrest of the late 1960s, and published it in the centennial year of the release of Marx's first volume of *Capital*. The title has since become a rallying cry

for a wide variety of political movements and a research agenda for academics. The unbounded

nature of the concept has allowed for no small amount of appropriation, alteration and deviation

in the use of the phrase. The right to the city has been fitted to a number of programs and studies,

and each new user seems to see different potential in its use. As a banner for social and political

movements, the right to the city has exhibited varying degrees of potency and effectiveness.

While some invocations of Lefebvre's work seem little more than hollowed homage, others have

promised more emancipatory politics in line with his intentions (Dikeç and Gilbert 2002). In the

academic realm, the right to the city has similarly been used in a range of theoretical

applications, from a broadened, more inclusive conception of citizenship (Purcell 2003) to a

coalition of interested parties and groups coalescing around a common hostility toward

capitalism (Marcuse 2009). In both theory and practice, then, the right to the city has garnered

considerable attention, and its applicability to new areas of study is ever-growing.

Most proponents of the right to the city trace their heritage to Lefebvre. The right to the

city was to be, as Lefebvre (1996: 158) now famously proclaimed, "like a cry and a demand", an

idea crafted for praxis (theoretically informed practice) and imbued with an impetus for contest

and challenge. Lefebvre was also equally famously unclear about the concrete nature of the right

to the city he envisioned. There are moments of clarity in Lefebvre's work, moments wherein the

abstract seems to touch down, so to speak, and these have provided clues to later users of his

work. For instance, he states that the right to the city "cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting

right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed

right to urban life" (Lefebvre 1996: 158, original emphasis). Even with such clues, however,

Lefebvre's blueprint is conceptually sparse enough to allow for wildly different goals to be

pursued and methods to be employed under the auspices of the right to the city (Attoh 2011).

111

An uneasy distinction in uses of the term can be made between theoretical work and practical work, or between academic engagements and political applications. This distinction is uneasy in part because there are also times when theory and practice can be difficult to disentangle, as when considering theoretical developments. Though such developments are sometimes forged in the furnaces of the academy, authors such as Harvey (2012) suggest that it is active political movements that inspire academic interests and provide substance for theories. Moreover, even if theoretical rights to the city are developed in academic settings, it is in practice that these developments find their relevance. The fact that many authors and practitioners advocate praxis when considering the right to the city also makes distinguishing theory and practice a difficult (and perhaps unnecessary) affair.

Calls for greater networking and communication between academics, policy-makers and the general public have received a great deal of attention from international governing bodies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), culminating in the International Forum on the Social Science – Policy Nexus in Buenos Aires in February of 2006. Such an international political climate, in which integration of theory and practice is so encouraged, provides fertile ground for application of the right to the city. The growing incorporation of the right to the city into policy documents and political conversations and agendas illustrates this point vividly. In July of 2010, the mayor of the Federal District of Mexico, Marcelo Ebrard, signed the *Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City*. This document is extensive in its demands and purpose, and participation in its formulation was extended to the general citizenry of Mexico City (Wigle and Zárate 2010). Joan Clos, former Mayor of Barcelona and current Executive Director of UN-HABITAT has also invoked the right to the city, of which he considers the strengthening of local democracy an integral part (*Social*

112

and Human Sciences Newsletter 2004). The link between theory and practice, realized in praxis, is one of the most crucial elements of the right to the city, and one frequently insisted upon by Lefebvre (1996: 156), who referred to a dialectical relationship "between science and political power, as a dialogue which actualizes relations of 'theory-practice'".

At its best, then, the right to the city is both theoretical and practical, a body of thought and a set of political means and ends. Though the literature testifies the truth of this statement, a constant struggle or negotiation exists to establish what such means and ends might be in practice and to what tenets the theory might hold. For most researchers working on the subject, the right to the city, if realized, would entail a fundamental reorganization of the political economic order. For Harvey (2008), the right to the city would mean democratic control of the surplus, or a complete revolution of the political economy on a global scale. Harvey and others have argued that cities are manifestations of surplus, and that the absorbing role cities play is crucial to the survival of capitalism and the abatement of crises (Harvey 1978; 2006; 2008; Walker 1981). A revolutionary change would allow for the installment of the right to the city as a right to participate in the determination of surplus investment (or disposal) and, by extension, urban form and function. What is crucially important to Harvey's conception is that the right to the city is thus a collective right, and the democratic component at the heart of this conception of the right to the city is one Harvey shares with a number of other researchers (Attoh 2011). Attoh (2011) has convincingly argued that such democratic conceptions can be equally troublesome, especially if democracy is defined in majoritarian terms. Fraught with the potential for injustice as such democratic and collective notions may be, Attoh ultimately advocates an approach able to make use of and contest the woes of democratic management, a strategy made possible by the aforementioned "capaciousness" of the concept. "Within the radical openness of the right to the

113

city concept," Attoh (2011: 677) states, "the right to the city can equally be a right to collective power and a right against unjust collective decisions."

Democratic management of the surplus, tempered with the concerns of minorities, would require broad democratic participation, a notion well understood by Joan Clos of UN-HABITAT and others operating in the realm of practice. Clos used the concept of the right to the city to bolster political participation during his tenure as mayor of Barcelona (*Social and Human Sciences Newsletter* 2004). The formulation of the *Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City* shows similar concern for collective voice (Wigle and Zárate 2010).[55] Far more important than participation in the construction of this charter, however, is the participation the charter advocates. The third of the charter's six "key principles" calls for a "politically active and socially responsible city," realized through direct democracy and citizen participation "at the highest levels of decision-making" (Wigle and Zárate 2010). In detailing the meaning and application of the right to the city in Brazil, Fernandes (2007: 208) posits a similar notion of participation, which he equates with "taking direct part in the management of cities". The Brazilian context is somewhat unique, as the 'right to the city' is a part of the Federal Constitution of 1988, though it is also perhaps emblematic of greater Latin American political trends (Fernandes 2007). What is most important about the Brazilian constitution and the accompanying 'City Statute' (aimed at the clarification and extension of the right to the city in Brazil) is their commitment to greater participation, which Fernandes considers essential (Fernandes 2007).

Equally important in Fernandes's work is the renegotiation of state authority. Fernandes (2007) argues that some power should be shifted from the national to the local level and that

---

[55] Enthusiastic support of this movement must be tempered by the reality that only 3,500 citizens participated, in a city of over nineteen million (Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook, 2011).

inter-governmental relations should be considerably strengthened. This scalar renegotiation is echoed in the work of many advocates of a right to the city (Purcell 2002; 2003; Parnell and Pieterse 2010). What is common to these authors is their insistence on a sub-national focus, at the city or "city-regional" scale. For Parnell and Pieterse (2010: 150), the city-regional level is crucial, as the level of urban management they see as necessary for realizing a right to the city is "rarely a national competency, but nor is it just the purview of local government." In order to adequately address the concerns of urban poverty and resource management, according to these authors, the state must be rescaled to the city-regional level and contend with what Fernandes (2007) calls the "metropolitan question". These authors thus seek to match greater democratic participation with greater regional and metropolitan authority, a move that would place greater resources in the hands of those struggling for a right to the city in particular metropolitan contexts.

Framing the right to the city as a struggle is one of the most potent and useful conceptualizations this literature provides. Mitchell's (2003b) work on struggles over urban public space is exemplary in this regard, as he explains that rights are never guaranteed in the abstract, but must be constantly won through political contest. Lefebvre (1996: 154) also speaks of a struggle to realize the right to the city, a struggle in which "Only groups, social classes and class factions capable of revolutionary initiative can take over and realize to fruition solutions to urban problems". For Lefebvre (1996: 158), not just any group is capable of realizing the change required, however: "Only the working class can become the agent, the social carrier or support of this realization". Harvey (2012) reserves the same revolutionary function for the working class, and also explains that Lefebvre's invocation of the revolutionary proletariat in *The Right to the City* should be seen as a bold statement directed toward orthodox Marxists of his time.

