

Upgrade Report

The Remaking of Resilient Urban Space:

A Case Study of West Hartford Center and the Kind of Space that is West Hartford Center



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Abstract

The intent of my research is to explore the kind of space that is West Hartford Center (The Center) and the remaking of The Center as a resilient urban space. Therefore, I argue that American urban research and theory focus mostly on large cities and metropolitan regions (Park, et. al., 1925; Dear, 2002; Smith, 1996, 2002; Soja, 1996) even though most urban dwellers live in smaller cities and metropolitan regions. I also argue that much of the writing on urbanization focuses on the central city as one kind of space (Jacobs, 1961; Mumford, 1961; Riesman, 1957) and the suburbs as another kind of space (Bruegmann, 2005; Fishman, 1987; Kunstler, 1993, 1998; Jackson, 1985). Unfortunately, this differentiation between central city urban and suburban space misses the multiplicity of spaces that exist. I also argue that much of the research on the remaking of space focuses on gentrification and state-sponsored regeneration (Freeman, 2006; Smith, 1996, 2002; Hannigan, 1998; Lees, 2000; Lees, et. al., 2008, 2010, Zukin, [1982] 1989, 2010) and does little to help us understand and explain the remaking of a both mundane and resilient West Hartford Center.

Based on the above arguments, I explore how the urban literature fall short of conceptualizing resilient spaces and how these spaces have been remade. For example, urban commentators and theorists (Jacobs, 1961; Mumford, 1961; Riesman, 1957) believe that suburban spaces are all similar, and more recently urban commentators and theorists (Kunstler, 1993, 1998; Duany, et. al., 2001, Zukin, 2010) assert that the process of suburbanization has created suburban spaces that are a *'Wal-Mart wasteland'* (Zukin, 2010). However, these characterizations of suburban spaces fail to explain the multiplicity of spaces that exist, including The Center, which does not fit into the characterizations provided by these commentators and theorists.

My research will explore, through a case study method, West Hartford Center as a kind of remade space that is and has been resilient. To accomplish this I will investigate the remaking of The Center, the kind of space that it is, by exploring: What kind of space is West Hartford Center, How and why did this space emerge, Who were (and are) the change makers and what were their roles in the emergence of this space, Who are the users of this space, how do they view and experience this space, and what role does it play in their everyday lives?

By exploring these questions, I hope to: one, develop a vocabulary to describe this kind of space; two, better understand how individuals and businesses innovated and self-organize to create an emergent, resilient, and successful space; three, how The Center fits into the individualized city and lives of the users of the space; and four, how the consumers influence the production and consumption of this space. Through this process, I hope to gain a greater understanding of this space, the remaking of space, and also to demonstrate the need for further research of smaller metropolitan regions and spaces—including the study of resilient spaces.

Key words: Urban, Suburban, Gentrification, Regeneration, Innovation, Emergence.

The Remaking of Resilient Space

The Kind of Space that is West Hartford Center

Introduction

As of the year 2007, approximately 240 million Americans lived in urbanized areas (Census, 2007). Of the 240 million persons living in urbanized areas, only 67 million live in the 10 largest metropolitan regions. The majority, 173 million persons, of the United States' urban population live in smaller (3,500,000 persons or less) metropolitan regions. For example, only nine U.S. metropolitan areas have over 5 million persons, only 11 metropolitan areas have over 4 million persons, and only 14 metropolitan areas have over 3 million persons. The 50th largest metropolitan area has 996,512 persons. Therefore, the experience of most Americans living in urbanized areas is a 'smaller' urban or metropolitan experience.

Another aspect of America's urbanization is that the majority of urban dwellers live in suburban places, not central cities (the political state) which are often thought of as traditional, authentic, or 'real' urban places (see Kunstler, 1993, 1998; Duany et al, 2001, 2010; Zukin, 2010). Of the 67 million persons living in the 10 largest metropolitan regions, only 24 million persons (36%) live in the central city while 43 million (64%) live in urbanized areas outside the central city—suburban areas (Cox, www.demographia.com). The population of the fifty largest U.S. metropolitan areas totals 162,514,411. Of that number, only 42,716,161 persons (26%) live in a central city and 119,798,250 (74%) live outside a central city. Therefore, the American urban experience is not only a smaller metropolitan experience; it is also a suburban experience.

Viewing the American urban experience as a smaller urban and suburban experience raises questions about urban research and theories and how we understand urbanization in America. Can urban research and theory based on the form, function, and the individual site and situation of large urban places (i.e. Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York) help us to understand smaller urban places (i.e. Hartford, Providence, and Raleigh)? For example, The Chicago School (see Park and Burgess, 1925) focused on Chicago, today the third largest metropolitan region, as the model of American urbanization. Scott and Soja (1996), Soja (1996) and Dear (2002), the so-called L.A. School, focus on Los Angeles, today the second largest metropolitan region as being the modern metropolis—the new model for American urbanization. Smith (1996, 2002), Lees, 2000; Lees, et al (2008, 2010), and

Zukin ([1982] 1989, 1995, 2010) utilized New York City as their urban laboratory to explain the process and effects of gentrification. While their research may be interesting in the context of New York City and does help us understand gentrification in New York City, I argue it is wrong to assume that the experiences of New York City, Chicago, or Los Angeles help us to understand smaller urban places.

Another question is how can urban theory that juxtapose central city (read urban) places against suburban places help us to understand the multiplicity of urban spaces that exist in urbanized areas? For example, Kunstler (1993, 1998), Duany (2000), and Zukin (2010) assert that the process of suburbanization has been very similar in all areas—that suburbanization and all suburbs are the same. To use Kunstler’s words, “*most of it is depressing, brutal, ugly, unhealthy, and spiritually degrading.*” In addition, these individuals often claim an authenticity (see Freeman, 2006; Zukin, 2010) of central city places. Such generalizations do little to help us understand the complexity and multiplicity of urbanization, be it central city or suburban. The American urban and suburban landscape is made up of a wide variety—multiplicity—of places.

Therefore, I argue that the focus of urban theory on large urban places has overlooked the uniqueness of urbanization and urban experiences of smaller urban places. In addition, I argue that generalized urban theory based on large urban places has caused us to misunderstand the unique experiences of smaller urban places. Related to this, the differentiation of and juxtaposition of what is considered to be urban and suburban has created gaps in our understanding of urbanization.

The focus on large urban places becomes evident when examining the literature on urban research in the United States and elsewhere. For example, Ley in his 1996 book *The New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City* documents gentrification in large Canadian cities. Hannigan opens his 1998 book *Fantasy City: Pleasure and Profit in the Postmodern Metropolis* in Toronto and discusses Boston, New York City, Baltimore, and Los Angeles. Muller 1997 explores “the rapidly expanding international role of suburban business complexes in large metropolitan areas, particularly Greater New York” (1997: 44). Tim Butler with Garry Robson in *London Calling: The Middle Class and the Re-making of Inner London* (2003) explore gentrification in London. Also, Zukin, (1993) in *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* focuses mostly on large urban places, and when she ventures into suburban spaces, she focuses on Westchester County, a portion of the New York City suburban region.

My concern is not just the focus of urban research on large urban places, but also the influences that the theories developed in large places have on not only academic research, but also on mainstream society. For example, influential journalists have focused on large urban places. Jane Jacobs' 1961 seminal work, *The Death and Life of the Great American City* focused on Greenwich Village, became the model and ideal for urban neighborhoods and urban life, and is still widely accepted and cited today (see Duany, 2000; Kunstler, 1993, 1998; Johnson, 2001). Joel Garreau's popular 1991 book *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* explained a new phenomenon of new suburban cities on the edge of large—Atlanta, San Francisco, Washington D.C., and others—metropolitan regions. The same is true with the suburban sociologists, suburban historians, and researchers on suburbanization and suburban places. Gans' *The Levittowners* (1967) takes place in the Philadelphia metropolitan region and Warner's, *Streetcar Suburbs* (1962) explores the suburbs of Boston. Duncan and Duncan in *Landscapes of Privilege: The Politics of the Aesthetic in an American Suburb* (2004) detail life in Bedford, a wealthy New York suburb in northern Westchester County. Jackson (1985) Fishman (1988) and Baxandall and Ewen (2000) document the history of American suburbanization by looking at large metropolitan suburbanization in places such as Brooklyn, Long Island, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

The focus on large cities and metropolitan regions has not only created bias toward large cities and metropolitan areas, but more significantly, the findings related to these large urban places have become the foundation of theories that have been universally applied to all urban places, large and small (see Park, et. al., 1925; Scott and Soja, 1996; Soja, 1989, 1996; and Dear; 2002). Ash Amin and Stephen Graham explain that “[t]oo often, single cities – most recently, Los Angeles – are wheeled out as paradigmatic cases, alleged conveniently to encompass all urban trends everywhere” (Amin and Graham, 1997: 411). In addition, these generalized theories have found their way into mainstream writings on how we understand urban places. They allow popular culture journalists such as Kunstler (1993, 1998) to assert that the process of suburbanization has created one kind of suburban space (1993). David Brooks (2004) reduces American urban places to a handful of distinct types. However, these generalizations that all urban experiences can be explained by examples in specific large urban places and that places are either urban or suburban, does little to help us understand the multiplicity of urban spaces that exist in our urban landscape. I argue that such generalizations have created barriers to our conceptualizing the multiplicity of urban spaces and reimagining the city (see Amin and Thrift, 2002). Unfortunately, this creates a gap in urban research and specific kinds of spaces, such as resilient and remade spaces that have been

overlooked. Therefore, I argue that we need to view urbanization as an evolutionary process where urban and suburban spaces evolve, mature, and are continually remade into new kinds of spaces.

Similar generalizations occur with the literature on gentrification (see Smith, 1996, 2002; Lees, 2000; Lees, et al, 2008, 2010; Freeman, 2006; and Zukin, [1982] 1989, 1995, 2010). For example, the definition of gentrification has become so generalized, that any remaking of space (see Phillips, 2004) or increase of wealth within a neighborhood is defined as gentrification (see Fraser, 2004). Unfortunately, such generalizations miss the small changes that occur, the evolutionary process of change, and the continual remaking of spaces that occurs in a multiplicity of urban spaces. Not all remade spaces transform from abandonment and immigrant occupied to gentrified and wealthy. Many remade places go through a slow process of change, adjustment, maturation, and evolve over time. Some of these remade places are resilient and successful. They never decline into abandonment, but instead are continually remade into something new. The debates on gentrification and state-sponsored regeneration (see Peck and Ward, 2002; Hannigan, 1998; Harvey, 2006) do not capture and often do not allow us to recognize the many resilient spaces that are continually remaking themselves.

It is this multiplicity of urban spaces, the gaps that exist in understanding urban spaces, the remaking of these spaces, and the unique experiences of these spaces that interest me and that I will explore through my research. To accomplish this, I have selected a specific space, West Hartford Center, to research as a case study. My reasons for selecting The Center are: one, it is located in the smaller metropolitan region (1.2 million persons) of Hartford, Connecticut; two, it is a mature suburban center that has evolved and changed over time; three, its recent history demonstrates a remaking of space that is not neatly explained by urban theory (including gentrification); three, the remaking of The Center appears to have occurred with minimal government/planning intervention—an emergent remaking of space; and last, urban theory does not provide a vocabulary to explain the kind of space that is West Hartford Center.

The purpose of my research is to better understand the American urban experience as a smaller urban and suburban experience and to explore a space that has evolved, been resilient, and remade outside of the generally accepted understanding of gentrification and regeneration. To do so I will investigate the remaking of West Hartford Center, the kind of space that is The Center, and the experience that it provides by exploring the following questions:

1. What kind of space is West Hartford Center and how can we develop a vocabulary to explain it?
2. How and why did this kind of space emerge—the remaking of space?
3. Who were (and are) the change makers and what were their roles in the emergence of this kind of space?
4. Who are the users of this space, how do they view and experience this space, and what role does it play in their everyday lives?

To clearly demonstrate how I will accomplish this, the following report is organized into six sections: Literature Review, Research Methodology, Case Study, Research Plan and Schedule, Possible Thesis Organization, and Bibliography. The first section, the literature review, will provide a detailed review of literature related to our understanding of urban and suburban space, the remaking of urban space in the context of gentrification and regeneration, and how we can reimagine the remaking of urban space through theories of creativity, innovation, and emergent self-organizing behavior.

Section two, my research methodology, will discuss in detail my research questions and goals in the context of West Hartford Center and how the literature review provides a framework to understanding this space. Section three, my case study of The Center, will provide the historic and regional context of West Hartford, explaining its evolution as a suburban space and how it fits into the Hartford metropolitan region. Included in the case study will be the mapping of changes in property ownership that have occurred in The Center over the past 30 years. The fourth section, my research plan, will map out my research schedule, providing timelines and deadlines. Together, each of these sections will create a comprehensive account of my research topic and methods and demonstrate my preparation for this project.

Literature Review

Paper I. Reimagining Urban and Suburban Space: The City as Potentiality

Introduction

The primary question I seek to explore in my research is “What kind of space is West Hartford Center and how can we develop a vocabulary explain it?” To accomplish this, my research will explore other questions related to The Center, such as, how and why did this kind of space emerge (the remaking of space); who were and are the change makers and what were their roles in the emergence of this kind of space; who are the users, the consumers of this space; what role does The Center play in their lives; and what role do they play in defining The Center? However, before I can begin to develop and explain my method of research to accomplish this—to explore these questions—I need to explore and demonstrate that urban theory does little to help us to understand The Center as a kind of urban space. In addition, I need to create a framework, a theoretical context, based in what we know about urban spaces and the forces that shape urban spaces, to explain and justify my methodological approach. Therefore, my literature review will be presented in three sections: the first will explore our understanding of urban and suburban space, the second will explore the remaking of urban space in the context of gentrification and regeneration, and the third will explore the role of creativity, innovation, and emergent self-organizing behavior in understanding the remaking of space. Together, the literature review will demonstrate the need for researching the kind of space that is The Center and provide a framework for designing the research methods to accomplish this research.

This, the first of three literature review papers, is presented in four sections. The first section will explore the urban and how we understand urban space. The second section will explore the suburban and how we understand suburban spaces. The third section will explore a number of specific kinds of urban spaces that have been named and identified. The fourth and final section will explore the concept of centrality and how we can reimagine centrality to better understand urban space as potentiality.

Understanding Urban Space

In the simplest and most common terms, West Hartford Center is a suburban center. But what does that really tell us about the kind of space that is The Center? It tells us that The Center is part of suburbia. It is located in a suburban community, outside the central city. But what is suburbia and how do we understand suburban as a kind of urban space? To answer this, we need to define suburbia. But before we can understand what is suburban, we first need to understand what is urban or in America, what is the central city?

I argue that American urban studies have created a significant differentiation between what is believed to be urban (the central city) and what is suburban (all urbanized areas outside the central city). While the central city and the suburban are both forms of urban space, they are generally viewed as very different kinds of spaces. Jon Teaford, in *The American Suburbs: The Basics* explains, “[f]or Americans the notion of city limits has been vital to the concept of suburbia. Unlike Britain, where the term *suburb* refers to a peripheral area whether inside or beyond a major city’s boundaries, in the United States the federal census bureau and most commentators have defined suburbia as that zone within metropolitan areas but beyond the central city limits” (Teaford, 2008: ix-x). He continues, “[b]ecause of the strong tradition of local self-rule in the United States, the political distinction between suburb and central city has been vital to discussions of suburban development, lifestyle, and policy” (Teaford, 2008: ix-x).

Based on Teaford’s explanation, urban can be defined in its simplest form as the central city (the political state), the core area, or the original historical settlement at the center of today’s urbanized region. In this context, we see the rise of centrality (see Latham, et. al.: 2009, Hall, 1998a), the city (urban) as a central place. Urban can also be defined as consisting of specific forms (Duany, et. al., 2000, 2010): architecture, the grid-iron street formation, and high density multi-story development (Duany, et al., 2000; Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987). While these physical forms are an essential part of the urban, other factors also play a role in how we understand what is urban. Jane Jacobs, in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) describes an urban lifestyle, a way of life that focused on the block, the neighborhood, and the community. This way of life, for Jacobs, was a dance, a ballet on the stage that was the city sidewalk, and this ballet provided the essence of what Jacobs considered to be urban. Jacobs’ perspective of the urban also included a mixture of urban form (the short block, diversity in architecture, and density of buildings), a mixture of uses (commercial and residential), and of social relationships (friends, neighbors, store

owners, and chance meetings) that co-existed to create an interesting and for her, an authentic urban environment, experience, and lifestyle (see also Duany, et al., 2000; Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987; Kunstler, 1993, 1998; Lefebvre, [1970] 2003; Zukin, 2010). The urban as a way of life can also be viewed as modern life and society and for Lefebvre, “society has been completely urbanized” (Lefebvre, [1970] 2003: 1).

Another means of understanding the urban is the negative attributes of the city. These negative attributes are best described by Riesman (1957), Fishman (1987), and Mumford (1961). For Riesman, “[t]he city today, for many, spells crime, dirt, and race tension, more than it does culture and opportunity” (Riesman, 1957: 131). Fishman explains, “[s]uburbia can never be understood solely in its own terms. It must always be defined in relation to its rejected opposites: the metropolis.... Buried deep within every subsequent suburban dream is a nightmare image of eighteenth century London” (Fishman, 1987: 27). Riesman’s and Fishman’s perspective of the negative and dangerous city is also shared by Mumford who claims, “[i]n every age, then, the fear of the city’s infections and the attractions of the open countryside provided both negative and positive stimulus” (Mumford, 1961: 487).