Lefebvre's casts his revolutionary workers as part of an urban movement, Harvey explains, as a way of indicating the increasingly urban character of society writ large and the relevance of cities to emancipatory politics.

Though Marcuse (2009) agrees that the right to the city should be understood as a struggle, he takes issue with Lefebvre's organization of forces. "Clearly," he states, "the view that it will be the proletariat that, as a single class, leads the struggle with the aid of some intellectuals is outdated" (Marcuse 2009: 192). Instead, Marcuse (2009: 192, original emphasis) advocates the formation of "*social blocs, à la* Gramsci," which may be comprised of various coalitions, alliances, movements, networks and other organizational forms. Importantly, it is not the nature of these groups that concerns Marcuse, but the force against which they set themselves. "The argument here is that there is a convergence of all groups, coalitions, assemblies around a common set of objectives, which see capitalism as the common enemy and the right to the city as their common cause" (Marcuse 2009: 192). What Marcuse's delineation of forces thus illustrates is that though groups may have different agendas and quite divergent understandings of the right to the city, their recognition of capitalism as a common enemy allows them to struggle cooperatively. Capitalism here is understood to be the driving force behind the production of the vast inequalities of the contemporary metropolis, including edge cities. Fighting to unseat the power of capital to control this process is what, for Marcuse, could unify these disparate groups.

One final area of theoretical and practical import is the struggle for difference and its place in urban space that right to the city proponents advocate. Mitchell (2003b: 18, original emphasis) argues that the city can be understood as "the place where difference *lives*." Cities, for Mitchell, are places where different sorts of people are able to encounter each other, where

116

heterogeneity thrives as a result of a struggle to gain the right of different people to inhabit the city. "Out of this struggle," Mitchell (2003b: 18) explains, "the city as a work—as an *ouvre*, as a collective if not singular project—emerges, and new modes of living, new modes of inhabiting, are invented." For Nagle (2009) also, the right to the city provides a banner under which the celebration of diversity and difference in the city can be made manifest, and under which previous understandings of community and belonging may be combated. Nagle illustrates the ways in which festivals and temporary occupations of public space in Belfast by marginalized groups can make such groups visible, using space to commit ideological violence to previous conceptions of community. For both of these authors, the right of different people to be present in and to inhabit the city in new and different ways is one important element of the right to the city.

The right to the city certainly has some deficiencies to go along with its strengths. One area of concern is the way that democratic participation, or more specifically, the extension of the membership of the political community, has been theorized. Participation is one of the areas where the theoretical right to the city has been practically realized, and is thus a crucially important component of the concept. Formulating and implementing participation, however, is not an easy task. For some authors, one of the conduits through which participation might be negotiated is citizenship (Purcell 2002; 2003; Dikeç and Gilbert 2002). Purcell (2003:565) advocates a renegotiation of citizenship, and argues that the nation state "need not be the political community to which citizenship is attached, and one need not be loyal to only one political community." Thus for Purcell, the right to the city would entail reconfiguring citizenship to be based on inhabitation of a city. Though Purcell's attempt to include immigrants in the decisions of cities and to transgress national citizenship is interesting, his citizenship unfortunately remains

tied to territory (which comes dangerously close to reification of a territorially static understanding of "the urban") and to inhabitance (which allows Purcell to entirely neglect any semblance of the city as 'oeuvre', according to Mitchell and Villanueva (2009)). Dikeç and Gilbert (2002) also discuss urban citizenship, though they subtly avoid Purcell's territorial dependence. In their formulation, the right to the city is also a recognition that "the urban is not simply limited to the boundaries of a city, but also includes the social system of production. Hence the right to the city is a claim for the recognition of the urban as the (re)producer of social relations of power, and the right to participation in it" (Dikeç and Gilbert 2002: 65). Even in the more nuanced conception of Dikeç and Gilbert, however, citizenship is a frustrating vehicle for realizing a right to the city. If greater participation is the goal, a fundamental reassessment of the political community is indeed warranted, though the redrawn boundaries of citizenship offered thus far by right to the city theorists leave much to be desired.

The most crucial problem with the right to the city, however, is less about solutions, as with citizenship, and all about the problem: the city itself. Much of the right to the city literature, from Lefebvre on down, is built upon a certain idea of 'the city.' The work of setting goals for movements and finding new ways to push the right to the city theory has largely been based on this outdated imaginary, wherein the central city, the historic downtown, remains the only seat of power in the metropolitan region. Theorists working on the right to the city have left Lefebvre's idea of the city (heavily influenced by Lefebvre's observations of mid- to late twentieth century Paris) largely unexamined. Certainly, contemporary American cities differ greatly from the 'City of Light' roughly fifty years prior. While much of the important economic and social activity of the metropolis has abandoned central cities for their suburbs, the goals and demands of many right to the city movements and theories have not kept pace with these changes. Indeed, one of

118

the more prominent features of the right to the city literature is 'centrality,' a concept that more often than not evokes a 'Chicago school' vision of a central city with concentric zones of activity. Though CBDs in U.S. cities remain the predominant economic nodes in metropolitan systems (Greene 2008), the contemporary American metropolis has been fundamentally reorganized and bears precious little resemblance to either the zone models of the Chicago school or the traditional city Lefebvre understood to be breaking up in the final decades of his life. Not only have cities become diffuse in form (Dear and Flusty 1998), but also in function.[56] Edge cities are important components of the differentially advantageous (or valuable) spaces of the American city, in a complex cartography that Harvey (1973) describes as a systematic redistribution of income. To demand a right to central cities, then, is to neglect a substantial portion of what edge cities insist the metropolis has now become. Recognition of the metropolitan question, the city-region and the primacy of local government are three of the more important theoretical advancements made in the right to the city literature toward its object of study and struggle. Indeed, this reconsideration of the metropolis (or city-region) is a substantial move toward continued relevance for this body of work. If the right to the city is to remain an effective organizing banner and potent critical theory, it must continue to be remade in this way to fit its object of struggle.

The Right to edge city

Elucidations of metropolitan reorganization evidenced by the emergence of edge cities (as discussed in this chapter and in chapter one) pose problems beyond the reach of a right to the city bent on changing a city that no longer exists. The right to the city, if it is to be politically useful in an American context, must engage the theoretical and material shift "from Chicago to

---

[56] Even edge cities differ greatly in primary function, as Bingham et al. (1997) illustrate.

LA" (Dear and Flusty 1998), seeing the American metropolis not as an easily digested set of concentric zones but as a sprawling, multi-nucleated bonanza heaving with contest and contradiction.

Neither Garreau's ardent edge city boosterism nor Dear and Flusty's postmodern party favor of concepts should not be swallowed whole, however. A theoretically informed right to edge city would assess its field of study and struggle in light of arguments made about 'the urban.' Lefebvre (1996: 126) argued that contemporary urban society was made possible "by the breakup of what we still call 'the city.'" Indeed Garreau's (1991) book and years of subsequent studies of edge cities proceed from the position that a new way of understanding the city is afoot. In the sense that Lefebvre (1996: 128) describes, however, edge city can be understood as just one expression of the urbanization of society as a whole, or just one wrinkle in the greater "urban fabric". Nevertheless, to ignore the material condition and situation of edge city would be a mistake. Edge cities are both materially different and socially and economically significant metropolitan expressions of capitalist urbanization marked by exploitation, exclusion and alienation. Theorizing a right to edge city thus requires attention to the specific material contexts (from the local to the metropolitan and even the global) in which edge cities are embedded and the degree to which they are part of a larger urban society. In this section I will draw from the case of Oak Brook to sketch an outline for how the right to edge city might be considered in thought and practice.