Based on these perspectives, the urban is not only defined by its physical forms (architecture, streets, and density) or its sociality (the sidewalk ballet, neighborhood and community), but the urban is also defined by its negative attributes—real or perceived—of crime, poverty, disease, and immoral activity. Therefore, the word urban, while neutral in the context of physical form and positive in the context of sociality, is burdened with negative connotations—the urban (the city) as bad.

Riesman (1957) is direct about the negatives of the city and allows them to stand on their own, while Fishman (1987) and Mumford (1961) juxtapose the city, the urban against the suburban and the countryside. For Fishman, “suburbia can never be understood solely in its own terms” (Fishman, 1987: 27) and therefore, in the context of American urbanization, nor can the city, the urban be understood solely in its own terms. This creates a symbiotic relationship between the two—the urban cannot be understood without comparison to the suburban and the suburban cannot be understood without comparison to the urban. Both words, simultaneously are dependent on the other and yet, in opposition to each other. It is this symbiotic relationship between the urban and suburban that creates difficulties in understanding and differentiating between urban and suburban spaces.

The urban can also be defined as a process. Lefebvre explains, “[t]he urban...can therefore be defined not as an accomplished reality, situated behind the actual in time, but on the contrary, as a horizon, an illuminating virtuality. It is possible, defined by a direction, that moves toward the urban as the culmination of its journey” (Lefebvre, [1970] 2003: 16-17). Lefebvre provides a perspective of the urban as incomplete, “the culmination of its journey” that is continual, moving forward or evolving, and hard to pin down.

So what is urban? Based on the above perspectives, we can begin to understand the urban as being not just the central city, but a built environment that includes high density multi-story buildings, gridiron streets, a mixture of architecture and uses, lively sidewalks that provide a dense experience of sociality, a gritty, possibly dangerous place, that is evolving and changing. However, in the context of West Hartford Center, such an understanding of what is urban or urban space becomes unclear. The Center, in the context of architecture, uses, street design, sidewalks, and sociality displays many characteristics of the urban. However, these characteristics are not all fully realized in what the theorists above describe as urban. The building design, scale, and massing are mixed. Most are single story, some are two-stories, a few are three-stories, and a half dozen or so are more than three stories. The uses are mixed, but dominated by commercial use, and most residential uses are adjacent to The Center, but not within it. The sidewalks do provide a dense ballet of sociality, but it is not the same dance or performers that Jacobs (1961) described. Jacobs’ dancers live on the block or in the neighborhood, while those that dance in The Center come from near and far. And last, the least urban of The Center’s characteristics, is crime—or the lack of crime. The Center does not have the gritty and dangerous qualities described above as urban.

So is West Hartford Center urban? While The Center displays qualities and characteristics that are urban, their manifestations are different than what is described by the literature as being urban. In addition, the location of The Center is suburban—outside the central city. Therefore, The Center is not the central city, but is a center to its suburban place—a node, one of many nodes, in a poly-centric metropolitan region. So what kind of space is West Hartford Center? Is it an urban space or a suburban space? At this point, the answer is unclear.

Understanding Suburban Space

To understand what is suburban I will use similar categories of characteristics that I used to understand the urban—architecture, form, massing, lifestyle, and negative attributes. However, the

characteristics used to define suburbia are many—more than those described above for understanding what is urban. In addition, these characteristics are more complex when we consider the social-cultural aspects of the suburban way of life. Therefore, to explore the suburban, I will present my discussion of these characteristics in three categories of suburban characteristics. This first will be the locational aspect of suburbia—beyond the core urban area—and the economic relationship between the suburb and city. The second will be the physical form of the suburbs—architecture, design, and landscape. The third will be suburbia as a way of life—the social-cultural aspects of how we live in suburbia.

To understand the suburban as a location, I return to Teaford’s explanation: “[f]or Americans the notion of city limits has been vital to the concept of suburbia...the federal census bureau and most commentators have defined suburbia as that zone within metropolitan areas but beyond the central city limits” (Teaford, 2008: ix). He continues again, “[b]ecause of the strong tradition of local self-rule in the United States, the political distinction between suburb and central city has been vital to discussions of suburban development, lifestyle, and policy” (Teaford, 2008: ix-x). Based on Teaford’s explanation, the suburban in the American tradition can be understood as a town (a political state) outside of the central city. Teaford’s explanation demonstrates the distinction between what is urban (the central city) and what is suburban (areas outside the central city). While this distinction provides some context for differentiating between urban and suburban places, the distinction does not tell us much about suburban space, other than that it is conceptualized as a separate space outside the central city urban space.

To better understand suburbs, we must recognize that suburbanization is a part of or kind of urbanization—the growth and expansion of urban space. Fishman recognizes this when he explains, “[t]he modern suburb was a direct result of this unprecedented urban growth. It grew out of a crisis in urban form that stemmed from the inability of the premodern city to cope with explosive modern expansion. It also reflected the unprecedented growth in wealth and size of an upper-middle-class merchant elite. The London bourgeoisie had attained the critical mass in numbers, resources, and confidence to transform the cities of their time to suit their values” (Fishman, 1987: 19). What Fishman is describing is not only the importance of spatial growth (urbanization) of cities, but also the emergence of a wealthy class that could afford an alternative to urban living. In this context, we begin to see the complexity of suburbanization—how it is difficult to separate the location from urban growth and from economic and social changes in society.

From an economic perspective, the emergence of a middle-class in large enough numbers—a critical mass—with the fiscal means to relocate is important. However, the economic link between suburb and city becomes a key determinant in understanding the suburban location. Fishman explains, “[a] location like Clapham gave them the ability to take the family out of London without taking leave of the family business” (Fishman, 1987: 53). Fishman demonstrates that suburbs, at least historically, while physically removed from the urban core, maintained an economic tie to the urban core. Therefore, the suburban can be understood as a location outside the urban core (within or beyond the city limits) that is still economically bound to the city. Jackson (1985) demonstrated the importance of this economic tie between suburb and city when he used the volume of commuter traffic generated between a suburb and a central city as the means to establish Brooklyn Heights, New York as the first true commuter suburb in America.

From a locational perspective we can begin to understand suburbs as areas removed from the urban core, but linked economically to the core. Whether the suburb is within the city limits or beyond is less important than the spatial separation that exists between the urban core and the suburb and the economics that bind the suburb to the city (see also Braxandall and Ewen, 2000; Bruegmann, 2005; Kruse and Sugrue, 2006). While the physical separation is important in the historical context—in defining early suburbs like Clapham, Brooklyn Heights, Riverside, and others (Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987)—it is less significant and more difficult to define in the context of modern urbanization that has continued to expand over time—filling in the undeveloped gaps that once separated city and suburb. The same is true for the economic ties between suburb and city. While the suburb once relied on the city as a central place for jobs (Bruegmann, 2005; Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987), shopping, and cultural amenities, (Fishman, 1987; Jackson, 1985; Teaford, 2008) the modern suburb has become self-sufficient (Fishman, 1987; Jackson, 1985; Teaford, 2008). For example, in the context of West Hartford the spatial separation and economic ties have become blurred to the point that it is difficult to define where the city ends and where the suburb begins. The following table, showing commuters in and out of West Hartford (CERC, West Hartford Town Profile), demonstrates that this suburban community is not solely relying on the central city, Hartford (see also Lees, et. al., 2008).

Table 1. Commuters 2000

Commuters into West Hartford From:		West Hartford Residents Commuting To:	
West Hartford	6,848	Hartford	8,116
Hartford	3,415	West Hartford	6,848
New Britain	1,459	Farmington	1,386
Newington	1,138	Bloomfield	1,105
East Hartford	946	East Hartford	848
Manchester	802	Berlin	830
Bristol	783	New Britain	815
Farmington	691	Newington	732
Bloomfield	682	Windsor	616
Windsor	582	Manchester	522

Since the spatial and economic relationships between suburb and city are blurred in modern urbanization, the suburb, as a physical form (design attributes), becomes important as a means of differentiating between what is urban and what is suburban. While the urban can physically be understood as a built environment that includes high density multi-story buildings, gridiron street patterns, a mixture of architecture style and massing, a mixture of uses (commercial and residential), and the resultant lively sidewalks that provide a dense experience of sociality, the suburban can also be understood in the context of its physical characteristics. One of the more important physical elements that defines the suburb is the single family house in the picturesque setting. Fishman explains, “[t]here was, however, another image central to the *bricolage* that built suburbia: the classical villa...the eighteenth century could not think of a house in the country without recalling the classical antecedents—the villas of ancient Rome—and attempting to imitate them” (Fishman, 1987: 45). He continues, “[t]he summit of Renaissance villa design was reached by Andrea Palladio (1508-80)...the most famous, the Villa Rotonda, was a true villa suburban designed for elegant leisure. The house is the ultimate expression of civilization conceived as order” (Fishman, 1987: 46).

In the design of the Villa Rotonda, as explain by Fishman, it is not only the villa as a home, but as a symbol of the suburban ideal—‘the ultimate expression of civilization’—the suburb as civilized compared to the uncivilized city and the suburb as the taming of the wild countryside. In addition, the villa becomes a container for a moral life (Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987). “The Palladian design was modified to provide for the Evangelical ideals of family life and contact with nature” (Fishman, 1987: 55). So how does Palladio’s villa become the American suburban home? Fishman explains, “[t]he path from the Villa Rotonda to the suburban tract house is a long and twisted one, but we cannot understand the latter without realizing that some small vestige of the

former's ideal of the 'civilized house in nature' survives in even the most modest suburban development" (Fishman, 1987: 46).

Figure 1. The Hartford Insurance Company



Notice that The Hartford's corporate headquarters in downtown Hartford is a Palladian Villa set back from the street with an ornamental lawn.

Fishman provides the link between the English Evangelicals and architectural designs to the American architectural designs when he explains, "Downing, whose *Cottage Residences* was published the year after [Catherine] Beecher's *Treatise*, was her necessary counterpart in the field of domestic architecture. If Beecher Americanized the doctrines of Wilberforce, More, and the other Evangelicals, Downing Americanized the designs of John Nash and the picturesque movement....only the picturesque could truly embody Beecher's vision of a sacred home" (Fishman, 1987: 123). Here we see the melding of the Evangelical ideals of home and family with the architectural design of single family homes.

Along with the single family house in the picturesque setting was the ornamental yard. Jackson also explains, "[i]n 1841...Downing published the first American book to deal with the area of landscape gardening in both a scientific and philosophical way....Downing became the most literate and articulate architectural critic of his generation and the most influential single individual in translating the rural ideal into a suburban ideal" (Jackson, 1985: 63). Jackson, further explains the emergence of the ornamental lawn (Jackson, 1985: 60):

Although the elaborate lawn would be attainable only by the wealthy in England, in the United States carefully tended grass became the mark of suburban respectability. In 1870 Frank J. Scott published *The Art of Beautifying the Home Grounds* and Jacob Weidenmann issued *Beautifying Country Homes: A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*, the first American

books devoted entirely to ‘methods by which every landowner may improve and beautify his suburban home effectively and with economy.’... The well-manicured yard became an object of great pride and enabled its owner to convey to passers-by an impression of wealth and social standing—what Thorstein Veblen would later label ‘conspicuous consumption.’ Such a large parcel of land was not a practical resource in the service of a livelihood, but a luxury in the service of gracious living.

Fishman explains the importance of the picturesque setting and the design of the ornamental yard. He states, “[l]and organized for consumption—here is the social basis of this style of landscape design and the source of its deep appeal for suburbia.... But the picturesque landscape has been carefully designed to represent the consumption of the property by the viewer/owner, and this passive enjoyment is precisely the relationship of suburbia to its environment. The aesthetic of the picturesque has thus become the design language in which the idea of ‘a natural setting’ has been expressed in the suburban setting, so much so that today we can hardly conceive of a suburb without the winding lanes and ‘scattering of park scenery’ that derived from it” (Fishman, 1987: 49).

Figure 2. Weidenmann Design Example



Taken from his book, this example is located on Farmington Avenue in Hartford, CT.

Associated with the picturesque location, the country villa or cottage, and the ornamental lawn are other physical aspects related to the overall design of suburban space. These elements include the curvilinear street and respecting the natural contours of the land (Fishman 1987; Jackson, 1985; Sutton, 1971) and are most often associated with Fredrick Law Olmsted and his 1860s design of Riverside, Illinois. These design elements, when combined with the outlying country location, the country villa or cottage, and landscaped ornamental lawn sculpt the picturesque into the ideal space of middle-class urban habitation—the idyllic blending of country

and city (see Sutton, 1971; Roper, 1973). All of these design elements are still evident in contemporary suburbs.

The final consideration in understanding suburban space is the social-cultural characteristics that have created a suburban way of life. The term that may best describe this suburban way of life is conspicuous consumption. Jackson explains conspicuous consumption when discussing Weidenmann and the landscape design of the ornamental yard and states, “[t]he well-manicured yard became an object of great pride and enabled its owner to convey to passers-by an impression of wealth and social standing—what Thorstein Veblen would later label ‘conspicuous consumption.’ Such a large parcel of land was not a practical resource in the service of a livelihood, but a luxury in the service of gracious living” (Jackson, 1985: 60).

Braxandall and Ewen (2000) explain in *Picture Windows* how the urban middle-class of New York City looked to the lifestyles (conspicuous consumption) of the Robber Barons on the North Shore of Long Island as the pinnacle of achievement and how this translated into the suburbanization of Long Island (see also Jackson, 1985). Conspicuous consumption is also associated with Fordism and the melding of production, and conspicuous consumption would become instrumental in post-1945 mass-suburbanization. Jackson explains, “Ford managed his feat even while revolutionizing American industry on January 5, 1914, by announcing, unilaterally, unexpectedly, and in the midst of a business recession, a raise in the minimum daily wage of his employees from \$2.30 to \$5.00 per day” (Jackson, 1985: 161). This was the start of creating a large American middle-class—the consumer class—which would later provide the critical mass to occupy and consume the suburbs.

The influence that Ford’s announcement had on industry and society is demonstrated by Baxandall and Ewen (2000) through Filene’s arguments and testimony. They explain, “[Edward] Filene argued that the challenge to American businessmen of the 1920s was: *‘Fordize or fail...’*” (Baxandall and Ewen, 2000: 38). They continue, “[h]ow would Ford’s assembly line make this second industrial revolution different from the first? ‘The business man of the future must produce prosperous customers as well as saleable goods,’ asserted Filene. ‘His whole business policy must look forward to creating great buying power among the masses. The business man of the future must fill the pockets of the workers and the consumers before he can fill his pockets’” (Baxandall and Ewen, 2000: 38). These statements and perspectives provide evidence of consumerism becoming ingrained, as much as the Evangelical ideals, in the American psyche.

While conspicuous consumption is critical to understanding this suburban way of life (Fava, 1956; Marsh, 1990; Riesman, 1957), we can't lose sight of the Evangelical ideals and the role of family and children—the “the ideologies of the closed, domesticated nuclear family” (Fishman, 1987: 34). Jackson explains the modern manifestation of the role of family and children, but in the context of the home—the home as central focus of this suburban way of life. “The real shift, however, is the way in which our lives are now centered inside the house, rather than on the neighborhood or the community. With increased use of automobiles, the life of the sidewalk and the front yard has largely disappeared, and the social intercourse that used to be the main characteristic of urban life has vanished. Residential neighborhoods have become a mass of small, private islands; with the back yard functioning as a wholesome, family-oriented, and reclusive place” (Jackson, 1985: 280). Therefore, the suburban, as location, physical form, and way of life, has created a new form—different from the urban—and realized a transformation of our economic and social-cultural means of habitation.

The suburban way of life has been the focus of many critics of suburbia. Central to the criticism is the shift from the urban form and the urban way of life (Jacobs, 1961) toward a suburban form and suburban way of life (Riesman, 1957; Kunstler, 1993, 1998). Mumford explains (Mumford, 1961: 486):

In the mass movement into the suburban areas a new kind of community was produced, which caricatured both the historic city and the archetypal suburban refuge: a multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lined up inflexibly, at uniform distances, on uniform roads, in a treeless communal waste, inhabited by people of the same class, the same income, the same age group, witnessing the same television performances, eating the same tasteless pre-fabricated foods, from the same freezers, conforming in every outward and inward respect to a common mold, manufactured in the central metropolis. Thus, the ultimate effect of the suburban escape in our time is, ironically, a low-grade uniform environment from which escape is impossible.

Riesman, while critical of the suburbs, expresses a realization about their appeal and success. He explains, “for millions of suburbanites, their post-World War II experience has been prosperous and open far beyond their depression-born expectations. For them, the suburbs have been one vast supermarket, abundantly and conveniently stocked with approved yet often variegated choices. The children are less of a worry there than on city streets; the neighbors often more friendly than those city folk who “keep themselves to themselves”; life in general is more relaxed” (Riesman, 1957: 129). He continues, “[l]ife on credit has worked out well for many such home owners, allowing them to have their children young and in circumstances far better than those in which they themselves grew up. Whatever the outsider might say about the risks blithely

taken...he would have to admit that such first-generation suburbanites have found the taste of abundance pleasant and, for the younger ones with wages rising faster than prices, not notably problematic” (Riesman, 1957: 129). Riesman does not shed light only on the success of the suburban way of life, but also on how this way of life is bound together with increasing prosperity and conspicuous consumption.

Similar criticism of the suburbs continues today (Jackson, 1985, 1996; Kunstler, 1993, 1998; Duany, et. al., 2000, 2010; Zukin, 2010). What is interesting about these critiques of suburbs and the suburban way of life is that they perpetuate this differentiation between what is understood to be urban and what is suburban. Unfortunately, this differentiation furthers the idea that suburban space is not an urban space, but something different. These perspectives create barriers to reimagining the suburban as urban and acknowledging how many suburban spaces have evolved or been remade into spaces that are more urban than they are suburban.

Based on the above discussions of the suburban, how can we understand or define suburban space? In the historical sense, we can understand suburban space as a location outside the urban core that was designed to blend the economic benefits of the city with the health and social benefits of the country (Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987). This blending was manifested as the villa or country cottage set back from the street in an ornamental yard that not only represented the picturesque setting, but also the conspicuous consumption of land (Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987). Conspicuous consumption blend with the family-centered home to create a suburban way of life—a lifestyle that is different from the urban lifestyle of Jacobs (1961) (see also Lefebvre, [1970] 2003). Jackson explains this change in lifestyle when he states, “suburbia has become the quintessential physical achievement of the United States; it is perhaps more representative of its culture than big cars, tall buildings, or professional football. Suburbia symbolizes the fullest, most unadulterated embodiment of contemporary culture; it is a manifestation of such fundamental characteristics of American society as conspicuous consumption, a reliance upon the private automobile, upward mobility, the separation of the family into nuclear units, the widening division between work and leisure, and a tendency toward racial and economic exclusiveness” (Jackson, 1985: 4).

In this context, the urban and suburban as defined and juxtaposed by architecture, density, form, location, home, family, consumption, and production become less helpful. These differences become less clear over time when the modern suburban landscape is viewed as part of the urbanization of space. While some of these suburban spaces, based on their location and physical

characteristics, are still suburban, the economics of these spaces have changed. In addition, other spaces that are defined as suburban because they are beyond the political limits of the central city have become more urban in form and sociality (see Garreau, 1991). At the same time, many conventionally urban spaces are viewed as becoming or being more suburban in character (see gentrification literature: Freeman, 2006; Lees, 2000; Lees et. al., 2008, 2010; Smith, 1996, 2002; Zukin, 2010).

So how do we understand West Hartford Center as a suburban space? West Hartford displays many of the physical characteristics of suburban design. These characteristics include the single family home, the ornamental lawn, and the transition from the streetcar suburb to the curvilinear street. The Center evolved from an early commercial strip-mall to a more concentrated town center. I argue that West Hartford as a suburban community and more specifically, West Hartford Center as a suburban space is one of many suburban spaces that no longer fits into what has been historically defined as suburban, yet is still viewed as suburban. The Center is a mixing of both urban and suburban qualities and is therefore difficult to define as being either urban or suburban. The fact is, West Hartford Center has evolved and matured over time and been remade into a new kind of space.

The Changing Nature of Suburbanization and Post-Suburbanization

While urban theorists and commentators have conceptualized space as urban or suburban, others have recognized the changing forms and functions of both urban and suburban spaces. As a result, the literature on urban and suburban space has produced many differing views of these changes and many attempts to reimagine and name these new urban spaces.

So how do we understand the changing form and function of suburban space? A good place to start is with Muller (1997) and his recognition that something has changed related to American suburbanization after the 1960s. He explains (Muller, 1997: 45):

The November 1975 issue of this journal was one of the first scholarly publications to recognize the then-new urbanization of the suburbs, and its 13 articles constitute a benchmark overview of suburbanization as the metropolis began to turn inside out. The profound significance of this structural transformation was reviewed by the renowned planner David Birch, who noted several key trends: (1) suburbs were becoming places of self-generating urban growth; (2) the intrametropolitan hierarchy of activity centers, dominated by the central city's downtown central business district (CBD), was disintegrating; (3) many suburbs were inheriting functions previously reserved for the CBD;

and (4) certain suburbs were developing complete economic bases of their own, thereby eliminating their dependency on the nearby central city for a growing array of goods and services.

Muller (1997), quoting Birch provides insights into the structural, economic, and functional changes that have and still are occurring in American cities and suburbs. However, he points not only to the changing suburbs, but also to the changes in urbanization, including the structures, economics, and functions of the central city, the urban. So how do we understand these changes in both suburbs and cities?

Joel Garreau, in his 1991 book *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* explains one of these many changing or new spaces. The Edge City is a suburban downtown—a suburban location on the edge of an urban region that resembles the traditional central business district more than a suburban center or as he explains “that acreage where the huge growth in jobs and other truly urban functions is centered” (1991: 6). However, Garreau’s examples of Edge Cities are mostly found in large—Atlanta, San Francisco, Washington D.C., and others—metropolitan regions. Defining Edge Cities helps us to better understand the multiplicity of spaces and that some suburban spaces are becoming more urban in form, function, and overall character. However, the Edge City does little to explain or help us understand West Hartford Center.

Teaford explains another type of space, the Boomburbs. Teaford explains, “Robert Lang and Patrick Simmons coined this term after examining the 2000 census and distinguishing a distinct class of giant suburbs whose size and rapid growth set them apart...boomburbs are ‘places with more than 100,000 residents that are not the largest cities in their respective metropolitan areas and that have maintained double-digit rates of population growth in recent decades” (Teaford, 2008: 79). Boomburbs are interesting in the context of understanding urban growth and where within a region growth may be occurring. However, the boomburbs do little to help us understand West Hartford or The Center, a community that does not meet the definition of a boomburb.

Teaford also explains the changing relationship between the city and suburb by questioning the subordinate relationship of suburbs to cities. He states, “American suburbia is no longer *sub* to the *urb*. In fact, many scholars and informed observers regard Americans as living in a postsuburban world where the concept of suburb is perhaps obsolete” (Teaford, 2008: x). He continues, “Thus the communities Americans call suburbs are neither subordinate to the historic hub nor outwardly similar to one another in appearance, economic base, or social composition” (Teaford, 2008: x-ix). To Teaford, what is generally considered to be the suburb, a word that implies

a connection to and reliance on the central city, is no longer connected to the central city, but is now independent of the central city. In addition, he recognizes that suburbia provides a multiplicity of spaces, that not all suburbs and suburban spaces are alike (see Duany, et. al., 2000; Kunstler, 1993, 1998; Mumford, 1961). Teaford continues, “[s]uburbia’s multitudinous communities have rendered the older notion of the [central] city largely obsolete and have created the amorphous metropolitan regions of today where there is no dominant single focus for the lives of residents throughout the area” (Teaford, 2008: xii). Teaford concludes, “[i]n the United States, then, the suburbs are not peripheral complements of the city; instead, they have largely superseded the city, created a new centerless world where the old, clear-cut boundaries between urban and rural have dissolved and the long-standing centripetal pull of the downtown has diminished to a faint tug” (Teaford, 2008: xii).

Teaford’s perspective transforms how suburbs have been historically defined and understood as something very different than what they are today. Not only does he recognize the multiplicity of suburban spaces, but he also recognizes the amorphous metropolitan region and the loss of centrality, as it has been historically conceptualized. Jackson provides a similar perspective; however Jackson’s perspective draws more on the personal nature of these changes. He explains (Jackson, 1985: 280):

The real shift...is the way in which our lives are now centered inside the house, rather than on the neighborhood or the community. With increased use of automobiles, the life of the sidewalk and the front yard has largely disappeared, and the social intercourse that used to be the main characteristic of urban life has vanished. Residential neighborhoods have become a mass of small, private islands; with the back yard functioning as a wholesome, family-oriented, and reclusive place.

In Jackson’s personalized perspective we can see the influences of the Evangelical ideals of home and family and how the automobile has facilitated this change in how we experience urban spaces. This is important in the context of West Hartford Center as a kind of space. The Center is not home, nor is it the central city. The Center is one of many spaces that exist within an *amorphous metropolitan region*, where specific aspects of urban life and sociality take place. So how do we understand these many spaces?

Fishman recognizes a significant change in suburbanization after 1945. In fact, he believes suburbanization has given way to a new kind of city. He explains, “the massive rebuilding that began in 1945 represents not the culmination of the 200 year history of suburbia but rather its end...this massive change is not suburbanization at all but the creation of a new kind of city”

(Fishman, 1987: 183). Fishman's new kind of city resembles Teaford's explanation of the changing role and function of suburbs in relation to the central city. Fishman begins his explanation with "[f]rom its origins in the eighteenth century London, suburbia has served as a specialized portion of the expanding metropolis. Whether it was inside or outside the political borders of the central city, it was always functionally dependent on the urban core" (Fishman, 1987: 183-84). Here Fishman recognizes that the suburb is no longer dependent on the urban core, the symbiotic relationship between city and suburb has ended.

The concept of centrality has been a key element to understanding what is urban and what is suburban. Centrality exists when the suburb is linked to the city via economics or other means. However, once the suburbs are free of those links to the central city, then centrality ends. Fishman explains the loss of centrality in contemporary suburbanization as (Fishman, 1987: 184):

the most important feature of postwar American development has been the almost simultaneous decentralization of housing, industry, specialized services, and office jobs; the consequent breakaway of the urban periphery from a central city it no longer needs; and the creation of a decentralized environment that nevertheless possesses all the economic and technological dynamism we associate with the city. This phenomenon, as remarkable as it is unique is not suburbanization, but a new *city*.

For Fishman, this new city is the 'technoburb', a peripheral zone...that had emerged as a viable socioeconomic unit and the 'techno-city', the whole metropolitan region that has been transformed by the coming of the technoburb (Fishman, 1987: 184).

Fishman's idea of the technoburb and techno-city recognizes the changing form and function of urban space and the multiplicity of this space. However, his terms do not help us understand the specific spaces that exist within this complex urban environment. Therefore, West Hartford Center may be part of both the technoburb and part of the techno-city, yet, neither term helps us understand the kind of space that is The Center.

Fishman's comparison of the techno-city to the "multicentered...pattern that Los Angeles first created" (1987: 184) brings into focus the debates over urban form and growth—the mono-centric city based on centrality versus the multi- or poly-centric urban realms—the debates between the Chicago School and the L.A. School (Park and Burgess, 1925; Scott and Soja, 1996; Soja, 1989, 1996; Dear, 2002). The Chicago School explains "[t]he typical processes of the expansion of the city can best be illustrated, perhaps, by a series of concentric circles, which may be numbered to designate both the successive zones of urban extension and the types of areas differentiated in the process of expansion" (Park and Burgess, 1925: 50). For The Chicago School, the city is based on

centrality and urban growth is propelled from the center outward. Therefore, suburbs are extensions of and tied to the city. For Park, Burgess, and the Chicago School, transportation systems radiating out from the center and intersecting at nodes (Park and Burgess, 1925) create a multi-centric urban region, but it is still linked to the center—the central city.

The L.A. School's urban theory (Scott and Soja, 1996; Soja, 1989, 1996; Dear, 2002) opposition to the Chicago School is based on the pivotal statement "it is no longer the center that organizes the hinterland but the hinterland that determines what remains of the center." From the L.A. School perspective, the hinterland has become more important than the center and centrality. Dear (2002) explains the L.A. School's differentiation from the Chicago School by explaining his economic theory of Keno Capitalism, a checkerboard explanation of how investment touches down in urbanized areas—in any location and at any time. This "checkerboard" means of urbanization destroys centrality and urban growth based on the concentric zone and sector models and has received strong reactions and criticisms (Shearnur, 2008; Hackworth, 2005; Greene, 2008) based on research that does not support the claim of Keno Capitalism.

Dear and the L.A. School also claim there is a shift from "a *modernist* to a *postmodern* city" and Los Angeles becomes the best example of, and laboratory for, the postmodern city. Dear further explains (Dear 2002: 9):

Ed Soja's celebrated tour of Los Angeles...most effectively achieved the conversion of Los Angeles from the exception to the rule—the prototype of late twentieth-century postmodern geographies: 'What better place can there be to illustrate and synthesize the dynamics of capitalist spatialization? In so many ways, Los Angeles is the place where 'it all comes together.' ...One might call the sprawling urban region...a prototopos, a paradigmatic place; or...a mesocosm, an ordered world in which the micro and the macro, the idiographic and nomothetic, the concrete and the abstract, can be seen simultaneously in an articulated and interactive combination'.

The L.A. School assertion that *it all comes together in L.A.* has been criticized by Amin and Graham (1997) and Amin and Thrift (2002). Amin and Graham explain, "[i]f it 'all comes together in Los Angeles, the implication is that all cities are experiencing the trends identifiable in Los Angeles' and that we do not really need to understand these processes" (Amin and Graham, 1997: 417). This supports my argument that urban theory developed in large urban places and generalized to all urban places does little to help us understand smaller urban places.

Other perspectives and critics of modern suburban space also rely on centrality and the loss of centrality to explain suburbia. For Kunstler (1993, 1998), suburbia is a *crushing mass of conformity*—homogeneous landscape, the *Geography of Nowhere*—that implies that all suburban

places are the same and fit into the same generic box—style of development, function, experience, and lack the proper role, function, and authenticity of the central city (see Duany, et. al. 2001). In contrast, Sharon Zukin provides a perspective that recognizes the complexity of trying to explain suburbanization. She states, “[i]n a cultural sense, no single clear-cut landscape represents the contemporary American community. Nor do we have spatial images of the built environment that would adequately describe the landscape of ‘metropolitan deconcentration’—neither urban nor suburban—in which most Americans live” (Zukin, 1991: 20). Gans, in his 1982 forward to his 1967 classic, *The Levittowners*, argues that “Levittown is not a typical suburb, but when so many Americans, of almost all ages and incomes, are suburban, there is no such thing as a typical suburb” (Gans, 1967/1982: vi). For Zukin *no single landscape represents contemporary America* and for Gans there is *no typical suburb*, and Warner in *Streetcar Suburbs*, states that “[t]he Boston metropolis is the product of hundreds of thousands of separate decisions” (Warner, 1962: 3). Other than Kunstler, each of these theorists recognizes the complexity and multiplicity in urban space.

David Brooks in his 2004 book *On Paradise Drive* takes the reader on a drive through the American landscape and identifies many different kinds of urban places. Brooks, a journalist, captures many of the changes that have been occurring in American urbanization. For example, he explains that “[i]n 1950 only 23 percent of Americans lived in suburbia, but now most do, and...many exurban places have broken free from the gravitational pull of the cities and now float in a new space far beyond them” (Brooks, 2004: 2). He not only recognizes the suburbanization of our urban population, but he also acknowledges the loss of centrality or *gravitational pull* as he calls it. In addition, Brooks connects these changes in physical form and spatial configuration to social-economic and social-cultural changes.

Brooks explains these changes in the urban landscape in the context of a way of life when he states, “...we have a huge mass of people who not only don’t live in the cities, they don’t commute to the cities, go to movies in the cities, eat in the cities, or have any significant contact with urban life. They are neither rural, nor urban, nor residents of a bedroom community. They are charting a new way of living” (Brooks, 2004: 3).

The following is his description of one of these suburban landscapes, the affluent inner-ring suburb that he calls “bistroville” (Brooks, 2004: 27):

You usually don’t have to wander far from a Trader Joe’s before you find yourself in bistroville. These are inner-ring restaurant-packed suburban town centers that have performed the neat trick of being clearly suburban while still making it nearly impossible to

park. In these new urbanist zones, highly affluent professionals emerge from their recently renovated lawyer foyers on Friday and Saturday nights, hoping to show off their discerning taste in olive oils. They want sidewalks, stores with overpriced French children's clothes stores to browse in after dinner, six-dollar-a-cone ice-cream vendors, and plenty of restaurants. They don't want suburban formula restaurants. They want places where they can offer disquisitions on the reliability of the risotto, where the predinner complimentary bread slices look like they were baked by Burgundian monks, and where they can top off their dinner with a self-righteous carrot smoothie.

Brooks' pop-culture sociology is interesting because it not only recognizes a multiplicity of places, it also captures a way of life—the conspicuous consumption of an affluent middle-class suburb. However, his description of 'bistroville', like his description of the other places, provides just a small glimpse at one kind of space. It does not capture a complete understanding of life in bistroville or a collective experience or way of life in all of suburbia. In addition, his reduction of 'bistroville' is a very limited means of understanding suburbia as a way of life.

Brooks recognizes a change, not only a change in the location, form, and function of urban spaces, but it is also a change in our society and culture. He explains (Brooks, 2004: 4):

In the exploding exurbs, there are no centers, no recognizable borders and boundaries, and few of the conventional geographic forms—such as towns, villages, and squares—that people in older places take for granted. Up till now in human history, people have lived around some definable place—a tribal ring, an oasis, a river junction, a port, a town square. You could identify a certain personality type with a certain place. There was a New York personality, an L.A. personality. But in exurbia, each individual has his or her own polycentric nodes—the school, the church, the subdevelopment, the office park—and the relationship between those institutions is altered.

The recurring theme of centrality and multi-centrality that is present throughout this discussion of the central city urban and the outlying suburban is interesting in that it recognizes the changing organization and functionality within urbanized regions. It questions, is there one center or many centers? Brooks, when he says “each individual has his or her own polycentric node” (Brooks, 2004: 4), is similar to Jackson when he states “[t]he real shift, however, is the way in which our lives are now centered inside the house.... Residential neighborhoods have become a mass of small, private islands” (Jackson, 1985: 280). This idea of a home-centered or individual-centered centrality becomes profound when Fishman states, “[f]or most Americans, the real center of their lives is neither an urban nor rural nor even a suburban area, as these entities have traditionally been conceived.... The true center of this new city is not some downtown business district but in each residential unit. From that central starting point, the members of the household create their own city from the multitude of destinations that are within suitable driving distance” (Fishman, 1987: 185). The idea that “members of the household [individuals] create their own city” (Fishman,

1987: 185), an individualized-centrality, provides a lens for viewing urban space and how we understand the kind of space that is West Hartford Center.