Oak Brook's particular geography makes several things perfectly clear about edge cities and their relationship to their broader metropolitan regions. For one, Oak Brook's residential and commuting populations illustrate the incredible population imbalance characteristic of edge cities, as discussed in chapters two and three. While residents are able to exercise a great deal of

control over politics and acceptable practices, commuters generally have very little voice in the village. Oak Brook's residents are able, by virtue of their exclusive access to private residential property, to vote in municipal elections, take part in the Oak Brook Caucus (where candidates for municipal office are debated and chosen) and make their voices heard in public affairs. Through these and other means, residents have been able to make the village after their hearts' desire.[57] Oak Brook's residents, as the evidence presented in preceding chapters shows, already have a right to their edge city.

Residents are partially joined in this privileged position by some of Oak Brook's professionals. Oak Brook's businesses are often referred to as 'corporate residents' by their representatives and Village officials, and 'white collar' employees at many of these companies have access to the village in ways that many of their lower-tier colleagues do not. Managers and executives of large companies can (and do) become involved in the Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce, for instance, an organization that has become a powerful voice in Oak Brook's political scene in recent years. Village officials have listened increasingly carefully to the concerns of Oak Brook's 'business community' in recent years, and the threat of vacant properties has made the Village more receptive to input from its 'corporate residents' (as discussed in chapter four). To a certain extent, then, the upper tiers of Oak Brook's businesses also already have a right to edge city.

Those already exercising rights to edge city are easier to see and to name, by and large, than those who do not have such rights. Notably, there are a great many workers in Oak Brook, most of whom cannot be said to have much of a right to edge city. Those who work for a wage in

---

[57] This phrase is borrowed from Harvey (2012: 4), who writes: "The right to the city is, therefore, far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts' desire." Harvey has himself borrowed the phrase from Robert Park, a founding member of the "Chicago School" of human ecology discussed above and in chapter one. There is, of course, a notable irony in a founder of the Chicago school providing an important rallying cry for the right to the city movement.

the village are expected to go home at night someplace else. They are not easily able to participate in public life in the village, as there are few public gathering places open to non-residents and they cannot vote in municipal elections (not that many would want to). These people have an important role in making Oak Brook what it is, but very little say in how this work is done and very tightly prescribed ways of experiencing or using the village when their work is complete (these ways largely revolve around consumption). As workers they are alienated and exploited, and if they choose to experience Oak Brook as consumers a portion of their wages are expropriated by the Village through taxation. Wage workers and consumers, as non-residents, have little in the way of a discernible right to edge city when compared to residents and managerial elites.

Importantly, people in other parts of metropolitan Chicago have little or no right to Oak Brook, though most have some role to play in its production. Oak Brook could not have grown as it has without O'Hare and Midway airports and the state and interstate highways that pass nearby or through the village, yet the governing bodies of these institutions and the workers that make them have little or no say in how things are done in Oak Brook. Businesses in Oak Brook are able to pull from an enormous pool of laborers[58] across greater Chicago in part because of unemployment and underemployment elsewhere in the metropolis, yet none of Chicago's unemployed were consulted when the Village drew up plans for its beautification project along 22nd Street or began talks with PACE officials about coordinating public transportation lines. Though Oak Brook requires both the structural problems and inequalities of greater Chicago and the advantages of its physical, political and social infrastructures, the overwhelming majority of Chicagoans have precious little right to Oak Brook.

---

[58] Many low wage workers, I was told by several local authorities, commute long distances from the Southside of Chicago, patching together inconvenient an inefficient public transportation lines to make the journey to work every day.

Such inequality of voice in edge city democracy makes Purcell's (2003) conception of the right to the city realized through citizenship appear somewhat attractive. Implementing anything like Purcell's notion of citizenship, however, would be fraught with problems. Using Los Angeles as an example, Purcell describes a citizenship able to incorporate even those who stand to be impacted at a distance by the political economic forces of global cities, offering an extremely broad basis for participation. Thus, citizens of Los Angeles would have a say in the Oaxacan land reform decisions of the Mexican federal government, as potential migration to Los Angeles may be affected by such decisions (Purcell 2003). This conception would create an absolute mess of political implications, as decisions made anywhere could potentially be said to affect livelihoods everywhere else on the globe, thus making all political decisions on earth potentially subject to participation by all human beings, a political program so hopelessly broad and awkwardly conceived as to be completely useless and wholly uninspiring. In the case of Oak Brook, this could be a useful conception only if the entirety of the metropolitan region could be fused together into a common citizenry, though it would certainly be difficult to delineate the boundaries of such an entity as metropolitan Chicago.[59] Theoretically, such citizenship would entail the development of a metropolitan government structure along the lines of what Fernandes (2007) has called for. Creating a governmental framework under which this participation might be fostered requires not a "new regionalism" approach (in which local governments are encouraged to participate voluntarily, but retain local autonomy), but rather something along the lines of what Norris et al. (2009) refer to as a more traditional metropolitan structure (which favors a strong governmental structure). Further, if Harvey's (2008) notion of the right to the city as democratic management of the surplus is used, the right to edge city would (in tandem with

---

[59] The CMSA, for example, would not come close to incorporating all of those whose lives are affected by the political economy of Chicagoland.

metropolitan democracy) allow all metropolitan residents a voice in the investment/disposal of the surplus, including that produced in and expropriated by Oak Brook.

If such a citizenship could be crafted, however, it would largely destroy the appeal of edge cities for the businesses and residents that call them home. Oak Brook's appeal for both communities lies partly in the realm of taxation.[60] As discussed above and in chapter one, the Village of Oak Brook levies no property tax, and the rates for sales and other taxes faced by businesses and corporations remain substantially lower in Oak Brook than in Chicago, saving property owners and business operators a great deal of money. If all of Chicago's municipalities were united and their tax policies unified, this advantage would disappear. Moreover, if Oak Brook were forced to share its sales tax revenue with its neighbors, or (God forbid) the rest of metropolitan Chicago, the Village's budget would shrivel and its residents would be forced to pay property taxes or move. Steps in this direction have actually been proposed locally and in the Illinois legislature, I was told by former Village President Karen Bushy, though they were easily defeated (Interview with Karen Bushy, 6/21/2011). Some administrators from neighboring municipalities, some fifteen years ago, suggested that the state consider legislation that would force Oak Brook to share its sales tax revenue with its less fortunate neighbors, Bushy explained. Bushy and her staff worked to convince the state that this would be foolish by explaining that the percentage of the sales tax generated in Oak Brook that was given back to the Village was actually quite small (one cent of every dollar spent in Oak Brook when Bushy was in office), and that out of this budget the Village was responsible to maintain the infrastructure and aesthetics[61]

---

[60] Other exclusionary considerations (such as prestige, exclusivity and perceived safety of self and property) also impact Oak Brook's residential attractiveness, as discussed in chapters two and three.

[61] At the time of my research, the Village was engaged in multiple transportation infrastructure projects, such as the widening of 22nd Street and the "I-88/22nd Street bridge project," a joint effort to which the Village must paid over $1.6 million in 2011 alone (Village of Oak Brook, 2011). The Village also budgeted roughly $400,000 for repairs and improvements on several municipal buildings and over $3 million for maintenance and improvements to the Village's water system. Oak Brook has also been quite successful in securing external funds. In 2010, Oak Brook

that enabled the generation of a large portion of the state's revenues (five cents of every dollar went to the state at this time). Once Bushy declared that she and the Village would be happy to put houses where the mall stood if they were forced to share their revenues, state legislators apparently acquiesced (Interview with Karen Bushy, 6/21/2011).