Reimagining Centrality and Urban Space as Potentiality

How can we reimagine the concept of centrality? The theories of centrality are mostly locational and spatial, layered with the socioeconomic relationships and interactions between these places. For example, from the perspective of centrality as mono-centric (Park, et. al., 1925), the central business district of the central city is conceptualized as the center of the urbanized region and linked through various relationships with all areas within the urbanized region. From the perspective of multi-centrality, the traditional central business district is still at the physical and socioeconomic center of the region. However multiple nodes (centers) have emerged throughout the urbanized region, and all nodes and the central business district are linked together through various relationships like a spider's web. In both these examples it is the physical place, the spatial location, that is the focus of centrality—the spatial, social, and economic relationships between various nodes and central places.

The concept of centrality asserts that central places, be they a mono-centric central city or multi-centric urban realm, exert a social-economic force over the area around them that links the center to the hinterland, as was the case in Fishman's (1987) London and Clapham and Jackson's (1985) Brooklyn Heights. This concept of centrality as a force exerted on the area around the center captures the individuals that exist within that area, the hinterland. In this regard, the individual's behavior is influenced by the existence of the built-environment—the existence of a center or centers—shaped by the mono-centric or multi-centric pull of centrality. But what happens if we question this space and place-based centrality and reimagine centrality, as suggested by Brooks (2004), Fishman (1987), and Jackson (1985) as an individualized-centrality?

To reimagine centrality, first we need to reimagine the city, the urban and the suburban. Amin and Thrift (2002) provide such a means to reimagine the city and how we understand the urban. Unlike the explanations above of city and suburbs as physical forms and bounded spaces, Amin and Thrift explain, that “contemporary cities are certainly not systems with their own internal coherence. The city's boundaries have become far too permeable and stretched, both geographically and socially, for it to be theorized as a whole. The city has no completeness, no centre, no fixed parts. Instead, it is an amalgam of often disjointed processes and social

heterogeneity, a place of near and far connections, a concatenation of rhythms; always edging in new directions” (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 8). Amin and Thrift free us of the bounded city and centrality, the container with a definable center, space, volume, and perimeter. Being free of this container and its definable parts allows us to reimagine a new form of city, a city of potentiality and a new form of centrality—a centrality that is not only formed in space based on the existence of a physical location or node—but a centrality that is created by the independent actions of the individual and the many. Lefebvre points to this when he states, “[t]he fact that any point can become central is the meaning of urban space-time” (Lefebvre, [1970] 2003: 116). If any urban space can become central at any point in time, then centrality is not only a physical place, a spatial location, but it is also created by things and actions (including people and their actions) that accumulate and occupy a given space at any moment in time. Lefebvre explains, “[v]irtually, anything can pile up, a festival unfold, an event—terrifying or pleasant—can occur. This is why urban space is so fascinating: centrality is always possible” (Lefebvre, [1970] 2003: 130). Using this as a framework for reimagining centrality, the kind of space that is West Hartford Center becomes a piling up of things—materials, ideas, businesses, people, and sociality.

In this context, traditional centrality as a physical location and place is only half of the equation and the mono-centric city versus the poly-centric city is less significant. Centrality, reimagined as a personal or individualized concept and something that can occur anywhere and at any time is the second half of the equation and opens up how we conceptualize centrality and urban space. Thus urban and suburban spaces become a singular space with multiple forms, functions, and most import, potentiality. The urban becomes a pliable space defined and molded by its realization of potentialities at any moment in time and the desires, needs, and choices of individuals made possible through varying modes of mobility. From this emerges a new city; the physical place as the city that we have known melds into a personalized city that we come to know through our own actions. The city is no longer one place, but many places, defined not only by its location in space, its physical form, or its functions—the city is now defined as a place of realized (or unrealized) potential and experienced by the individual and many.

In this reimagined city, the question is no longer whether the center shapes the hinterland or if the hinterland defines what remains of the center. The new question is: How do we understand the multiplicity of urban space as potentiality, experienced by the individual and the many? How do specific spaces, like The Center, realize their potentiality in the piling up of ideas, individuals, and investment?

The city as potentiality becomes an unbounded space with no fixed center(s) or edges, only a multiplicity of spaces with the potential of realized centrality. Each space is defined not only by its location or physical design, but also by the potential it provides. In the reimagined city of potentiality space is fluid, changing, and continually remade and redefined—what was once a center is no longer and what will become a center is unknown. The city as potentiality, at any point in time, contains spaces that realize their potential and other spaces that don't.

By reimagining the city as potentiality we free ourselves from the definitions and debates over what is urban and suburban (including lifestyles) and how we understand their similarities and differences. In this context urban space becomes a platform “to create a situation, the urban situation, where different things occur one after another and do not exist separately, but according to their difference” (Lefebvre, [1970] 2003: 117). Therefore, the remaking of space opens up—moves beyond urban and suburban or gentrification and regeneration—to be reimagined as spaces that work. What kinds of spaces realize their potentiality and why? How is it that a specific space becomes central, attracting the individual and the many? How do things, ideas, and concepts pile up in these places?

Reimagining centrality as individualized and the city as unbounded and a multiplicity of spaces with potentiality, any of which can become central at any moment in time, provides a means of exploring the kind of space that is The Center. In this context, West Hartford Center becomes a platform (see Johnson, 2010) for potentiality—a physical space that collects ideas, individuals, and investments. As these ideas, individuals, and investments pile up, a centrality of place emerges. The ideas may be a new business, a type of product or service, or new means of providing an experience. The individuals may be the property owners, business owners and entrepreneurs, the worker, or the consumers who utilize The Center as one of many spaces in their overall urban experiences based on their individualized centrality. The investments may be financial or social—the renting of commercial space, renovations, paying for parking, purchasing a glass of wine or dinner, meeting a friend, reading a newspaper in a coffee shop, or walking one's dog. Together, these actions and activities are a coalescence of potentiality that creates a place, an experience, a kind of space. How do we understand this space? How did it emerge? How did it evolve, and does it continue to be remade?

Literature Review

Paper II. Remaking of Space: Gentrification and Regeneration

Introduction

In paper one I explored how urban and suburban spaces are conceptualized and how urban theory has used centrality and poly-centrality to explain the urbanization of metropolitan regions. I also explored a number of spaces that have been defined in an attempt to better describe our changing urban and suburban landscapes. I ended the paper arguing for a reimagining of urban space as potentiality. In addition, I argue that centrality and poly-centrality have given way to an individualized centrality and that any of the multiplicity of spaces that exist within metropolitan regions have the potential to become central at any moment in time. Therefore, the city is conceptualized as potentiality and how we understand specific spaces is dependent on how these spaces achieve their potentiality or not.

In this paper I will explore the literature related to the remaking of urban space through the lens of both gentrification and state-sponsored regeneration in an attempt to understand the kind of space that is West Hartford Center. I have chosen the gentrification literature since it is the comprehensive study and discussion on the remaking of space. As discussed above, The Center is a resilient space that has matured and evolved over time. In addition, I have argued how urban theorists have defined and conceptualized urban and suburban spaces has created a gap between what is urban and what is suburban and that The Center is an undefined space that can neither be understood as urban or suburban. In this paper I will argue that the literature on gentrification and regeneration also create gaps in how we understand and conceptualize the remaking of space—that the processes of gentrification and regeneration do little to help us understand the kind of space that is The Center or how the remaking of this space has occurred.

This paper will be presented in four sections. The first, Understanding Gentrification, will explore the definitions and debates regarding gentrification and regeneration. The second, Smaller Urban Places and Experiences, will explore the application of gentrification theories and strategies from large urban places to smaller urban places. The third, Gentrification and Suburbanization, will explore the similarities between gentrification and suburbanization. The fourth, The Kind of Space

that is West Hartford Center, will explore the remaking of The Center in the context of what is learned in sections one, two, and three.

Understanding Gentrification

West Hartford Center is a mature suburban center that in recent years has experienced change—a remaking of space—from a mundane town center to a vibrant regional center of middle-class sociality and consumption. The intent of my research is to better understand how this remaking of space occurred, what kind of space The Center has become, and to develop a vocabulary to explain this kind of space. Therefore I will explore gentrification, including regeneration, to better understand how gentrification may or may not help to explain the remaking of The Center and the kind of space that is The Center.

To begin this discussion, it is imperative that gentrification be defined. The word gentrification was first coined by Ruth Glass in 1964 when she defined gentrification as a means of understanding neighborhood change. She explains (Glass [1964] in Lees, et. al., 2010: 7):

One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes—upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews of cottages—two rooms up and two down—have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences. Larger Victorian houses, downgraded in an earlier or recent period—which were used as lodging houses or were otherwise in multiple occupation—have been upgraded once again. Nowadays, many flats or ‘houselets’ (in terms of the new real estate snob jargon). The current social status and value of such dwellings are frequently in inverse relation to their size, and in any case enormously inflated by comparison with previous levels in their neighborhoods. Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced, and the whole social character of the district is changed.

Since Glass coined the word, gentrification has attracted much interest, inspired volumes of research, and created many debates on the causes and effects of gentrification. However, gentrification existed long before 1964. Lees explains, “[g]entrification, however, began before the term itself was coined. As Clark (2005: 260) points out, ‘...it is careless to turn this into an assumption that we have here the origin of the phenomenon’. Neil Smith (1996a: 34-40) outlines some of its significant precursors, for example, the Haussmannization of Paris. Baron Haussmann, a member of Napoleon III’s court, demolished the residential areas in which poor people lived in central Paris, displacing them to make room for the city’s now famous tree-lined boulevards which showcase the city’s monuments” (Lees, et. al., 2008: 5). The Haussmann plan and the restructuring

of central Paris is important because it provides a historical context of gentrification and state-sponsored regeneration (see Peck and Ward, 2002; Hannigan, 1998; Harvey, 2000, 2006). While Glass was describing a mostly naturally occurring phenomenon of change, the Haussmann plan and the resulting redevelopment of central Paris, link both gentrification and regeneration.

Sharon Zukin, in *Loft Living*, provides a simplified explanation of gentrification. She explains that gentrification “occurs when a higher class of people move into a neighborhood, make improvements to property that cause market prices and tax assessments to rise, and so drives out the previous, lower-class residents” (Zukin, [1982] 1989: 5). Zukin’s definition is similar to that of Freeman, who explains gentrification “is a process that benefits the haves to the detriment of the have-nots. It is a continuation of the history of marginalized groups being oppressed by the more powerful. And always, gentrification leads to the displacement of poor marginalized groups” (Freeman, 2006: 59).

The influx of a ‘higher class’ into a neighborhood is a key ingredient of gentrification. However, gentrification as defined by Glass, Zukin, Freeman, and Smith is also dependent on the displacement of the poor. Lees explains, “...the negative consequences of gentrification—the rising housing expense burden for poor renters, and the personal catastrophes of displacement, eviction, and homelessness—are not simply isolated local anomalies. They are symptoms of fundamental inequities of capitalist property markets, which favor the creation of urban environments to serve the needs of capital accumulation, often at the expense of the needs of home, community, family, and everyday social life” (Lees, et. al., 2008: 73). While I do not deny the existence of displacement or the negative outcomes of displacement, the process of neighborhood upgrading and its negative effects may not be so definitive. For example, Freeman documents the reactions and views of residents already living in neighborhoods that were experiencing gentrification and states, “[m]y conversations with residents of Clinton Hill and Harlem, however, reveal a more nuanced reaction toward gentrification. If gentrification were a movie character, he would be both villain and knight in shining armor, welcome by some and feared and loathed by others, and even dreaded and welcomed at the same time by the same people” (Freeman, 2006: 60). Freeman’s research demonstrated that many residents welcomed the upgrading of the neighborhood, as well as the stores and amenities that accompanied the upgrading, and at the same time they expressed concerns about displacement.

Accepting that displacement may result from gentrification, how do we understand gentrification as a remaking of space? The above explanations and studies of gentrification that are

biased toward residential neighborhoods, the displacement of the poor, and central city neighborhoods do little to help us understand West Hartford Center—a middle-class suburban commercial center that has not experienced the same transformation discussed by Zukin ([1982] 1989) and Freeman (2006) above. Therefore, we need to broaden our understanding of the remaking of space.

Residential displacement of the poor has been cast as a key issue in the study of gentrification. However, Zukin argues that gentrification can result in the displacement of not only the poor, but also of businesses. She explains, “in the case of lofts, the social class distinctions between old (artist) residents and new (non-artist) residents are somewhat blurred, and the real victims of gentrification through loft living are not residents at all. Before some of the artists were chased out of their lofts by rising rents, they had displaced small manufacturers, distributors, jobbers, and wholesale and retail sales operations” (Zukin, [1982] 1989: 5).

Zukin’s recognition of business displacement as a result of a form of gentrification demonstrates the complexity of displacement and how the debates and research into gentrification have widened. This widening of gentrification has created definitions of specific forms of gentrification. Lees explains, “[a]s the process of gentrification has mutated over time, so have the terms used to explain and describe it.... The term ‘rural gentrification’...refers to gentrification of rural areas, and it studies the link between new middle-class settlement, socioeconomic and cultural transformations of the rural landscape, and the subsequent displacement of marginalization of low-income groups” (Lees, et. al., 2008: 129). Lees also recognizes “new-build gentrification...newly constructed townhouses and condominiums” and “super-gentrification, or financification” (Lees, 2000, 2003b; Butler and Lees, 2006). “Here we find a further level of gentrification which is superimposed on an already gentrified neighborhood, one that involves a higher financial or economic investment in the neighborhood than previous waves of gentrification and requires a qualitatively different level of economic resource...driven largely by globally connected workers employed in the City of London or on Wall Street” (Lees, et. al., 2008: 130). Last, Lees identifies “‘Commercial gentrification’...the gentrification of commercial premises or commercial streets or areas; it has also been called ‘boutiqueification’ or ‘retail gentrification’” (Lees, et. al., 2008: 131).

Unfortunately, these definitions of gentrification still create problems in understanding the remaking of West Hartford Center as a form of gentrification. The Center, for example is not the result of rural gentrification, or new-build gentrification, or super-gentrification. Commercial

gentrification may be the closest form of gentrification to help us understand The Center. However, West Hartford and The Center do not meet the criteria for any form of gentrification. For example, West Hartford is a suburban community, not a central city neighborhood. In addition, West Hartford has always been a middle-class community, not a once low-income community that has been transformed by displacement of the poor. Also, The Center has gone through a slow process of maturing and evolving, which has included changes in business and some upgrading, but this slow change cannot be explained as commercial gentrification. Most important, the remaking of The Center has not included “the displacement of poor marginalized groups” to use Freeman’s (2006) words. Therefore, we still have an incomplete understanding of The Center and the remaking of this space.

Smaller Urban Places and Experiences

I argue above that the most common American urban experience is a smaller urban experience. However, the majority of urban theory has been developed based on large urban places such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles and then applied to other places regardless of site, situation, size, or scale. Amin and Graham criticize this notion of one size fits all urban theory when they state “the notion that ‘it all comes together in Los Angeles’ (City 1996; Soja 1989) has been most influential” (Amin and Graham, 1997: 416). The focus on large cities as the one size fits all explanation of urban theory is also present in the gentrification literature. Zukin, in the context of loft living, demonstrates this bias toward the large urban places when she explains, “[t]his new housing style emerged along canals of Amsterdam, near the London docks, and in the old sweatshop districts of New York. Soon it spread to cities like Boston, Philadelphia, Galveston, and Portland, whose nineteenth-century factories and warehouses had fallen on hard times” (Zukin, [1982] 1989: 1). However, the majority of urban dwellers in America live in smaller urban places, like metropolitan Hartford, that have not experienced the same scale of gentrification as have large urban places. Therefore, I argue that it is unrealistic to assume that these processes based on large urban places apply equally in smaller urban places.

Lees, who argues to reenergize the study of gentrification (Lees, 2000: 402), through a ‘geography of gentrification’ first proposed by Ley (1996) explains, “[t]here has long been a bias towards research on large metropolitan cities in the gentrification literature” (Lees, et. al., 2008: 171-172). Lees’ concern is that redevelopment schemes developed in large central cities, are now

being adopted in small cities. She explains that, “small cities borrow regeneration policies, plans, and ideas from bigger ones. Think of the way that waterfront redevelopment, repackaged by those people who first did Faneuil Hall in Boston, then South Street in New York and Inner Harbor Baltimore, sold the idea of putting the old commercial city back in touch with its waterfront” (Lees, et. al., 2008: 171-172). This is also true in Hartford where the state-sponsored redevelopment schemes, such as the Adriean’s Landing (a new convention center, hotel, science museum, and shopping district) in Downtown Hartford and adjacent to the riverfront, has been constructed.

Lees explains how government reports in Britain and the United States further spread gentrification policies down the urban hierarchy, “[t]he problem with the British *Towards an urban renaissance* and the American *The state of the cities* reports is that the policies advocated by them are ‘one size fits all’. Both the Urban Task Force and HUD set out to plug the gap between successful cities and lagging cities—mostly small or mid-size cities—yet the plugs they promote are taken from examples in successful larger cities such as London. These plugs may not be appropriate for smaller cities such as Manchester or Sheffield, England, or Portland Maine, in the USA” (Lees, 2000: 391-392). This ‘one size fits all’ discussion of an urban renaissance does not apply to The Center, a suburban town center. However, the discussion may apply to a smaller city like Hartford and provides a context to understanding the remaking and definition of The Center.