This is not to say that greater participation in the decision making processes of Oak Brook is totally out of the question. DuPage County and the State of Illinois certainly have some role to play, as the episode surrounding the IBLP (discussed in chapter three) and the annexation/de-annexation of Utopian properties (discussed in chapter two) illustrate. The union of Oak Brook and Oakbrook Terrace in the Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce has recently resulted in some leveling of Oak Brook's bastions of exclusivity, such as the sign ordinance, the selectivity with regard to new commercial enterprises and the rigidity of opinion regarding sidewalks (as discussed in chapters three and four). Though these changes appear minute, they have already had significant impacts on the visual landscapes of the village and the character of its commuting population especially. These changes threaten to erode the exclusivity generally associated with Oak Brook in popular perceptions. As this understanding of place shifts, new and unforeseen avenues for political change may become apparent. This is where those who would fight for the right to edge city must assert themselves, making their demands known and felt in the spaces of possibility created by changes in the political economy of edge cities, recognizing and taking advantage of these brief but potent moments. As Mitchell (2003b) has shown, every right to the city is the product of such political struggle.

---

was awarded a grant in excess of $550,000 for a beautification project along 22nd Street from the Illinois Department of Transportation (part of a nearly $90 million in federal money given out as grants by this agency in 2010). The Village also received a $1 million grant from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) under its new "Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ).

Asserting the right to edge city is fundamentally about centrality, a multi-faceted concept of vital importance to much of the right to the city's work and thought. As Purcell (2003) explains, the idea of centrality in Lefebvre's right to the city was both literal, concerning itself with presence in and inhabitation of physical city centers, and metaphorical, in the sense of being central to decision-making in local, regional and global processes now decidedly urbanized. Purcell attempts to formulate a program for centrality in the second, metaphorical sense by way of citizenship, as discussed above. Centrality in the first, literal sense, then, is about demanding access to physically central spaces in edge city (which must themselves be seen as 'central' to metropolitan economies). In Oak Brook, as in many edge cities, public space is incredibly scarce. Oak Brook has no 'downtown,' as many of my interviewees pointed out time and again.[62] The few gathering places in Oak Brook, such as Oakbrook Center, are privately owned, maintained and guarded. The current push for sidewalks by the Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce and some Village officials can perhaps be understood as a small step in this direction. If nothing else, sidewalks would make it significantly easier for commuters to get from the commercial area along 22nd Street to the few public properties in the village (the Oak Brook Public Library and the Butler Government Center, for instance).

Finally, if the right to edge city as a "cry and a demand" is to be realized, the ultimate bearers or possessors of this right must be named. In seeking to define this group, it is useful to return to Marcuse's (2009) separation of "cry" and "demand" in considering the right to the city. The demand, Marcuse (2009: 190) explains, "comes from those directly in want, directly oppressed, those for whom even their most immediate needs are not fulfilled: the homeless, the hungry, the imprisoned, the persecuted on gender, religious, racial grounds". The cry, then,

---

[62] This lack of a central gathering place evoked mixed feelings from residents in my interviews. While some envied the quaint river walks and bistros of neighboring suburbs, others described feeling safer because no such gathering places existed.

comes from "the aspiration of those superficially integrated into the system and sharing in its material benefits, but constrained in their opportunities for creative activity, oppressed in their social relationships, guilty perhaps for an undeserved prosperity, unfulfilled in their lives' hopes" (Marcuse 2009: 190). Marcuse, like Attoh (2011), is clear about the fact that the right to the city is not a singular right but a collection of rights that are often contradictory. Where rights to the city conflict, both of these authors contend, choices must be made. For Marcuse, the right to the city for the first group, "the directly oppressed" trumps that for the "alienated."

Marcuse (2009) also insists that we not concern ourselves with the right to the city for those who already have it, but instead for those who do not. This is a crucial component in formulating a right to edge city. Oak Brook's residents, for example, are already in possession of substantial rights to edge city. They are able to participate in the definition and coding of urban spaces and their attendant legal practices (through zoning), make claims on and manage a portion of the social surplus (through the expropriation of tax revenues) and, crucially, inhabit edge city through residence. According to Marcuse, then, it is with the right to edge city for its other producers and users with which we must concern ourselves. Many (perhaps most) of these belong to Marcuse's "alienated" rather than "directly oppressed," but this should not be seen as an obstacle in seeking to fight for their right to edge city. Indeed, the small but powerful changes discussed above that are now afoot or are now brewing in Oak Brook have their roots in the work of powerful individuals who are decidedly not "directly oppressed." Such examples point to exactly what Marcuse calls for, a coalition of the deprived and the discontented who will struggle together to claim a right to the city. In edge city, this coalition may come to include residents and commuters, officials and organizers, the discontented and the directly oppressed.

Conclusion

Addressing the exploitative, alienating and exclusionary dimensions of edge cities begins with the recognition that edge cities are part of a larger urban fabric. They are intimately connected to their regional contexts (especially through transportation networks, including airports), though they often have strong ties to national and international economies as well. In many ways, edge cities can be understood as just one part of an increasingly urban global society under contemporary capitalism. In Oak Brook, commercial, political and social ties to Chicago and beyond are apparent in many different ways, as are the myriad manifestations of alienation, exploitation and exclusion to which capitalist urbanization gives rise. Efforts to combat these (such as those discussed in chapters three and four), though they have at times enjoyed some success, have been undertaken in relative isolation from one another. In this chapter I have argued that the right to the city framework developed by theorists and activists in many different national contexts offer a productive way to collect, organize and support such struggles in and over edge cities. Moreover, this framework offers opportunities to link struggles over edge cities with other urban contests in a collective fight for a right to a "renewed urban life" (Lefebvre 1996: 158) of which edge cities are only a part.

To understand an edge city as an 'ouvre', a work, is to see it as the product of many laborers working collectively (however unconsciously). In Oak Brook, this work is undertaken by many kinds of people who perform very different roles. Jockeys and janitors, shelf stockers and saloniers, trainers, cops, crooks, and kids all put their creative energies together to make Oak Brook what it is. Flight attendants, downtown taxi drivers, the unemployed and the homeless of greater Chicago also have roles to play in making Oak Brook, though their contributions are often visible only beneath the surface. Only a select few of these people, however, have much of

a say in how these labors are undertaken or how the proceeds are divided. Adopting the perspective of the right to the city offers a chance to understand who has the right to make the city in their preferred manner, after their hearts' desire, and consequently who does not. Moreover, the right to edge city is about more than the right to centrality in Oak Brook (though this is a crucial piece). Instead, demanding the right to Oak Brook must be a part of demanding the right to Chicago. Edge cities, such a movement should assert, are but one prominent expression of the spatial whole of contemporary capitalist urbanization, and it is the right to the whole that such a movement should seek to claim.

CONCLUSION: A NEW (FRONT)IER

Oak Brook is an edge city, arguably the truest edge city in metropolitan Chicago. As such, Oak Brook's story has implications for how edge cities are understood. I began this thesis with a curiosity about Oak Brook. With time and research, this curiosity developed into an inquiry aimed at understanding life in edge cities. Given the claims and conclusions of past research on edge cities, I developed research questions that dealt with the exploitative and exclusionary dimensions of edge cities. I also endeavored to understand whether Garreau's (1991) belief that edge cities are an unprecedented change in urbanization, a 'new frontier' in city-building is accurate, or whether Walker (1994) is correct to see edge cities as nothing new at all, or at most as the haggard face of capitalist urbanization with naught but a heavy layer of new makeup. In the preceding chapters, I have investigated these questions with the aid of several robust bodies of work from within and beyond urban geography. In this concluding chapter, I will connect the arguments I have made thus far and assess their ability to answer the research questions with which I began.

To be an edge city, a place must be a metropolitan employment center. It must be home to a great many jobs, especially office jobs. Oak Brook is home to several large corporations (such as McDonald's and Ace Hardware) and to many smaller operations, and is one of the four edge cities commonly noted as large employment nodes in the Chicago region (Garreau 1994; Greene 1997, McMillen and McDaniel 1998; Lang 2003). This huge commercial presence must be matched by a small residential population, as is evident in Oak Brook. Edge cities must also be relatively new (post 1960 or so), and be locally recognized as singular places. This last requirement is intended to mediate against the amorphous form of edge cities, as they often develop without regard to municipal or other structures. In Oak Brook, such a defense is not

necessary, as a sturdy municipal government preceded (by just a few years) most commercial and residential development.

Understanding edge cities requires seeing them in a larger context, however. Edge cities are important to the lives of people all over their metropolises, and to metropolitan economies as well. Lang (2003), Greene (2008) and others illustrate the necessity of seeing edge cities within their metropolitan contexts. There are also other reasons to take a broader view. Walker (1994), Beauregard (1995), Marcuse (1997) and others explain that edge cities should be seen as part of larger processes of capitalist urbanization, an insight that pushes the necessary analytical scale far beyond the metropolis. Approaching edge cities in this way brings other characteristics of the edge city form to light. Edge cities are the product of capital accumulation, as they and other built environments serve to soak up surpluses won through the exploitation of productive labor (Walker 1977; Harvey 2008). They are also an important part of further capital accumulation, as their particular geographies are crafted with an eye toward returns on investment and the production of surplus value. In these roles (as product and facilitator of capital accumulation), edge cities are inextricably bound to processes of exploitation.

At one level, this is true of all flavors of capitalist urbanization, as capital accumulation requires the exploitation of labor power (Harvey 2006). Edge cities add their own ingredients to the mix, however. In Oak Brook, an especially apparent face of this exploitation is the lack of a municipal property tax, which allows residents to have their fine municipal services at a very low cost compared to the residents of neighboring municipalities. Sales taxes paid by the tens of thousands of shoppers,[63] workers and others who visit Oak Brook every day, in addition to the

---

[63] Sales tax revenue accounted for nearly 35% of the Village's 2012 budget, as discussed in chapter two (Neimeyer and Dangles 2012).

utility taxes and other fees paid by 'corporate residents' (and residents themselves) are expropriated from many to support few.

In fact, this type of exploitation is only possible because the few remain few, a necessity cited time and again in struggles over the size of Oak Brook's residential population. Maintaining this exploitation thus requires exclusion in Oak Brook. The lucrative tax arrangement that has become the envy of Oak Brook's neighbors is maintained by keeping the residential population small, and by limiting access to Oak Brook's financial and other resources (as was argued in the case of the Oak Brook Public Library in chapter three). The motivations for exclusion in Oak Brook's history have not been solely financial, however. As I argued in chapter three, struggles for inclusion in Oak Brook's 'public' have been challenged by racial and class-based discrimination, and by attempts to limit access to the public realm (democratic participation, especially the right to vote).

Exclusion and exploitation are close companions in Oak Brook. Though there are times when each has its own motivations and logics, there are also times when each supports the other, as is the case when the exploitation of metropolitan sales tax revenues is made possible by exclusionary practices in the residential realm. Alienation, I argued in chapter five, is another close companion, as capitalism produces lives that are splintered and fragmentary, and people who are separated from each other and from the products of their labors (Ollman 1976). The fact that edge cities necessarily thrive on the labor of non-residents is enough to display such alienation at work. Every day, people go to work in Oak Brook, perform their duties, and go home to some other place, leaving the products of their labors behind in an edge city to which they have no right. Struggling for a right to edge city, as I argued in chapter five, brings this reality harshly into focus. Edge cities are built upon and maintained by these interrelated

processes of alienation, exploitation and exclusion, as many authors have argued (Beauregard 1995; Marcuse 1997). The particular ways that these processes find expression in Oak Brook, as well as their pervasiveness, suggest that edge cities should be considered an especially alienating, exclusionary and exploitative urban form.

The sole remaining question is that which I posed at the outset of chapter one: are edge cities the new frontier? Are we to understand edge cities as the greatest advance in urbanism since the civil war, as Garreau suggests? As to whether students of urban geography should hail edge city the urban messiah, the answer is decidedly no, for all the reasons mentioned above and more. As to whether edge cities are the new frontier, the answer is more complex. Certainly, exclusion is not new, nor are exclusionary suburbs. Exploitation and alienation are certainly not new, and histories of the suburbanization of capitalist production show that this is also now much older than Garreau and his followers let on (Walker 1977; 1978; Lewis and Walker 2001). Walker (1994) is thus on solid ground when he claims that edge cities are but one node in the network of the "suburban solution" (1977), or one fold in Lefebvre's (1996) "urban fabric".

There is also a case to be made for seeing edge cities as new, however. As Marcuse (1997) suggests, there are "specific characteristics" that edge cities exhibit, specific ways in which the processes described above take shape and do their work. Edge cities, Barnett (2002) reminds us, are not "real cities," by which he means traditional cities. They have small residential populations, they do not always have municipal governments or even agreed-upon names, and they are rarely well served by public transportation. They sprout up in fields and pastures, or in sleepy, forgotten commuter suburbs, usually in response to and in tandem with a developing highway network. Importantly, they do not stand alone. They are called edge cities, after all, because they parasitically grow at the edges of existing metropolises. Acknowledging

133

that edge cities put a new face on the time-honored exploitation, exclusion and alienation of capitalist urbanization can hardly be avoided. Accounting for this difference in research and in political practice is an important step for both academics and activists who seek to understand and contend with this and other incarnations of contemporary urban capitalism.

Edge cities are thus unique and different, even while they are nothing new. They offer new ways to exploit and exclude the alienated, atomic American individual (Mitchell 2005), though these processes have long urban lineages. I wish to posit that edge cities are worth studying for exactly this reason: they offer at once a laboratory for examining the ongoing processes of the "suburban solution" and a Petri dish for monitoring its new expressions and manifestations. Moreover, edge cities like Oak Brook are fertile ground for asserting a right to a different urban future. Garreau (1991) calls edge cities the "frontier", a concept that evokes the imagery of manifest destiny, conquest and empire. What I wish this thesis to offer in response is a framing of edge cities as a 'front,' a literal and metaphoric boundary line where those who would refuse to be so conquered may gather and assert their collective "right to urban life" (Lefebvre 1996).

REFERENCES

Primary:
Interview with anonymous commuter, 6/14/2011

Interview with anonymous commuter, 7/6/2011

Interview with anonymous official, 7/7/2011

Interview with anonymous resident, 6/7/2011

Interview with Jeremy Alderson and Dave Pearson, 6/16/2011

Interview with John Baar, Walter Barber, George Kouba, Harry Peters, Robert Sanford and Charles Shemely, 6/9/2011

Interview with Joanne Bienduga, 6/16/2011

Interview with Cathy Bushman, 7/12/2011

Interview with Karen Bushy, 6/17/2011; 6/21/2011

Interview with Robert Kallien, 6/3/2011

Interview with Jodie Koslow-Martin, 6/14/2011

Interview with Jim Lazzarini, 6/10/2011

Interview with Eve Lee, 6/15/2011

Interview with Kathy Maher, 6/9/2011

Interview with Tracy Mulqueen, 6/27/2011

Interview with David Neimeyer, 6/6/2011

Interview with Linda Trombetta, 6/17/2011

Interview with Leo Tubon, 6/6/2011

Interview with Dan Wagner, 6/28/2011

Secondary:

Ahmed-Ullah, N., 1999a, Oak Brook moves toward construction of new library. *Daily Herald*, February 24, p. 1/4.