Hartford, since 1954 and the conception of the City’s first redevelopment scheme, Constitution Plaza (Hartford Courant, 1954: 19), has utilized similar schemes implemented in large cities. Such schemes have included building sports arenas, riverfront redevelopment, downtown housing (including lofts), shopping malls and districts, and tourist attractions. However, Hartford’s implementation of such schemes has resulted in little or no success in remaking Hartford socially, racially, or economically. This calls into question the scale at which gentrification, and more specifically, state-sponsored regeneration schemes take place and their ability to regenerate or remake smaller urban spaces. Ironically, while Hartford and the State of Connecticut invested greatly in such schemes in Hartford, West Hartford Center, three and half miles west of Downtown Hartford, emerged as a successful location with little to no state sponsorship.

Hartford demonstrates the failure of ‘one size fits all’ urban policy in the context of housing and neighborhood regeneration policy. For example, Hartford’s utilization of the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, cited by Zukin (2010) and Freeman (2006), as a gentrification scheme in New York City—the primary funding mechanism for its neighborhood reinvestment schemes. Poland explains in his report on Hartford’s Healthy Neighborhood program

that the City of Hartford neighborhood redevelopment strategies have done nothing more than cluster low-income households into already low-income neighborhoods (Poland, 2009: 31):

After decades of redevelopment projects, the North Frog Hollow neighborhood is still one of Hartford's most distressed neighborhoods. It is characterized by a low- and very-low-income population, an aging and deteriorating housing stock, a weak real estate market, and all of the negative traits and characteristics associated with a distressed neighborhood, i.e., crime, poverty, litter, graffiti, drug dealing, and so on. After decades of investment in the production of affordable housing in the neighborhood, little has changed in its conditions. More important, years of primarily producing low-income housing and clustering low-income households have caused the neighborhood real estate market to be undermined, and subsidy and low-income restrictions (many for 30 years) have all but sealed the fate of this neighborhood as a low-income neighborhood even though some of those restrictions have or will soon expire. In addition, no new market (demand) was created for this or existing housing, further exacerbating the problem.

While the LIHTC program may be utilized as a gentrification tool in New York City, the same is not true in Hartford. The Hartford experience supports Lees' claim that the spread of such policies—the utilization of successful schemes in large cities—down the urban hierarchy as 'one size fits all' urban regeneration schemes may have negative consequences. Unfortunately, Lees continues the bias toward large urban places in her call for a 'geography of gentrification'. Lees states (Lees, 2000: 402):

...the way to reenergize the study of gentrification is to focus on what Ley (1996) has called the 'geography of gentrification'. It is the 'geography of gentrification' that emerges as the common denominator for both the recent changes in the gentrification process and the holes in the gentrification literature I have identified. There are four (inter-related) 'new wrinkles' which research into the 'geography of gentrification' need to address: 1) financiers – super-gentrification; 2) third-world immigration – the global city; 3) black/ethnic minority gentrification – race and gentrification; and 4) liveability/urban policy – discourse on gentrification.

The first two areas of research that Lees calls for, super-gentrification and the global city, provide little, based on the size and scale of urban places, in terms of understanding gentrification in a smaller city such as Hartford. If there is to be a 'geography of gentrification' and a better understanding of urban geography in general, then we need to have a better understanding of smaller cities and smaller metropolitan places. The neighborhood of Harlem in New York City has a population similar to the population of the City of Hartford and super-gentrification (Lees, et. al., 2008) in Brooklyn Heights, across the East River from Wall Street, cannot and does not help us understand gentrification in Hartford.

More important, these discussions do little to help us understand the remaking of West Hartford Center. The Center is not Baltimore's Inner Harbor or New York's South Street Seaport.

Nor is it the result of a HUD Hope VI program or the utilization of a LIHTC scheme. Therefore, gentrification and state-sponsored regeneration, based mostly on large urban places provide little in helping us understand The Center—a resilient space that has matured and evolved over decades—as a remaking of space.

Suburban Places and Experiences

I also argue that the American urban experience is not only a smaller urban metropolitan experience, but that it is also a suburban experience. However, the research on gentrification—the remaking of space—has focused, not only on large urban places, but almost exclusively on central city neighborhoods. Martin Phillips, citing Smith, explains this as he argues for rural gentrification to be included in a ‘geography of gentrification’. Phillips explains, “[a]s Smith (2002: 390) has recently argued, gentrification is widely seen as a phenomenon ‘specific to a handful of inner-city areas in large metropolitan areas’” (Phillips, 2004: 6). However, much of the research on gentrification has juxtaposed gentrification and suburbanization. For example, Bruegmann states (Bruegmann, 2005: 4):

Gentrification at the center and sprawl at the edge have been flipsides of the same coin. In a typically paradoxical situation, no matter how much the new, more affluent residents profess to like the ‘gritty’ urban character of the place, so different in their minds to the subdivision of the far suburbs, what makes the neighbourhood attractive today are less the things that are traditionally urban but those that are not. The most important of these are sharply lowered population densities, fewer poor residents, less manufacturing activity, and the things that the Lower East Side finally shares with suburbs: reliable plumbing, supermarkets with good produce, and a substantial cohort of middle-class residents.

The idea of gentrification and suburbanization being the ‘flipside of the same coin’ is relevant in the context of The Center, a suburban space. In addition, the Haussmann plan and the rebuilding of central Paris also creates an interesting historical link between gentrification and suburbanization. Fishman (1987) provides a historical context and explanation for differences in American and French urbanization. He explains that America would follow the Anglo/Evangelical tradition of middle-class suburbanization and that “[t]he French bourgeoisie also felt strongly the ideal of domesticity, but lacking the Puritan tradition of the Evangelicals, they saw no contradiction between family life and the pleasures of urban culture” (Fishman, 1987: 110). The end result would be the middle- and upper-class in America moving to the suburbs and the French middle- and upper-middle class inhabiting the central city.

Fishman's discussion of Haussmann's plan demonstrates an early form of state-sponsored regeneration and public-private partnerships discussed by Zukin ([1982] 1989, 2010) and Smith (1996). Fishman explains, "Haussmann's reliance on state power and state supported banks and corporations... Haussmann mobilized the Parisian building industry to accomplish what private enterprise unaided could never have attempted. With power and profit both committed to the task of middle-class housing, the boulevards were soon lined with the apartment houses of Haussmann's vision" (Fishman, 1987: 113).

This historical context raises questions regarding gentrification and suburbanization. For example, are gentrification and suburbanization the same process only differentiated by spatial location and configuration? Are gentrification and suburbanization nothing more than specific forms of middle-class habitation of space? These two questions provide an interesting framework for exploring central city gentrification, sprawling suburbanization, and the remaking of space. In addition, since The Center is a suburban location, the similarities and differences of gentrification and suburbanization may help us to better understand the remaking of West Hartford Center.

Gentrification and Suburbanization

Neil Smith in his book *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city*, claims, "[a]s part of the experience of postwar suburbanization, the US city came to be seen as an 'urban wilderness': it was, and for many still is, the habitat of disease and disorder, crime and corruption, drug and danger" (Smith, 1996: XIII). There is some truth to Smith's statement about the negative perspective of the American central city (see Riesman, 1957; Mumford, 1961). However, his assumption that it is "part of the experience of postwar suburbanization" may be shortsighted in a historical context, resulting in an incomplete understanding of modern American perspectives of the central city. Fishman (1987) and Jackson (1985) document the beginning of suburbanization in America to a period between the 1840s and 1880s. Fishman documents that the American perspective of an 'urban wilderness' (to use Smith's phrase) has a much older history than postwar suburbanization when he states, "[e]very true suburb is the outcome of two opposing forces, an attraction toward the opportunities of the great city and a simultaneous repulsion against urban life" (Fishman, 1987: 26). Smith's shortsighted historical account of the 'urban wilderness' makes it easy for him to assert that gentrification is the 'new frontier' and "[i]nsofar as gentrification infects working-class communities, displaces poor households, and converts whole neighborhoods into

bourgeois enclaves, the frontier ideology rationalizes social differentiation and exclusion as natural, inevitable. The poor and working class are all too easily defined as ‘uncivil,’ on the wrong side of a heroic dividing line, as savages and communists” (Smith, 1996: 17). However, Fishman (1987) explains that in eighteenth century London, the poor and working class were “defined as ‘uncivil’ ...as savages...” and that as Fishman explains, “[a] location like Clapham gave them [the Bourgeois] the ability to take the family out of London.... Unlike the City of London, this community did not have to be shared with the urban poor” (Fishman, 1987: 53). Gentrification, portrayed by Smith as a middle-class aversion to the ‘urban wilderness’ that needs to be tamed and the displacement of or separation from the poor is not a new phenomenon and is no different, other than spatially, than the suburban ideologies that drove middle-class suburbanization—a move away from the poor rather than the displacement of the poor. In this context, while it may be unjust to displace the poor through gentrification of central city neighborhoods, abandoning the poor in the central city through suburbanization may not be seen as unjust.

It is not my intent to condemn Smith for his historical perspective of the ‘urban wilderness’, but rather to show that a greater historical perspective alters how we view the ‘urban wilderness’. To Smith’s credit, he does provide an interesting economic perspective that recognizes similarities or interconnected aspects of suburbanization and gentrification (Smith, 1996: 39-40):

It would be foolish to think that partial geographical reversal in the focus of urban reinvestment implies the converse, the end of the suburbs. Suburbanization and gentrification are certainly interconnected. The dramatic suburbanization of the urban landscape in the last century or more provided an alternative geographical locus for capital accumulation and thereby encouraged a comparative disinvestment at the center—most intensely so in the US. But there is really no sign that the rise of gentrification has diminished contemporary suburbanization. Quite the opposite. The same forces of urban restructuring that have ushered new landscapes of gentrification to the central city have also transformed the suburbs. The recentralization of office, retail, recreation and hotel functions has been accompanied by a parallel decentralization which has led to much more functionally integrated suburbs with their own more or less urban centres—edge cities as they have been called (Garreau 1991). If suburban development has in most places been more volatile since the 1970s in response to the cycles of economic expansion and contraction, suburbanization still represents a more powerful force than gentrification in the geographical fashioning of the metropolis.

What is interesting about Smith’s perspective of ‘capital accumulation,’ ‘the same forces of urban restructuring that have ushered new landscapes of gentrification to the central city’ that ‘have also transformed the suburbs,’ and that ‘suburbanization still represents a more powerful force than gentrification in the geographical fashioning of the metropolis’ may be manifestations of

the suburban ideal in the form of consumer demand that Smith downplays in the process of gentrification.

Smith, in defending his position regarding consumer demand, argues, “I do not mean to suggest here that consumer demand is illusory or that it finds no expression in the market. Nor do I mean to suggest that such demand is unchanging or impotent” (Smith, 1996: 108-109). He continues, “But the conundrum of gentrification does not turn on explaining where middle-class demand comes from. Rather it turns on explaining the essentially *geographical* question why central and inner areas of the city, which for decades could not satisfy the demands of the middle class, now appear to do so handsomely. If indeed demand structures have changed, we need to explain why these changed demands have led to a *spatial* reemphasis on the central and inner city” (Smith, 1996: 108-109). However, only a few pages later—if we consider gentrification and suburbanization to be manifestations of middle-class ideals, forms of habitation, and as spaces that work—he answers his own question by saying, “[w]here such modern infill occurs in gentrifying neighborhoods, whether in Baltimore’s Otterbein, in central London’s Barrett Estates, or in Brisbane’s Spring Hill, the impression is one of having come full circle, in geographical and cultural as well as architectural terms. This infill gentrification is accomplishing a suburbanization of the city” (Smith, 1996: 115). Gentrification is accomplishing a suburbanization of the city (see also Hammett and Hammett, 2007)—the manifestation of suburban ideals—middle class ideals—in what Smith considers traditional urban spaces. If this is the case, that gentrification is the suburbanization of the city the gentrification literature becomes nothing more than an anti-suburbanization literature and is in opposition to middle class spaces that work.

Smith’s references to ‘edge cities’ creates another interesting juxtaposition of gentrification and suburbanization—the edge city representing as Smith says, ‘more or less urban centres’ (Smith, 1996: 40) in suburban locations. In this context, the edge city is more urban than the suburban, but less urban than the central city. Therefore, the economics of gentrification, even in a suburban location, is maintained within the context of the urban, not suburban. This is interesting when at the same time Amin and Thrift argue “[t]he city’s boundaries have become far too permeable and stretched, both geographically and socially, for it to be theorized as a whole. The city has no completeness, no centre, no fixed parts. Instead it is an amalgam of often disjointed processes and social heterogeneity, a place of near and far connections, a concatenation of rhythms; always edging in new directions” (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 8). Gentrification and suburbanization look very similar in the context of ‘permeable and stretched’ geographic and social urban boundaries. Therefore, the

remaking of space (be it through gentrification or suburbanization) becomes a socio-economic and socio-cultural manifestation of upper- and middle-class habitation of space.

Freeman also juxtaposes gentrification and suburbanization by stating that “[f]or those seeking an alternative to the cookie cutter subdivisions of modern suburbia, architecturally distinctive neighborhoods offer an attractive alternative” (Freeman, 2006: 49). While Freeman recognizes the differences in spatial location and architectural form, his statement recognizes that there is little or no difference in middle-class ideals.

Zukin, based on the phenomenon of loft living (Zukin, [1982] 1989) and middle-class ideals of authenticity (Zukin, 2010), provides an interesting insight into what could be deemed as cultural changes in middle-class ideals and the spatial configuration of suburban land use. She explains, “[o]f course, a middle-class preference for strictly residential neighborhoods pre-dates the suburbs by many years. Since the rise of separate middle-class and working-class housing markets in the 1840s, urban houses and neighborhoods have been predominantly either residential or commercial. Most people still prefer purely residential housing and neighborhoods – for either escape or exclusivity. But symbolically, the mixed use in loft living reconciles home and work and recaptures some of the former urban vitality” (Zukin, [1982] 1989: 68). Zukin also notes that over time the first occupiers of the lofts, the artists, are often displaced by wealthier non-artists. She explains, “[i]n a way, loft living appears to be related to the modern ‘gentrification’ process...in the case of lofts, the social class distinctions between old (artist) residents and new (non-artist) residents are somewhat blurred, and the real victims of gentrification through loft living are not residents at all. Before some of the artists were chased out of their lofts by rising rents, they had displaced small manufacturers, distributors, jobbers, and wholesale and retail sales operations” (Zukin, 1989: 5). Therefore, “the mixed use in loft living [reconciliation of] home and work [that recaptures] some of the former urban vitality” is erased by middle-class gentrifiers who utilize the lofts solely as residential spaces—reaffirming the middle-class preference for separation of use.

In describing the media influences in “allure of new hip neighborhoods” (Zukin, 2010: 16) she states, “[a]t the same time, new urban lifestyle media for the middle-class, led on the East Coast by *New York* magazine, created a buzz around the remaining small shops selling ethnic foods in old neighborhoods...and taught readers how to buy ‘the best for less’ in the city’s new wine shops, boutiques, and ethnic restaurants. The ways *New York* depicted the sensual variety of urban life glamorized the old neighborhoods, showing them as great places for consuming authenticity—the authenticity that modernizers and suburbanites had lost” (Zukin, 2010: 16). She later states, “[t]he

East Village still enjoys the image of an oasis of authenticity in Wal-Mart wasteland, which tends to make living here even more expensive” (Zukin, 2010: 104).

Zukin’s argument, as well as that of Smith (1996) and Freeman (2006), begins to shed light on West Hartford Center. The remaking of The Center is possibly a manifestation, not of suburban ideals, but of middle class, or for Smith, the manifestation of shifting demand in locations. In this context, it is possible that gentrification (urban) and suburbanization (suburban) are less about spatial location and more about middle class preferences and habitation of space. From this perspective, The Center, like the East Village, may be ‘an oasis of authenticity in Wal-Mart wasteland’ (Zukin, 2010) of suburbia.

The idea of the city as authentic and the suburbs as in-authentic or as a ‘Wal Mart wasteland’ is common in the both the gentrification and suburban literature. For example, Andres Duany et. al. in *Suburban Nation*, writes “[s]uburban sprawl...ignores historical precedents and human experience.... Unlike the traditional neighborhood model, which evolved organically as a response to human needs, suburban sprawl is an idealized artificial system” (Duany, et. al., 2000: 4). Kunstler describes suburbia as a *Geography of Nowhere*, “depressing, brutal, ugly, unhealthy, and spiritually degrading—the jive-plastic commuter tract home wastelands” (Kunstler, 1993: 10). The criticisms of both gentrification and suburbanization sound like what Richard Lloyd (2006) describes as imperialist nostalgia when he explains that “newcomers” in Chicago’s Wicker Park neighborhood “soon resented those that followed” (Lloyd, 2006: 96). Lloyd further explains “that their own presence was heavily implicated in neighborhood change, they may have been enacting a version of what Rosaldo calls *imperialist nostalgia*, ‘where people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed’” (Lloyd, 2006: 96-97). This is ironic in the context of Zukin (1989, 2010), a self-proclaimed gentrifier and loft liver.