------------, 1999b, Firm hired to find fat in Oak Brook library plan for $5.3 million. *Daily Herald*, July 15, p. 1/4.

Anderson, M., 2010, The Discursive regime of the "American dream" and the new suburban frontier: The case of Kendall County, Illinois. *Urban Geography*, Vol. 31, 1080-1099.

Anderson, N., and Bogart, W., 2001, The structure of sprawl: identifying and characterizing employment centers in polycentric metropolitan areas. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 60, 147-169.

------------, 2004, Intrametropolitan trade: understanding the interdependency of the central-city and edge cities. *The Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy*. Vol. 34, 13-25.

Arvidson, E., 1999, Los Angeles, or, taking the risk of class in postmodern urban theory. *Economic Geography*, Vol. 75, 134-156.

Associated Press, 1981, Black man, wife get damages for discrimination. *Alton Telegraph*, July 23, p. B-7.

------------, 1982, Homeowner group must pay up in race bias case: judge. *Alton Telegraph*, November 27, p. A-8.

Attig, N., 2007, Excess control and the risk of corporate expropriation: Canadian evidence. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Services*, Vol. 24, 94-106.

Attoh, K., 2011, What *kind* of right is the right to the city? *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 35, 669-685.

Baeb, E., 2010, New signage law helps Oak Brook land big tenant. *ChicagoRealEstateDaily.com*, February 17, http://www.chicagorealestatedaily.com/article/20100217/CRED03/200037124/new-signage-law-helps-oak-brook-land-big-tenant, Accessed 3/17/2012.

Baerwald, T., 1978, The emergence of a new downtown. *Geographical Review*, Vol. 68, 308-318.

Barnett, J., 2002, Turning edge cities into real cities. *Planning*, Vol. 68, 10-13.

Bartlett, D., Draine, E., and Soot, S., 2007 [1975], A re-examination of urban economic rent: the Chicago case. *Bulletin of the Illinois Geographical Society*, Vol. 49, 1-16.

Barton, R., 1965, Zoning proposal 'wholly unsuited'. *The Doings*, January 1.

------------, 1990, *Notes on the History of Oak Brook*. Gallatin Gateway, MT: Richard A. Barton.

Beatty, A., 1996, Religious group withdraws Oak Brook expansion plan. *Daily Herald*, April 4, p. 1/1.

Beauregard, R., 1995, Edge cities: peripheralizing the center. *Urban Geography*, Vol. 16, 708-721.

Bingham, R., and Kimble, D., 1995, The industrial composition of edge cities and downtowns: The new urban reality. *Economic Development Quarterly*, Vol. 9, 259-272.

------------, Bowen, W., Amara, Y., Bachelor, L., Dockery, J., Dustin, J., Kimble, D., Maraffa, T., McKee, D., Schwirian, K., Sommers, G., and Stafford, H., 1997, *Beyond Edge Cities*. New York, NY: Garland Publishing.

Buursma, B., 1990a, Michael Butler, from polo field to chapter 11. *Chicago Tribune*. September 26.

------------, 1990b, Money woes strip the mystery from Michael Butler. *Chicago Tribune*. October 28.

Caldeira, T., 1999, Fortified enclaves: the new urban segregation. In S. Low, editor, *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 83-107.

Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook, 2011, Mexico. Retrieved April 14, 2011 from the Central Intelligence Agency Web site at https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mx.html

Chapek, E., 1985, Oak Brook. In R. Thompson, editor, *DuPage Roots*. Wheaton, IL: DuPage County Historical Society.

Cochrane, A., 1998, Illusions of power: interviewing local elites. *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 30, 2121-2132.

Commercial Revitalization, 2011, Village of Oak Brook. Available online at: http://www.oak-brook.org/documents/2011_Commercia_Revitalization_Plan_Power%20Point_and_Matrix.pdf. Constable, B., 2009, Choice words for a library. *Daily Herald*, October 1, p. 1/1.

Crang, M., 2002, Qualitative methods: the new orthodoxy? *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 26, 647-655.

Cubbage, A., 1981, Ruling to aid blacks moving to suburbs. *Daily Herald*, July 24, p. 1/3.

Davis, M., 1990, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. London, UK: Verso.

Dear, M., 2005, Comparative urbanism. *Urban Geography*, Vol. 26, 247-251.

------------, and Dahmann, N., 2008, Urban politics and the Los Angeles school of urbanism. *Urban Affairs Review*, Vol. 44, 266-279.

------------, and Flusty, S., 1997, The iron lotus: Los Angeles and postmodern urbanism. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*. Vol. 551, 151-163.

------------, and ------------, 1998, Postmodern urbanism. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 88, 50-72.

Dikeç, M., and Gilbert, L., 2002, Right to the city: Homage or a new societal ethics?. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, Vol. 13, 58-74.

Ding, C., and Bingham, R., 2000, Beyond edge cities: job decentralization and urban sprawl. *Urban Affairs Review*, Vol. 35, 837-855.

Dinovitzer, R., Hagan, J., and Levi, R., 2009, Immigration and youthful illegalities in a global edge city. *Social Forces*, Vol. 88, 337-372.

Dunphy, R., 2006, Edge city, just off the interstate: boon or bane? *TR NEWS*, Vol. 244, 20-21.

Dwyer, C., Gilbert, D., and Shah, B., forthcoming, Faith and suburbia: secularisation, modernity and the changing geographies of religion in London's suburbs. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 1-17.

Elder, M., 2002, From small beginnings, Oakbrook now a giant. *Shopping Centers Today*, Issue, October. Accessed 6/21/2011 at http://www.icsc.org/srch/sct/sct1002/page46.php
England, K., 2002, Interviewing elites: cautionary tales about researching women managers in Canada's banking industry. In P. Moss, editor, *Feminist Geography in Practice: Research and Methods*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 200-213.

Featherstone, M., 2004, Automobilities: an introduction. *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 21, 1-24.

Fernandes, E., 2007, Constructing the 'right to the city' in Brazil. *Social and Legal Studies*, Vol. 16, 201-219.

Forstall, R., and Greene, R., 1997, Defining job concentrations: The Los Angeles case. *Urban Geography*, Vol. 18, 705-739.

Furlong, W., 1962, Man with 14 polo fields. *Sports Illustrated*, October 22, 47-50.

Garreau, J., 1991, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*. New York, NY: Doubleday.

------------, 1994, Edge cities in profile. *American Demographics*, Vol. 16, 24-33.

Ghosh, A., and Robertson, P., 2012, Trade and expropriation. *Economic Theory*, Vol. 50, 169-191.

Greene, R., 1997, Chicago's new immigrants, indigenous Poor, and Edge Cities. *The ANNALS of the Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 551, 78-90.

------------, 2008, Urban peripheries as organizers of what remains of the center: examining the evidence from Los Angeles and Chicago. *Urban Geography*, Vol. 29, 138-53.

Grondin, K., 2002, Oak Brook library to open with four times the space. *Daily Herald*, March 8, p. 1/3.

Hackworth, J., 2005, Emergent urban forms, or emergent post-modernisms? A comparison of large U.S. metropolitan areas. *Urban Geography*, Vol. 26, 484-519.

Hardinghaus, M., 2008, The meaning of Protestant-Calvinist imagery in urban America: an interpretation of the city-suburb structure. *Space and Culture*, Vol. 11, 422-435.

Harris, R., and Lewis, R., 1998, Constructing a fault(y) zone: misrepresentations of American cities and suburbs, 1900-1950. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 88, 622-639.

Hart, C., 1993a, Institute development plan raises resident objection. *Daily Herald*, January 15, p. 5/6.

------------, 1993b, Basic Life delays hearing to clear up rumors of plan. *Daily Herald*, February 12, p. 1/3.

------------, 1993c, Institute's delay of hearings a stall tactic, residents say. *Daily Herald*, February 18, p. 1/3.

------------, 1993d, Oak Brook sets final date for religious group's hearing. *Daily Herald*, May 18, p. 1/3.

------------, 1993e, Religious group's letter misleading, residents say. *Daily Herald*, May 26, p. 1/3.

Hartshorn, T., and Muller, P., 1986, *Suburban Business Centers: Employment Implications*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce.

Harvey, D., 1973, *Social Justice and the City*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

------------, 1978, The urban process under capitalism: a framework for analysis. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 2 101-131.

------------, 1989, From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation in urban governance in late capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler*, Vol. 71, 3-17.

------------, 2006 [1982], *The Limits to Capital*. New York, NY: Verso.

------------, 2008, The right to the city. *New Left Review*, Vol. 53, 23-40.

------------, 2009, Is this really the end of neoliberalism? *Counterpunch*, March 13.

------------, 2012, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. New York, NY: Verso.

Henderson, V., and Mitra, A., 1996, The new urban landscape: developers and edge cities. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, Vol. 26, 613-643.

Herod, A., 1999, Reflections on interviewing foreign elites: praxis, positionality, validity, and the cult of the insider. *Geoforum*, Vol. 30, 313-327.

Hodson, J., 1994, Neighbors decry plan to create campus. *Daily Herald*, January 21, p. 1/1.

Hollar, M., 2011, Central cities and suburbs: economic rivals or allies? *Journal of Regional Science*, Vol. 51, 231-252.

Ihlanfeldt, K., 1995, The importance of the central city to the regional and national economy: a review of the arguments and empirical evidence. *Cityscape*, Vol. 1, 125-150.

Inwood, J., and Martin, D., 2008, Whitewash: White privilege and racialized landscapes at the University of Georgia. *Social and Cultural Geography*, Vol. 9, 373-395.

Irazábal, C., 2006, Localizing urban design traditions: gated and edge cities in Curitiba. *Journal of Urban Design*, Vol. 11, 73-96.

Iveson, K., 2007, *Publics and the City*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Jet, 1980, Blacks refused $675,000 home due to bias: judge. November, p. 5.

Kadin, D., 1999, County may condemn land to create Route 83 buffer. *Daily Herald*, June 16, p. 1/5.

Kogan, R., 1996, The aging of Aquarius. *Chicago Tribune*, September 30.

Kunstler, J., 1993, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Kutz, K., 1995, Oak Brook residents protest institute's plan for housing. *Daily Herald*, October 5, p. 1/1.

------------, 1996a, Zoning dispute more than academic. *Daily Herald*, January 8, p. 1/4.

------------, 1996b, Residents seek zoning change to keep institute from growing. *Daily Herald*, May 30, p. 1/4.

Lake, R., 1999, Postmodern urbanism? *Urban Geography*, Vol. 20, 393-395.

------------, 2003, Introduction: the power of culture and the culture of power in urban geography in the 1990s. *Urban Geography*, Vol. 24, 461-464.

Lang, R., 2003, *Edgeless Cities: Exploring the Elusive Metropolis*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press.

------------, and LeFurgy, J., 2003, Edgeless cities: examining the noncentered metropolis. *Housing Policy Debate*, Vol. 14, 427-460.

------------, Sanchez, T., and LeFurgy, J., 2006, Beyond edgeless cities: office geography in the new metropolis. Available at: http://www.mi.vt.edu/uploads/Edgeless%20Cities.pdf. Accessed 8/10/2011.

------------, Sanchez, T., and Oner, A., 2009, Beyond Edge City: office geography in the new metropolis. *Urban Geography*, Vol. 30, 726-55.

Leavy, W., 1982, A $287,675 victory. *Ebony*, February, pp. 27-34.

Lee, B., 2007, "Edge" or "edgeless" cities? Urban spatial structure in U.S. metropolitan areas, 1980-2000. *Journal of Regional Science*, Vol. 47, 479-515.

Lee, W., and Sardovi, C., 2010, Mobster's stash is discovered. *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, online.

Lefebvre, H., 1996 [1968], The Right to the city. In E. Kofman and E. Lebas, editors, *Writings on Cities*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 61-181.

Lewinnek, E., 2010, Mapping Chicago, imagining metropolises: Reconsidering the zonal model of urban growth. *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 36, 197-225.

Lewis, R. and Walker, R., 2001, Beyond the crabgrass frontier: industry and the spread of North American cities, 1850-1950. *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol. 27, 3-19.

Lilleker, D., 2003, Interviewing the political elite: navigating a potential minefield. *Politics*, Vol. 23, 207-214.

Low, S., 2001, The edge and the center: gated communities and the discourse of urban fear. *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 103, 45-58.

Marcuse, P., 1997, The ghetto of exclusion and the fortified enclave: new patterns in the United States. *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 41, 311-326.

------------, 2009, From critical urban theory to the right to the city. *City*, Vol. 13, 185-197.

Martin, D., 2003, Place-framing as place-making: Constituting a neighborhood for organizing and activism. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 93, 730-750.

McEvoy, J., 2006, Elite interviewing in a divided society: lessons from Northern Ireland. *Politics*, Vol. 26, 284-191.

McGovern, P., 1998, San Francisco Bay area edge cities: new roles for planners and the general plan. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, Vol. 17, 246-258.

McKee, D., and McKee, Y., 2001, Edge cities and the viability of metropolitan economies. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 60, 171-184.

------------, and ------------, 2004, Edge cities, urban corridors and beyond. *International Journal of Social Economics*, Vol. 31, 536-543.

McKenzie, E., 1994, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

McMillen, D., 2003, Employment subcenters in Chicago: past, present and future. *Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 27, 2-14.

------------, 2004, Employment densities, spatial autocorrelation, and subcenters in large metropolitan areas. *Journal of Regional Science*, Vol. 44, 225-243.

------------, and Lester, T., 2003, Evolving subcenters: employment and population densities in Chicago, 1970-2020. *Journal of Housing Economics*, Vol. 12, 60-81.

------------, and McDonald, J., 1998, Suburban subcenters and employment density in metropolitan Chicago. *Journal of Urban Economics*, Vol. 43, 157-180.

Michel, D., and Scott, D., 2005, The La Lucia-Umhlanga Ridge as an emerging "edge city". *South African Geographical Journey*, Vol. 87, 104-114.

Mikelbank, B., 2004, A typology of U.S. suburban places. *Housing Policy Debate*, Vol. 15, 935-964.

Mitchell, D., 1993, The end of public space? People's Park, definitions of the public, and democracy. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 85, 108-133.

------------, 1996, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

------------, 2000, *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

------------, 2002, Dead labor and the political economy of landscape: California living, California dying. In K. Anderson, M. Domosh, S. Pile and N. Thrift, editors, *Handbook of Cultural Geography*. London, UK: SAGE Publications, Ltd., 233-248.