Duncan and Duncan in *Landscapes of Privilege: The Politics of the Aesthetic in an American suburb*, a case study of Bedford, New York (a wealthy suburb 44 miles northwest of New York City and part of the metropolitan region and housing market of all the gentrified New York City neighborhoods discussed by Freeman (2006), Lees, et. al., (2008), Smith (1996), and Zukin ([1982] 1989, 2010), provide some similar perspectives of suburbs and suburban life. In addition, their accounts of Bedford demonstrate just how similar a wealthy suburban community is to a wealthy gentrified neighborhood.

The wealthy suburbanites of Bedford ironically share the same anti-suburban views expressed by Zukin (2010), Duany (2001), Kunstler (1993), Freeman (2006), and Smith (1996). Duncan and Duncan explain, “Bedford Village is no longer a rural village, but a rural-looking suburb, or exurb. Many people in Bedford claim to hate suburbs. In fact, to contemporary residents, suburbia conjures up a terrifying vision of spreading so-called ‘placeless’ and ‘ticky-tacky’ Levittowns of the early postwar period. They fear being swallowed up by this suburban sprawl” (Duncan and Duncan, 2004: 24).

Martin Phillips, while making his argument for a rural gentrification provides a similar finding regarding perspectives of suburbs, by citing Caulfield (1994: 165), who states, “[f]or many of his respondents, inner cities and ‘small town, rural environments’ constituted landscapes of desire, both being seen as desirable alternatives to the ‘landscapes of despair’ of suburban space. At the very least, such comments seem to suggest that second space geographies of gentrification may have some rural elements within them, and also might raise questions as to the degree of difference between constructions of inner city and rural space” (Phillips, 2004: 14-15). In both these accounts, we again see an *imperialist nostalgia* expressed by suburban residents.

While Smith (1996, 2002) notes the importance of globalization in relation to gentrification and Zukin (2010) documents the role of authenticity and the middle-class desire for the authentic to explain both gentrification and specific kinds of urban spaces, Duncan and Duncan provide similar reasoning to explain Bedford. They explain, “[i]n the United States...globalization has produced a nostalgia for small town communities. It is a longing for simpler, quieter, more wholesome places that have an air of historical authenticity and an aura of uniqueness about them, without forcing oneself to be divorced from the many benefits of globalization enjoyed by the more privileged members of society. The sense of community that is longed for is more a symbol or aesthetic of community than the reality of close-knit social relations” (Duncan and Duncan, 2004: 5). This statement sounds like the same argument on both sides of the coin (Bruegmann, 2005)—an authentic historic gentrified neighborhood or a small town suburban community.

Smith (1996, 2002), Zukin ([1982] 1989, 2010), Freeman (2006), Harvey (2006), and Lees, et. al. (2008, 2010) emphasize the importance of government in the process of gentrification. They note that public financing of development, public-private partnerships in the form of Business Improvement Districts, the privatization of public spaces, and the use of zoning regulations to both control and promote specific forms of development all play a role in the gentrification of urban neighborhoods. Duncan and Duncan demonstrate similar forces at work in suburban Bedford. They

explain, “Bedford is a site of aesthetic consumption practices in which the residents achieve social status by preserving and enhancing the beauty of their town. They accomplish this through highly restrictive zoning and environmental protection legislation and by preserving as much undeveloped land as possible through the creation of nature preserves. Thus we argue that romantic ideology, localism, anti-urbanism, anti-modernism, and an ethnic- and class-based aesthetic all lend a political dimension to the desire to live in a beautiful place such as Bedford” (Duncan and Duncan, 2004: 7). If gentrification is the suburbanization of urban space, then suburbanization in Bedford is the suburbanization of an already existing suburban space. Therefore, suburbanization and gentrification are more about cultural ideals and socioeconomic status than spatial location.

Duncan and Duncan continue, “[s]ince the late nineteenth century, Bedford’s elite has been cosmopolitan and urban in its public and business life, but deeply anti-urban in many aspects of its private life. Bedford has been produced as a highly controlled space, a semi-privatized domain in which supposedly authentic rural republican American identity can be nurtured. Its landscapes are treated as aesthetic productions, highly controlled so that as far as the eye can see, even if one drives or rides on horseback for many miles, one views nothing industrial or distasteful” (Duncan and Duncan, 2004: 9). The ‘highly controlled space’ and ‘aesthetic production’ of Bedford is no different than the ‘highly controlled space’ of Union Square or the ‘aesthetic [read authentic] production’ of lofts in Lower Manhattan. Other than spatial location and spatial configuration, it is difficult to differentiate between gentrification and suburbanization. The behaviors of upper- and middle-class residents of Bedford to create and maintain their ideal suburban space is no different than those of their counterparts in Manhattan. In this context, the spatial location of gentrification and upper- and middle-class suburbanization becomes much less important and Bruegmann’s statement that “[g]entrification at the center and sprawl at the edge have been flip sides of the same coin” (Bruegmann, 4, 2005) becomes profound.

While Duncan and Duncan explain this wealthy New York City suburb and Zukin ([1982] 1989, 2010), Smith (1996), Lees (2008), and to some extent Freeman (2006) explain elite gentrified or gentrifying New York City neighborhoods, they are all subject to the same socio-economic forces—as part of the same metropolitan region. Therefore, the value of understanding these spatially different spaces is not the specific location (urban and suburban) or conditions (economic and social), but that they are two kinds of a multiplicity of continually changing urban spaces that exist within metropolitan regions. Therefore, within this multiplicity of urban spaces, there are

some areas that are poor, others that are wealthy, and still others that are firmly middle-class. Some of these spaces are ‘gentrifying’ (gain in capital), others are declining (loss of capital), and still others are stagnating or maintaining the status quo (no change in capital). More important, the two kinds of urban spaces, the gentrified central-city neighborhoods and the middle class or wealthy suburbs, are two kinds of spaces that are produced and consumed (Thrift, 2006, 2008) by the middle- and upper-class.

In this context, capital (wealth) becomes critical in our understanding of the remaking of urban space. Without the investment of capital (continued or new) into any specific space, such spaces would deteriorate and decline. Therefore, in the case of manufacturing districts in Lower Manhattan where these lofts emerged, changes in the structure of the economy (see Baxandall and Ewen (2000), Smith (1996), Jackson (1985), Fishman (1987) removed capital from this location. The construction of lofts, be it naturally occurring (gentrification) or state-sponsored (regeneration), is nothing more than the remaking of this urban space (reinvestment). However, this explains only part of the remaking of space. We still need to explain the emergence of wealthy- and middle-class persons in these spaces.

Fishman documents the emergence of American middle-class suburbanization as being linked to Evangelical “ideologies of the closed, domesticated nuclear family” (Fishman, 1987: 34). Jackson (1985) demonstrates the importance of Ford in creating a middle-class—the consumer class—which would provide the critical mass to produce, consume, and occupy the suburbs (see also Baxandall and Ewen, 2000). In the context of the remaking of space, the middle-class as a consumer class and the culture of consumerism become a critical component. Ley, in his 1996 book, *The New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City* argues that gentrification is not only linked to this ‘new middle-class,’ but gentrification is the remaking of space by this ‘new middle class’. In addition, Ley’s gentrification is not the ‘revanchist city’ of Smith (1996), but a remaking of space by this new middle class. Ley calls this specific segment of the new middle-class “the *cultural new class*” and claims “their imagineering of an alternative urbanism to suburbanization has helped shape new inner-city environments, where they are to some degree both producer and consumer” (Ley, 1996: 15; also see Lloyd 2002, 2006).

Hannigan (1998) demonstrates how American consumerism and culture has evolved into the consumption of space (see also Zukin, 2010). However, our consumption of space is tied to our production of space. The systems of production and the culture of consumption are no longer separate processes—with the producers making a product and consumers purchasing that same

product. Nigel Thrift in his 2008 book, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*, explains his “difficulty...with keeping production and consumption separate: producers try to put themselves in the place of consumers, consumers contribute their intellectual labour and all kinds of work to production in the cause of making better goods, in a kind of *generalized outsourcing*, migrations regularly occur between production and consumption, and vice versa” (Thrift, 2008: 33). In this context the remaking of urban space combines the production of space with the consumption of space. Middle-class ideals are projected onto the space, shaping the production of the space into the kind of space the inhabitants desire to consume.

Zukin recognizes this melding of production and consumption as it relates to urban spaces. She explains “[n]eighborhoods that offer opportunities for cultural consumption also play an important role in culture production. The interplay of production and consumption creates a distinctive terroir that nurtures specific forms of originality and innovation, which become a marketable brand for the district, its residents, and their products. The products are not necessarily manufactured there; the crucial fact is that they are conceived or designed there and identified with the lifestyle of the new middle class” (Zukin, 2010: 236). Thrift explains this further, “[i]t has, of course, been a standard component of a number of recent new left accounts that consumption has become, in some sense or another, productive: consumption is no longer a passive terminus but a complicit and creative relay in the production of capitalism. But it seems to me that these accounts, which were almost certainly premature and which were allowed much too great a generality, are now starting to take on real weight” (Thrift, 2008: 33).

If we move beyond gentrification and regeneration as debates over supply and demand and displacement of the poor, we can open up a new view of the remaking of space. In addition, we open up the opportunity for a multiplicity of spaces. Amin and Graham provide a perspective that allows this opening up of the understanding of urban space. They explain, “...the ‘city’ now needs to be considered as a set of spaces where diverse ranges of relational webs coalesce, interconnect and fragment” (Amin and Graham 1997: 418). They continue, “[t]he contemporary city is a variegated and multiplex entity – a juxtaposition of contradictions and diversities, the theater of life itself. The city is not a unitary or homogeneous entity and perhaps it never has been” (Amin and Graham 1997: 418).

By reimagining the city as the ‘theater of life itself,’ we open up a new means of viewing and understanding the remaking of space and urban lifestyle. The city as the ‘theater of life itself’ is also recognized by Bell (2007) when he discusses the research of Latham (2003) in Auckland, New

Zealand. Bell explains, “[Latham] detects a new form of public culture, based around cafes, bars, and restaurants.... ‘Consumption has quite literally helped to build a new world’ (p. 1713), he writes – hence the importance of this kind of study of micro-practices, of how people make use of bars and cafes in their everyday lives, but also the importance of looking outwards from the micro-practices, to witness their broader impacts” (Bell, 2007: 14). So how does all of this relate to the remaking of West Hartford Center and the kind of space that is The Center?

The Kind of Space that is West Hartford Center

West Hartford is a mature suburban community and The Center is a mature town center that has evolved over time. West Hartford has always been a middle-class suburb, and The Center is a smaller, mostly commercial neighborhood. While The Center stagnated in the 1970s and 1980s, it never suffered from blight or abandonment, and there were other commercial areas in both West Hartford and the central city of Hartford that suffered far greater decline and abandonment. In addition, displacement of the poor and displacement of businesses (in terms of gentrification) has not occurred in the Center. Therefore, it is difficult to classify the remaking of The Center as resulting from the process of gentrification. In addition, until the recent 2007 addition of Blue Back Square, a mixed use lifestyle center, the remaking of The Center was not the result of state-sponsored regeneration. Therefore, the literature on gentrification and regeneration fall short of explaining the remaking of this space and the kind of space that is The Center.

As both a place and space, West Hartford and The Center challenge the perspectives of suburbia as Zukin’s ‘Wal-Mart wasteland’ (2010) or Kunstler’s “depressing, brutal, ugly, unhealthy, and spiritually degrading—the jive-plastic commuter tract home wastelands” (1993). In addition, West Hartford and The Center challenge the arguments of Lees (2008), Smith (1996), Zukin (2010) and Freeman (2006) that central city neighborhoods, based on qualities of grit, authenticity, architecture, and other characteristics, provide an alternative to living in the suburban wasteland. For example, Zukin, in discussing the gentrifiers of New York City’s neighborhoods explains, “[i]n other areas of the city, editors, professors, lawyers, and writers are wheeling baby strollers, talking on cell phones, and window-shopping in small design shops; these ‘bourgeois bohemians’ prefer to lead a comfortable life, especially after they have children, but don’t want to live like their parents do—especially not in the suburbs—and don’t mind a little dirt on the streets as long as they feel safe” (Zukin, 2010: 7). Zukin’s assertion here is interesting because she uses David Brook’s term

'bourgeois bohemians' (Brooks, 2000) and claims that these BoBo's do not want to live in the suburbs. However, Zukin's description of the BoBo's and their activities are very similar to those of the inhabitants of Bistoville (Brooks, 2004), a mature suburban location described by Brooks. West Hartford Center, like Bistoville, displays the same "BoBo" lifestyles as Zukin's Lower Manhattan gentrifiers, but in a suburban location.

This conflicting account of gentrified New York City neighborhoods and the suburbanized Bistoville, further indicates that the spatial location—central city or suburb—is insignificant in understanding the remaking of space. This account also moves the argument of displacement to an issue of inequality that may in some cases be a result of the remaking of space, but not a defining quality of all remaking's of space. In addition, the conflicting account of New York City's gentrified neighborhoods and Bistoville highlights and elevates the importance of middle-class consumption—as both producer and consumer—in the remaking of space. In this context, the consumers of The Center are also the producers of The Center. Zukin explains, "New York's growth in recent years has both created and depended on new consumption spaces that respond to changing lifestyles and make the city more desirable. Our tastes as consumers—tastes for lattes and organic food, as well as for green spaces, boutiques, and farmers' markets—now define the city, as they also define us" (Zukin, 2010: 27). The remaking of space—the production of space—is motivated by the tastes of consumers and their consumption of such space, 'the theater of life itself' (Amin and Graham 1997). Therefore, The Center becomes Latham's (2003) 'new form of public culture' and '[c]onsumption has quite literally helped to build as new world' (Latham, 2003: 1713).

The consumer, also as producer, returns us to Thrift (2006, 2008) and his struggle to separate the processes of production and consumption. Thrift claims that as a result of this melding of production and consumption, "[i]nnovation can turn up anywhere" (Thrift, 2008: 33). Thrift's idea, in this context, is similar to an individualized centrality and urban space as potentiality, that "innovation can turn up anywhere" and is similar to Lefebvre's claim that "[v]irtually, anything can pile up, a festival unfold, an event—terrifying or pleasant—can occur....centrality is always possible" (Lefebvre, [1970] 2003: 130). Any location, urban or suburban, at any moment in time can not only become central, but can also innovate and be remade.

In the context of how we understand the remaking of space, the remaking of West Hartford Center and the kind of space that is The Center, Thrift's statement "innovation can turn up anywhere" (Thrift, 2008: 33) provides a new means of understanding and conceptualizing West

Hartford Center. How can we understand and conceptualize the remaking of this space an innovative and emergent self-organizing process?

Literature Review

Paper III. Reimagining Creativity, Innovation, Emergence and the Remaking of Space

Introduction

In the first paper, I explored both urban and suburban spaces and how we conceptualize these spaces. In doing so, I argued that our conceptualizations of urban and suburban space fall short of explaining the kind of space that is The Center. I also argued for a reimagining of centrality as individualized—that centrality is based on the choices and decisions of the individual and the many, and how the individual experiences the city. As a result of this, I argued for a reimagining of urban space as potentiality—that a multiplicity of spaces exist within urban areas and that these spaces may become central at any point in time. Together, individualized centrality and potentiality provide a framework for understanding The Center as a specific kind of urban space.

In the second paper, I explored gentrification and regeneration as a means of understanding the remaking of urban space. I argued that as a place and space, West Hartford and The Center challenge the perspectives of the suburbs as Zukin’s ‘Wal-Mart wasteland’ (2010) or Kunstler’s “depressing, brutal, ugly, unhealthy, and spiritually degrading—the jive-plastic commuter tract home wastelands” (1993). In addition, I argued that The Center challenge the gentrification arguments of Lees (2008, 2010), Smith (1996), Zukin (2010) and Freeman (2006) that central city neighborhoods, based on qualities of grit, authenticity, architecture, and other characteristics provide an alternative to living in the suburban wasteland.

I also argued that conflicting accounts of gentrified New York City neighborhoods and the mature suburban Bistrotville or West Hartford Center, demonstrate that the spatial location—central city or suburb—is insignificant in understanding the remaking of space. I asserted that gentrification in the central city and suburbanization or super-suburbanization in Bedford, New York (see Duncan and Duncan, 2004) are very similar, if not the same, in that they are both examples of a remaking of space based on middle- and upper-middle class ideals and consumption—the production and consumption of space based on tastes.

In this context, I argued that the consumers of West Hartford Center are also the producers of The Center (see Zukin, 2010). In other words the melding of production and consumption—consumer also as producer (see Thrift, 2006, 2008), provides a new means of viewing the remaking of space and that “[i]nnovation can turn up anywhere” (Thrift, 2008: 33). I also argued that Thrift’s idea, in this context, is similar to the individualized centrality and urban space as potentiality, that “innovation can turn up anywhere,” in Lefebvre’s claim that “[v]irtually, anything can pile up, a festival unfold, an event—terrifying or pleasant—can occur....centrality is always possible” (Lefebvre, [1970] 2003: 130). Any location, urban or suburban, at any moment in time can not only become central, but can also be remade.

In this, the third and final paper of my literature review, I will now explore creativity, innovation, and emergent self-organizing behavior. My intent is to explore and demonstrate how these concepts can provide a framework for an understanding of individualized centrality, the city as potentiality, the production and consumption of space, and the remaking of space. Therefore, I will argue that individualized centrality, the city as potentiality, and the production and consumption of space can be studied and understood through theories of creativity, innovation, and emergent self-organizing behavior and collectively can help forward how we conceptualize the remaking of The Center—a mature and resilient space—and the kind of space that is The Center.