------------, 2003a, Cultural landscapes: Just landscapes or landscapes of justice? *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 27, 787-796.

------------, 2003b, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

------------, 2005, The s.u.v. model of citizenship: floating bubbles, buffer zones, and the rise of the "purely atomic" individual. *Political Geography*, Vol. 24, 77-100.

------------, and Heynen, N., 2009. The geography of survival and the right to the city: Speculations on surveillance, legal innovation, and the criminalization of intervention. *Urban Geography*, Vol. 30, 611-632.

------------, and Staeheli, L., 2005, Permitting protest: Parsing the fine geography of dissent in America. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 29, 796-813.

------------, and Villanueva, J., 2009, The Right to the City. In R. Hutchison, editor, *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 667-671.

The New York Times, 1981, Rights groups applaud housing bias ruling. August 2, p. A-21.

The New York Times, 1993, Company news: Georgia Pacific to sell Butler Paper. March 16.

Neimeyer, D., and Dangles, S., 2012, Village of Oak Brook 2012 Budget Summaries. Available online at: http://il-oakbrook.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/Home/View/182. Accessed 5/15/2012.

Nickerson, M., 1996, Oak Brook voters give nod to new library. *Daily Herald*, November 6, p. 1/7.

------------, 1997, Oak Brook tussling over proper use for 'recreational' land. *Daily Herald*, July 22, p. 1/4.

Norris, D., Phares, D., and Zimmerman, T., 2009, Metropolitan government in the United States? Not now…Not likely. In D. Phares, editor, *Governing Metropolitan Regions in the 21ˢᵗ Century*. New York, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 11-38.

Numrich, P., 2000, Change, stress and congregations in an edge-city technoburb. In L. Livezy, editor, *Public Religion and Urban Transformation: Faith in the City*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 187-209.

Oak Brook Park District, 2011, *History of the Oak Brook Park District*. Oak Brook, IL.

Odendahl, T. and Shaw, A., 2002, Interviewing elites. In J. Gubrium and J. Holstein, editors, *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 299-316.

Ollman, B., 1976, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Page, M., 2005, *Recovering a Sense of Place in the Edge City*. Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University.

Parnell, S., and Pieterse, E., 2010, The 'right to the city': Institutional Imperatives of a Developmental State. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 34, 146-162.

Peck, J., 2011, Neoliberal suburbanism: frontier space. *Urban Geography*, Vol. 32, 884-919.

Phelps, N., 1998, On the edge of something big: edge-city economic development in Croydon, South London. *The Town Planning Review*, Vol. 69, 441-465.

------------, and Parsons, N., 2003, Edge urban geographies: notes from the margins of Europe's capital cities. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 40, 1725-1749.

Pierce, V., 2002, Commission supports senior housing plan. *Daily Herald*, May 21, p. 4/1.

Purcell, M., 2002, Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant. *GeoJournal*, Vol. 58, 99-108.

Purcell, M., 2003, Citizenship and the right to the global city: Reimagining the capitalist world order. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 27, 564-590.

Roberts, G., 2009, *Analysis of Employment Center Change in the Chicago Metropolitan Area, 1990-2000*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University.

Rudel, T., O'Neill, K., Gottlieb, P., McDermott, M., and Hatfield, C., 2011, From middle to upper class sprawl? Land use controls and changing patterns of real estate development in northern New Jersey. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 101, 609-624.

Scheer, B., and Petkov, M., 1998, Edge city morphology: a comparison of commercial centers. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 64, 298-310.

Schein, R., 1997, The Place of landscape: A conceptual framework for interpreting an American scene. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 87, 660-680.

Schein, R., 2009, Belonging through land/scape. *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 41, 811-826.

Seligman, A., 2005, O'Hare. In J. Reiff, D. Keating and J. Grossman, editors, *The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Historical Society. Accessed 6/25/2012 at: http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/924.html.

Shah, B., Dwyer, C., and Gilbert, D., 2012, Landscapes of diasporic religious belonging in the edge city: the Jain temple at Potters Bar, outer London. *South Asian Diaspora*, Vol. 4, 77-94.

Shearmur, R., and Coffey, W., 2002, Urban employment subcenters and sectoral clustering in Montreal: complementary approaches to the study of urban form. *Urban Geography*, Vol. 23, 103-130.

Smith, N., 2008 [1984], *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press.

Social and Human Sciences Newsletter, 2004, Joan Clos. Retrieved April 14, 2011 from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Web site at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001363/136381e.pdf

Soja, E., 1989, *Postmodern Geographies*. London, UK: Verso.

Staeheli, L., 2010, Political geography: democracy and the disorderly public. *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 34, 67-78.

------------, and ------------, 2008, 'Don't talk with strangers': regulating property, purifying the public. *Griffith Law Review*, Vol. 17, 531-545.

------------, ------------, and Nagel, C., 2009, Making publics: immigrants, regimes of publicity and entry to 'the public'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 27, 633-648.

Sui, D., 1999, Postmodern urbanism disrobed: or why postmodern urbanism is a dead end for urban geography. *Urban Geography*, Vol. 20, 403-411.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, *Profile of General Population and Housing Charactaristics*.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, *Selected Housing Characteristics: 2008-2010 American Community Survey 3-year Estimates.*

Vaughan, L., Griffiths, S., Haklay, M., and Jones, C., 2009, Do the suburbs exist? Discovering complexity and specificity in suburban built form. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 34, 475-488.

Village of Oak Brook, 2011, 2011 Budget approval. *Village of Oak Brook Newsletter*. Vol. 57, 3.

Walker, R., 1977, *The Suburban Solution: Urban Geography and Urban Reform in the Capitalist Development of the United States*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University.

------------, 1978, The Transformation of urban structure in the nineteenth century and the beginnings of suburbanization. In K. Cox, editor, *Urbanization and Conflict in Market Societies*. Chicago, IL: Maaroufa Press, Inc., 165-212.

------------, 1981, A theory of suburbanization: capitalism and the construction of urban space in the United States. In M. Dear and A.J. Scott, editors, *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society*. New York, NY: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 383-429.

------------, 1994, *Edgy Cities, Technoblurbs and Simulacrumbs: Depthless Utopias and Dystopias on the Sub-Urban Fringe*. Paper presented at The City: Annual Colloquium Series of the Center for Social Theory and Contemporary History at the University of California Los Angeles.

------------, 1997, Unseen and disbelieved: A political economist among cultural geographers. In P. Groth and T. Bressi, editors, *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 162-173.

------------, and Storper, M., 1989, *The Capitalist Imperative: Territory, Technology and Industrial Growth*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.

Wallace, D., 2000, 50 acres of land owned by church condemned by Forest Board. *Daily Herald*, October 5, p. 5/1.

------------, 2003, Forest board buys Christian group's land. *Daily Herald*, January 22, p. 1/4.

Watson, W., 2008, *Watching Oak Brook Change: 1958 to 2008*. Oak Brook, IL: William R. Watson, Jr.

Wigle, J., and Zárate, L., 2010, Mexico City Creates Charter for the Right to the City. Retrieved April 14, 2011 from the Planners Network Web site at http://www.plannersnetwork.org/publications/2010_summer/wigle_zarate.html

William J. Phillips and Dorothy R. Phillips v. Hunter Trails Community Association, 685F.2d 184, (7th Cir., 1982).

www.oakbrookcenter.com/about. Accessed 7/11/2011.

VITA

Ben A. Gerlofs

DATE OF BIRTH: 17 October, 1985

PLACE OF BIRTH: Chicago, IL

PREVIOUS DEGREE: BA, Geography (minor in History), Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, MI

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE: Teaching Assistant, Department of Geography, Syracuse
        University, 2010-2012