To accomplish this objective, this paper is organized into four sections: exploring creativity, exploring innovation, exploring emergence and complexity, and the emergent remaking of space. The first section, exploring creativity will look generally at how creativity has been conceptualized in the context of cities and how we can apply these ideas to better understand West Hartford Center. The second section, exploring innovation, will look generally at innovation and at innovation in the context of cities. Then I will explore Thrift’s theories related to the reinventing of invention (Thrift, 2006, 2008) and how the melding of production and consumption provides a framework for reimagining the remaking of space in the context of innovation. The third section, exploring emergence and complexity, will look at how emergence and complexity are being used to explain and understand cities. In doing so, I will explain how emergence and complexity can be reimagined to help us better understand urban space. The fourth, and final section, the emergent remaking of space, will argue that creativity, innovation, and emergence can be reimagined to better understand the remaking of space, specifically the remaking of West Hartford Center and the kind of space that is The Center.

Exploring Creativity

Creativity, in the context of cities, is a topic that has been written about extensively (see Amin and Roberts, 2008; Hall, 1998, 2000; Florida, 2002, 2005; Landry, 2000, 2008) and has been approached in a variety of ways. For example, Peter Hall in his treatise *Cities in Civilization* explores the various conditions that existed in the many great creative cities of western civilization and explains that “it becomes increasingly hard to find any single satisfactory explanation” to creativity (Hall, 1998: 282). Charles Landry, in his 2000 book *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* explores creativity in the context of remaking cities to compete in our fast changing global economy. Richard Florida, in *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) and *Cities and the Creative Class* (2005) argues that a new creative class of workers and the amenities of cities that attract this creative class drive economic development and the success of cities—a position disputed by Jamie Peck in *Struggling with the Creative Class* (2005) and others (Houston Et. al., 2008; Donegan, Et al, 2008; Amin with Thrift, 2007; Milligan, 2003; and Scott, 2006). Other approaches to creativity have included entertainment and image (Currid and Williams, 2009), agglomeration and clusters (Porter, 1990, 1998; Martin and Sunley, 2003; Suire and Vicente, 2009), spatial diffusion (Ormrod, 1990), creative people and the arts (Sawyer, 2005), and firms and product development (Cornish, 1997). While each of these perspectives provides a means of viewing and understanding creativity, in the context of understanding urban space they fall short of providing a meaningful explanation of how creativity can be understood as a means of remaking urban space. In addition, most approaches focus on large cities or regions (Porter, 1998; Hall, 1998; Florida, 2005) and have missed that creativity may play a role in small urban spaces as well.

Creativity is generally defined in dictionaries as the state of being creative and the ability to transcend traditional ideas. Charles Landry defines creativity as a ‘new currency’ (2000: xxv) and the “process of being creative [as a means]...to solve any problem and can grasp potential” (2000: xxv). Both the dictionary and Landry’s definition of creativity allow it to be conceptualized at any scale and in any location. Therefore, we are not bound to viewing creativity only in terms of Silicon Valley, the arts and entertainment world, or high-tech firms. Creativity can occur anywhere and at any time.

Landry also defines a creative milieu, “a place – either a cluster of buildings, a part of a city, a city as a whole or a region – that contains the necessary preconditions in terms of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ infrastructure to generate a flow of ideas and inventions. Such a milieu is a physical setting where a

critical mass of entrepreneurs, intellectuals, social activists, artists, administrators, power brokers or students can operate in an open-minded, cosmopolitan context and where face to face interactions create new ideas, artifacts, products, services and institutions and as a consequence contribute to economic success” (Landry, 2000: 133). Landry’s definition of a creative milieu provides a means for understanding urban space and the remaking of space, in the context of creativity. For example, in the context of The Center we can ask questions about the “preconditions in terms of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ infrastructure” (2000: 133). Have property and business owners been creative (past and present) in solving problems and creating potential in The Center? Does The Center contain “the necessary preconditions in terms of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ infrastructure to generate a flow of ideas and inventions” and “a critical mass of entrepreneurs” to “operate in an open-minded, cosmopolitan context and where face to face interactions create new ideas, artifacts, products, [and] services” that contribute to the “economic success” (2000: 133) of The Center? Landry’s creative milieu provides a framework for understanding the creative capacity of space and the organizations that fill such space.

In this context, Landry’s definition of a creative milieu, “a place – either a cluster of buildings, a part of a city, a city as a whole or a region – that contains the necessary preconditions in terms of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ infrastructure” (Landry, 2000: 133) becomes a means of thinking about the remaking of space. What are the ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ infrastructures of West Hartford Center that create an environment of realized potentiality? While much of the writing on creativity has to do with the arts (Sawyer, 2006; Hall, 1998), Landry opens up an opportunity to approach urban change or the remaking of spaces, a means of being creative and creating an environment that fosters a creative milieu.

Exploring Innovation

Innovation is also a topic that has been studied and written about extensively (Castells and Hall, 1994; Hall, 1998; Fagerberg, et. al., 2005; Johnson; 2010; Sawyer, 2006; Thrift, 2006, 2010). Innovation, like creativity, has also been approached from many perspectives. For example, Hall (1998) explored the great innovative cities in western civilization (Manchester, Glasgow, Berlin, Detroit, San and Francisco) in an attempt to understand the city as innovative milieu. Castells and Hall (1994) in *Technopoles of the World: Making of 21st-century Industrial Complexes* explored the great innovative industrial complexes such as Silicon Valley and the I-28 Corridor outside of Boston.

Michael Porter (1998) explores agglomeration and industry clusters in the context of economic competition and competitiveness (see also Gordon and McCann, 2005; Lindahl and Beyers, 1999; Harrison, et. al., 1996). Oliver Crevoisier (2004) argues for an innovative milieus approach to economic development. What all of these theorists and their approaches to innovation and cities have in common, as with the literature on creativity, is that they focus on large industries, large cities and metropolitan regions, and high-tech companies as a means of understanding national and regional economic development and firm level innovation. While such approaches to innovation are interesting and important, they focus on innovation at a large scale, both in terms of urban scale and industry. This does little to help us understand innovation in the context of small urban space. Therefore, in this section, I will explore innovation in the context of small urban space and how we can reimagine innovation to better understand small urban space.

Defining innovation can be a challenging task, since innovation is “used in a variety of ways and contexts, many of which overlap and some of which are rather contradictory” (Gordon and McCann, 2005: 525). Gordon and McCann define innovation, not as invention, the creation of a new idea, product, or service, but as a process that “involves the successful implementation of a new product, service, or process, which for most activities entails their commercial success” (Gordon and McCann, 2005: 525). This definition is similar to Sawyer’s (2006) explanation of innovation as “not simply the creation of something new. In the development of the Windows GUI, many people created new technologies in the 1960s and 1970s that didn’t become viable products until they all came together in the Apple Macintosh in 1984. Innovation involves both the creation of a new idea, and the implementation, dissemination, and adoption of that idea by an organization (West, 2002, 2003)” (Sawyer, 2006: 287). Gordon and McCann continue to explain how we can understand innovation. They state, “[a]lthough the nature, sources, and impacts of innovation are difficult to isolate, on the basis of these arguments there are three common features of all innovation which are identifiable; these are newness, improvement, and the overcoming of uncertainty” (Gordon and McCann, 2005: 525). Innovation, in the context of *newness, improvement, and the overcoming of uncertainty*, “can be applied equally to products and or process innovations, and secondly, it can be applied to any industrial sector, irrespective of the levels of technology employed” (Gordon and McCann, 2005: 526).

While Gordon and McCann use words such as *products, process, industrial sector* and *technology* to discuss innovation, I argue that their definition can also be applied to services, hospitality, retail, and the remaking of urban space. I also argue that in the context of urban space

and the remaking of space, the newness of an idea, product, process, or service does not need to be new to the world—inventive—but that it has only to be new to the specific space. More important, this definition can help us understand the small and mundane changes that occur in urban space and result in a remaking of space. For example, the activity of outdoor dining is not new or inventive in the context of restaurants or urban space. However, the introduction of outdoor dining to a specific urban space, such as West Hartford Center, provides *newness, improvement, and* [can overcome] *uncertainty* (Gordon and McCann, 2005: 526). For example, the *newness* of outdoor dining may be the fact that this is a new utilization of this space. The *improvement* may be that it creates greater potential for business/revenue and that it creates greater opportunities for sociality and chance meetings—Jacobs’ (1961) sidewalk ballet. The overcoming of *uncertainty* may be realized in that such a small innovation breathes new life into the space. Therefore, this seemingly mundane change is actually innovation and needs to be better understood in the context of the remaking of this space.

By broadening how we understand and conceptualize innovation in the context of urban space, we can start to better understand urban space and the remaking of space. In paper two I argued that gentrification and regeneration fall short of explaining the remaking of West Hartford Center. I also argued that Zukin ([1982] 1989, 2010) Smith (1996), and Lees (2008) have limited their understanding of the social, economic, and cultural changes that have occurred and continue to occur in these gentrified neighborhoods. For example, Zukin claims that “in the case of lofts, the social class distinctions between old (artist) residents and new (non-artist) residents are somewhat blurred, and the real victims of gentrification through loft living are not residents at all. Before some of the artists were chased out of their lofts by rising rents, they had displaced small manufacturers, distributors, jobbers, and wholesale and retail sales operations” (Zukin, 1982, 1989: 5). However, what if we reimagine the conversion of manufacturing buildings into lofts as a form of innovation? Perhaps the reuse of old industrial space as modern residential apartments is innovative—a form of *newness*, [and] *improvement*, [that can overcome] *uncertainty* (Gordon and McCann, 2005: 526). Viewing the conversion of lofts as innovative provides a means understanding the remaking of space.

Steven Johnson in his 2010 book *Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation* explains this conversion of manufacturing buildings into residential lofts when he introduces the idea of exaptation through a discussion of Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press. He explains, “[t]hanks to his training as a goldsmith, Gutenberg made some brilliant

modifications to the metallurgy behind the movable type system, but without the [wine] press itself, his meticulous lead fonts would have been useless for creating mass-produced Bibles” (Johnson, 2010: 153). He continues, “[e]volutionary biologists have a word for this kind of borrowing...exaptation.... An organism develops a trait optimized for a specific use, but then the trait gets hijacked for a completely different function” (Johnson, 2010: 153-154). In this context, the conversion of economically marginal manufacturing buildings into economically viable residential loft apartments is a form of exaptation—the utilization of a “specific use [building]...hijacked for a completely different function” (Johnson, 2010: 153-154). This conversion of buildings, the remaking of space from manufacturing to residential lofts, is explained by Sawyer, “[a]ccording to the famous economist Joseph Schumpeter, creativity [or innovation] is the core of capitalism. New innovations displace the old, often leading to radical transformations, and creative destruction” (Sawyer, 2006: 281).

Zukin, in the context of the gentrification—the remaking of space—touches upon innovation in the context of capitalism and production and consumption. She explains, “[n]eighborhoods that offer opportunities for cultural consumption also play an important role in culture production. The interplay of production and consumption creates a distinctive terroir that nurtures specific forms of originality and innovation, which become a marketable brand for the district, its residents, and their products” (Zukin, 2010: 236). Zukin recognizes this interplay between production and consumption, but falls short of explaining it as a structural change in capitalism—a new and innovative form of capitalism.

Thrift in *Re-inventing Invention: New Tendencies in Capitalist Commodification* (2006; see also Thrift, 2008) discusses in detail, this *interplay of production and consumption*. Thrift explains his “difficulty...with keeping production and consumption separate: producers try to put themselves in the place of consumers, consumers contribute their intellectual labour and all kinds of work to production in the cause of making better goods, in a kind of *generalized outsourcing*, migrations regularly occur between production and consumption, and vice versa. Innovation can turn up anywhere and is no longer necessarily restricted to particular niches in the division of labour.” (Thrift, 2008: 33). Thrift argues this melding is one part of much more transformative changes in our capitalist economy. He explains three changes in capitalism (Thrift, 2008: 33):

The first of these developments has been an obsession with knowledge and creativity and especially an obsession with fostering tacit knowledge and aptitude through devices like the community of practice and metaphors like performance. However, this stream of thought and practice has now transmuted into a more general redefinition of intellectual labour

arising out of the mobilization of the resource of *forethought*, or rather the possibilities of plumbing the non-cognitive realm and ‘fast’ thinking in general.... Then, second, there was a desire to rework consumption so as to draw consumers much more fully into the process, leaching out their knowledge of commodities and adding it back into the system as an added performative edge through an ‘experience economy’ (Pine and Gilmore 1999). This stream of thought and practice has now blossomed into a set of fully fledged models of ‘co-creation’ which are changing corporate perception of what constitutes ‘production’, ‘consumption’, ‘commodity’, ‘the market’ and indeed ‘innovation’. The third development has involved the active engineering of the space of innovation, the result especially of emphasis on communities of knowledge. Informed by the profusion of information technology and by attempts to construct more intellectually productive environments, especially through the construction of built forms that would hasten and concentrate interaction, this stream of thought and practice has transmuted into more general concerns with social engineering of groups, thereby learning how to combine information technology, built form and group formation in ways that really will deliver the goods. Taken together, these three developments have also foregrounded the absolute importance of design.

Based on Thrift’s account of these changes in capitalism, the remaking of urban space can be reimagined as the commodity. With space reimagined as a commodity, the businesses and owners become the producers of space, and the users are the consumers. The ‘interplay’ between the producers of space and the consumers of space, co-create the commodity of space. In this context, “[t]he world [urban space] becomes a continuous and inexhaustible process of emergence of inventions that goes beyond slavish accumulation” (Thrift, 2008: 31). Bruegmann, while discussing sprawl and suburbanization, unwittingly explains this production and consumption of space—spaces produced and consumed by the middle and upper-middle class (Bruegmann, 2005: 4):

Gentrification at the center and sprawl at the edge have been flipsides of the same coin. In a typically paradoxical situation, no matter how much the new, more affluent residents profess to like the ‘gritty’ urban character of the place, so different in their minds to the subdivision of the far suburbs, what makes the neighbourhood attractive today are less the things that are traditionally urban but those that are not. The most important of these are sharply lowered population densities, fewer poor residents, less manufacturing activity, and the things that the Lower East Side finally shares with suburbs: reliable plumbing, supermarkets with good produce, and a substantial cohort of middle-class residents.

If Thrift is right and capitalism is being restructured (and I think he is), then the process of gentrification—a form or process of remaking space—is not only about the rent gap, displacement, and the suburbanization of city (Smith, 1996, 2002; Zukin, 1989, 2010; Harvey, 2006; Lees, et. al., 2008, 2010). The remaking of space is also about producers and consumers co-producing spaces that work—spaces that meet the capitalist needs of the producers and the consumptive needs of the consumers. This returns us to Zukin claim that “New York’s growth in recent years has both created and depended on new consumption spaces that respond to changing lifestyles and make the city more desirable. Our tastes as consumers—tastes for lattes and organic food, as well as for

green spaces, boutiques, and farmers' markets—now define the city, as they also define us" (Zukin, 2010: 27). Zukin's claim opens up new question about the remaking of space and how we consume space. For example, how do our "tastes for lattes and organic food...define the city" (Zukin, 2010: 27) and help explain the remaking of space? How does a new coffee culture and the \$4 latte relate to the remaking of space—West Hartford Center?

Thrift further explains this shift or change in capitalism as efficacy. Thrift explains, "[e]fficacy is variously defined by dictionaries – as the 'ability...or a method of achieving something, to produce the intended result', as 'the capacity or power to produce an effect' or as 'the ability to produce desired results'. In other words, efficacy constitutes a certain kind of capability, a force" (Thrift, 2008: 49). Thrift goes further to explain that "a different kind of efficacy is gradually being foregrounded. It is a form of efficacy that I will call 'rightness' in that it is an attempt to capture and work into successful moments, often described as an attunement or a sense of being at ease in a situation.... But I want to argue that it has become a more highly sought-after quality which is now thought can be actively engineered on a mass scale" (Thrift, 2008: 49).

I argue that Thrift's *rightness* provides a means of reimagining the consumption of and the remaking of space. Thrift explains, "[w]hat seems certain is that the implementation of this new version of efficacy demands that capitalism becomes 'both a business and a liberal art' (McCullough 2004: 206), in that what is being attempted is to continuously conjure up experiences which can draw consumers to commodities by engaging their own passions and enthusiasms, set within a frame that can deliver on those passions and enthusiasms, both by producing goods that resonate and by making those goods open to potential recasting" (Thrift, 2008: 50). The idea that one can *conjure up experiences which can draw consumers to commodities by engaging their own passions* is exactly what Brooks (2004) is describing in Bistrotville. He explains that the residents of Bistrotville want to "show off their discerning taste in olive oils. They want sidewalks, stores with overpriced French children's clothes, stores to browse in after dinner, six-dollar-a-cone ice-cream vendors, and plenty of restaurants. They don't want suburban formula restaurants. They want places where they can offer disquisitions on the reliability of the risotto, where the predinner complimentary bread slices look like they were baked by Burgundian monks, and where they can top off their dinner with a self-righteous carrot smoothie" (Brooks, 2004: 27). Brooks' use of the phrases 'they want' and 'they don't want' emphasizes this interplay between production and consumption (Zukin, 2010). Those that frequent Bistrotville influence and shape the production of Bistrotville based on their wants. Bistrotville, like West Hartford Center, is a mature suburban space that provides *experiences*

which... draw consumers to commodities [the space] by engaging their own passions (Thrift, 2006, 2008) for olive oils, sidewalks, stores, dinner, ice-cream, risotto, and a self-righteous carrot smoothie (Brooks, 2004).

Unfortunately, Brook's captures only the manifestation of rightness and misses the more subtle and interesting questions that can help us better understand the remaking of West Hartford Center. For example, what has changed socially or culturally that makes West Hartford Center interesting? Why is it that the consumers of The Center want to shop in 'stores with overprice French children's cloths'? How has this space been remade to engage consumers on their own passions? How does interplay between production and consumption (Zukin, 2010) influence the remaking of space? These questions open up how we conceptualize innovation, consumption, and the remaking of space—the 'the theater of life itself' (Amin and Graham, 1997) and Latham's 'new form of public culture' (Latham, 2003: 1713).

Thrift's concept of rightness explains a change in capitalism, and as I have argued, this change is helpful in how we understand the remaking of space. For example, he explains, "[i]f one wished to specify this tendency more concretely, it would be as an attempt to mass produce commodities [space as a commodity] as so many experiences of a sense of rightness through a series of new practices of innovation that draw directly on consumers' collective intelligence" (Thrift, 2008: 50). While Michael Batty and Thrift approach cities from different perspective, I argue that aspect of their differences in understanding the city intersect in the context of the remaking of space. Batty, while discussing cities and complexity theory, provides a means of understanding this change in capitalism, Thrift's rightness. Batty explains (Batty, 2005: 32):

[a] more pervasive type of change that affects the entire system is called a phase transition, after its physical counterpart that marks the qualitative change that takes place when liquids become solids or gases as a result of temperature change as, for example, in the transition from water to ice. This kind of change is also characteristic of urban systems and can be seen at many levels. For example, the differences between the industrial and postindustrial city might be described as a phase transition composed of many technological and behavioral shifts that have led to dramatic changes in functional structure of cities, if not in their spatial structure.

Thrift's rightness, the emergence of new form capitalism, is a phase transition—the *differences between the industrial and postindustrial city...[the] many technological and behavioral shifts that have led to dramatic changes in functional structure of cities* (2005: 32). Thrift's rightness—as a phase transition—the creative destruction of Joseph Schumpeter's (Schumpeter, [1942] 2008: 83) capitalism itself.

Exploring Emergence

In the last chapter “The Kind of Problem a City is” in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs argued that neighborhoods and cities could be understood by what Dr. Warren Weaver wrote in the *1958 Annual Report of the Rockefeller Foundation*. Jacobs explains, “Dr. Weaver lists three stages of development in the history of scientific thought: (1) ability to deal with problems of simplicity; (2) ability to deal with problems of disorganized complexity; and (3) ability to deal with problems of organized complexity” (Jacobs, 1961: 559). Jacobs explains, “[p]roblems of simplicity are problems that contain two factors which are directly related to each other and their behavior—two variables” (1961: 559). Jacobs, quoting Weaver, describes the second stage, “[l]et us develop analytical methods which can deal with two billion variables. That is to say, the physical scientist (with mathematicians often in the vanguard) developed power techniques of probability theory...which can deal with what we may call problems of *disorganized complexity*” (Jacobs, 1961: 560).

Weaver believed there was a gap between the first and second stages of scientific thought, an area that is more complex than problems of simplicity and with fewer variables than problems of disorganized complexity, that neither approach was equipped to handle. Weaver’s report aimed at encouraging or pushing scientific thought into this gap, the third stage. Weaver, as quoted by Jacobs explains, “[m]uch more important than the mere number of variables is the fact that these variables are all interrelated.... These problems, as contrasted with the disorganized situations with which statistics can, *show the essential feature of organization*. We will therefore refer to this group of problems as those of *organized complexity*” (Jacobs, 1961: 563). Jacobs drew from Weaver and argued that cities and neighborhoods are problems of organized complexity.

Since the time of Weaver and Jacobs, emergence and complexity have become popular areas of research in science, social sciences (see Sawyer, 2005), popular culture (see Johnson, 2001, 2010), and in the study of cities (see Thrift, 1999; Latham, 2003; Batty, 2008). Batty elaborates on the research in this area (Batty, 2007: 5):

As classical science began to discover that many of its systems of interest were not in fact ‘simple’ but ‘complex,’ in the words of Warren Weaver (1948), a new paradigm grappling with the essence of such systems began to emerge. This is complexity theory, which is being built from many directions. The physics of far-from-equilibrium structures is important, as in the notion of decentralized decision making. Processes that lead to surprising events,

emergent structures not directly obvious from the elements of their process but hidden within their mechanism, new forms of geometry associated with fractal patterns, and chaotic dynamics—all are combining to provide theories that are applicable to highly complex systems such as cities.

Published in 2001, *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software* by Steven Johnson looks at the science of emergent and self-organizing behavior. Johnson describes “bottom-up systems, not top-down. They get their smarts from below. In a more technical language, they are complex adaptive systems that display emergent behavior. In these systems, agents residing on one scale start producing behavior that lies one scale above them: ants create colonies, urbanites create neighborhoods; simple pattern-recognition software learns how to recommend new books. The movement from low-level rules to higher-level sophistication is what we call emergence” (Johnson, 2001: 18). For example, Johnson explains how scientific research has shown that harvester ant colonies are not directed by the queen ant, but that the behavior of the colony is driven by the individual ants within the colony—that the behavior of the colony is self-organized by the individual behavior of each ant—a bottom up system. Each ant, through its interaction with the other ants in the colony, determines what tasks are most needed to support and sustain the colony at a given time and adjusts its own behavior and tasks accordingly (Johnson, 2001).

Johnson also explains that the research on these ant colonies demonstrates that the colony’s behavior changes over time—the colony collectively learns. Harvester ant colonies typically exist for 15 years, the length of the life of the queen who produces all members of the colony. Male ants exist only for a day with the sole purpose of mating. Female ants live for approximately a year. However, the research has shown that the collective colony learns over time. That is, the knowledge gained, the learning of each generation of the colony, is passed on to later generations. Therefore, a colony of ants, self-organized and driven by bottom up behavior, collectively learns, and that learning is passed on generation to generation (Johnson, 2001).

Johnson continues to explain emergence in the context of cities and uses Manchester, England and the Industrial Revolution to demonstrate that cities are also emergent and self-organized. He explains, “Manchester between 1700 and 1850...created a new kind of city, one that literally exploded into existence” (Johnson, 2001: 34). Johnson continues, “a 1773 estimate had 24,000 people living in Manchester; the first official census in 1801 found 70,000. By the midpoint of the century, there were more than 250,000 people in the city proper—a tenfold increase in only seventy-five years” (Johnson, 2001: 34). The growth of Manchester was not planned and the organization of Manchester as the first Industrial city was emergent. “Manchester didn’t even send

a representative to Parliament until 1832, and it wasn't incorporated for another six years. By the 1840s, the newly formed borough council finally began to institute public health reforms and urban planning, but the British government didn't officially recognize Manchester as a city until 1853. This constitutes one of the great ironies of the industrial revolution, and it captures just how dramatic the rate of change really was: the city that most defined the future of urban life for the first half of the nineteenth century didn't legally become a city until the great explosion had run its course" (Johnson, 2001: 35).

Johnson also explains how Manchester internally self-organized itself, without planning or a command and control center. Johnson quoting Engels writes, "[t]he town itself is peculiarly built, so that someone can live in it for years and travel into it and out of it daily without ever coming into contact with a working-class quarter or with workers—so long, that is to say, as one confines himself to his business affairs or to strolling about for pleasure" (Johnson, 2001, p. 36-37). Engels continues, "I know perfectly well that this deceitful manner of building is more or less common to all big cities...I have never elsewhere seen a concealment of such fine sensibility of everything that might offend the eyes and nerves of the middle classes. And yet it is precisely Manchester that has been built less according to a plan and less within the limitations of official regulations—and indeed more through accident—than any other town" (Johnson, 2001: 37). Fishman (1987) further explains this social and economic self-organizing phenomenon while explaining the emergence of middle class suburbs in the 1840s.

Sawyer explains "*emergence*—[as] the process whereby the global behavior of a system results from the actions and interactions of agents" (Sawyer, 2005: 2). Emergence, in the context of understanding urban space and the remaking of space, opens up a means to conceptualize West Hartford Center. The Center, as a space and its remaking, can be seen as the manifestation of *the global behavior of a system [that] results from the actions and interactions of agents* (2005: 2)—similar to Johnson's harvester ants and Bruegmann's "our urban areas are the result of the actions of every citizen, every group, and every institution, every day" (2005: 225). This also relates to the individualized centrality (Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987; Brooks, 2000) that I argued for in paper one and the emergent results of the individual and the many. How can we understand the actions of individuals, be they of business owners or consumers result—or emerge and self-organize—in the remaking and defining of The Center?

Emergent Remaking of Space

I have argued that urban studies, especially in the context of gentrification, have fallen short of studying and understanding mundane and resilient space and the remaking of such space. Latham understands this when he asserts that “we need to be more dexterous in our work with and understand the affective economies that give contemporary urban space and events their very particular feel and consistency whether that be the apparently exotic like the Cadillac drivers...or the boringly mundane conveniences of the ubiquitous hyper-market or shopping mall” (Latham, 2004: 790). West Hartford Center is one of these mundane spaces. Since The Center began to develop in the 1920s, it has matured, ebbed and flowed through good and not so good times. However, it has remained resilient and has evolved—partaking in a slow process of remaking itself. So how do we understand this slow change?

Batty explains that “[e]volution is commonly assumed to involve processes of change in which organisms better adapted to their environments increase in number, often at the expense of those less suited. The paradigm is stretched somewhat when applied to collectivities of individuals and activities such as those comprised by cities...” (Batty, 2007: 154). This is similar to Johnson’s (2010) discussion of exaptation above. Batty continues, explaining the idea of evolution as a form of mutation (Batty, 2007: 155):

At any time, all individuals, or the groups into which they are aggregated, experience some random force that leads to very small increases or decreases in their size. The noise might also be considered a second source of locational change based on *innovation* in the system. Innovations occur incessantly, all forcing some small change in the size of the organism or object. Most of these small changes do not become established, for their positive feedback effects rarely ‘kick in,’ but a few do, and these are the true sources of urban growth and decline. Arthur (1988) suggests that many favored locations begin as the result of some innovation that, by historical accident, finds itself at a place and subsequently grows through positive feedback, such feedback occurring through the inertia of the historical contingency. Silicon Valley is his seminal example.

West Hartford Center cannot and should not be compared to Silicon Valley or any other large innovative place (see Castells and Hall, 1994; Hall, 1998). In addition, it is not my interest or intent to model mutation in The Center. However, Batty’s idea of small changes, positive feedback, and innovation that result in favored locations provides a theoretical framework to explore urban space as potentiality and the remaking of urban space. For example, can we begin to understand the natural turnover of business in The Center as small changes? Can we understand the success of some businesses, those that survive for long periods of time, as positive feedback ‘kicking in’? Can

the success and resiliency of The Center be seen as a *favoured location* that is the *result of some innovation*? Conceptualizing the remaking of space as the evolution of space opens up new possibilities in how we understand urban space.

While mutation, small changes, and positive feedback help us understand the innovations of businesses, we need to understand the physical space of The Center as fixed and relatively constant. Johnson explains a specific kind of remade space as a platform. “Platform building is, by definition, a kind of exercise in emergent behavior ... The beaver builds a dam to better protect itself against its predators, but that engineering has the emergent effect of creating a space where kingfishers and dragonflies and beetles can make a life for themselves” (Johnson, 2010: 182-183). He later continues, “[t]he songbird sitting in an abandoned woodpecker’s nest doesn’t need to know how to drill a hole into the side of a poplar, or how to fell a hundred-foot tree. That is the generative power of open platforms” (Johnson, 2010: 210).

The idea of a platform provides a new means of conceptualizing urban space and the remaking of space. Johnson, discussing coral reefs as a platform and Darwin’s ability to understand this unusual landform in the Indian Ocean created by the a coral reefs, explains, “Darwin’s theory of atoll formation marked his first significant contribution to science, and it has largely stood the test of time. The idea itself drew on a coffeehouse of different disciplines: to solve the mystery, he had to think like a naturalist, a marine biologist, and a geologist all at once.... To understand the idea in its full complexity required a kind of probing intelligence, willing to think across those different disciplines and scales” (Johnson, 2010: 180-181). I argue that the same is true in regards to understanding the remaking of urban space and that platform building, as a metaphor, can help us understand the remaking of urban space.

Johnson further explains that a “coral reef is a platform in a much more profound sense: the mounds, plates, and crevices of the reef create a habitat for millions of other species, an undersea metropolis of immense diversity. To date, attempts to measure accurately the full diversity of reef ecosystems have been foiled by the complexity of these habitats” (Johnson, 2010: 181). Urban space is also an ecosystem of human life, and understanding is often foiled by the complexity of human habits. Borrowing this concept allows us to reimagine urban space as a platform consisting of a multiplicity of spaces similar to the crevices in a coral reef. Collectively these spaces form an urban ecosystem. Individually they provide a habitat for a diverse number of activities. Therefore, West Hartford Center can be reimaged as both a platform (the physical space) and habitat (a kind of

space for specific kinds of lifestyle). In this context, each commercial space, a metaphysical crevice in the reef, is continually remade to house new and ever changing forms of urban life.

This becomes more interesting when Johnson explains a critical species that exists within a habitat known as an 'ecosystem engineer'. He explains, "a scientist named Clive Jones...decided that ecology needed...[a] term to describe...the kind [of species] that actually creates the habitat itself. Jones called these organisms 'ecosystem engineers'" (Johnson, 2010: 182). The concept of 'ecosystem engineers' as a metaphor allows the reimagining of how we can understand the innovative businesses owners, who I have called the cultural entrepreneurs, that have individually and collectively influenced the remaking of The Center into a kind of space or habitat. These cultural entrepreneurs can be reimagined as ecosystem engineers. For example, Bricco's restaurant occupying the former space of Alford's brick oven pizza restaurant is no different than the songbird occupying the former home of the woodpecker—space as a platform. However, Bricco did not occupy only the space and provide brick oven pizza and dining. Bricco's owner remade the space (innovated) and offered a new kind of dining experience—a dining experience that was not only about dining, but a dining experience that offered new means of sociality—a place to not only eat, but to also be seen.

While Bricco may have been just another songbird remaking the platform created by the woodpecker (Alford's), the owner of Bricco was an ecosystem engineer—a cultural entrepreneur—creating a new habitat in West Hartford Center. More important, it is a habitat that is produced and consumed to "continuously conjure up experiences which...draw consumers to commodities by engaging their own passions and enthusiasms" (Thrift, 2008: 50). Johnson explains, "[t]he reef helps us understand...[that] the city is a platform that often makes private commerce possible.... Ideas collide, emerge, recombine; new enterprises find homes in the shells abandoned by earlier hosts; informal hubs allow different disciplines to borrow from one another" (Johnson, 2010: 245).

West Hartford Center can further be reimagined as a platform. The construction of commercial buildings in The Center began in the 1920s, and new buildings have continually been added. However, during the 80 plus years since The Center began to develop, buildings have been used and reused by a variety of businesses. Small stores have been combined to create larger stores; while larger spaces have been divided to create smaller spaces. Building spaces that were once retail shops are now offices, banks, and restaurants. Over the decades the platform of The Center has been continually remade into a new kind of space or habitat. While Zukin's (1989) lofts are a dramatic reincarnation of the skeletal remains of an industrial economy that died in Lower

Manhattan, the remaking of West Hartford Center is the mundane evolution of everyday space that is resilient, never dying as did the manufacturing buildings in Lower Manhattan.

Lloyd explains the difference between dramatic remaking of space and the mundane evolution of The Center when he states, the “current focus on consumption by urban theorists too often loses sight of the everyday life and spatial practices that link the lived activity of residents to new labor patterns, strategies of accumulation and urban spectacles. Instead, most theories of the city as site of consumption posit a radical disjuncture between the new spaces of capital and the lives of residents” (Lloyd, 2002: 519). Unfortunately, many urban theorists have missed the importance of the everyday space, resilient space, and the remaking of this kind of space. Thrift, in his discussion of efficacy as rightness, uses Wallace Stevens (a former resident of Hartford as noted by Thrift) as a metaphor, to explain how we have missed the importance of understanding the mundane and the every day. Thrift explains, “[o]ne of Stevens’s key tasks was to resonate with the moments of sudden rightness in an ultimately bewildering world, those moments of everyday life when ‘mere’ things seem to light up, seem to become ‘precious portents of our powers’” (Stevens 1960: 174) (Thrift, 2008, p. 52).

Conclusion

In this paper, I explored creativity, and how creativity may help us better understand urban space and West Hartford Center. I noted that Landry’s definition of a creative milieu, “a place – either a cluster of buildings, a part of a city, a city as a whole or a region – that contains the necessary preconditions in terms of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ infrastructure to generate a flow of ideas and inventions. Such a milieu is a physical setting where a critical mass of... [individuals and businesses]” (Landry, 2000: 133) opens up reimagining how we understand urban space, such as The Center as a kind of space, and the questions that we ask about such spaces.

I also explored how innovation can help us better understand the remaking of space—that innovation as “newness, improvement, and the overcoming of uncertainty” (Gordon and McCann, 2005: 525) provides a means of conceptualizing innovation in a small urban space. To explain the why and how of this reimagining of innovation and the remaking of space, I explored Thrift’s arguments that production and consumption are becoming or have become a single process (Thrift, 2006, 2008), which result in a new form of capitalism and efficacy, that he calls rightness. I argued that Thrift’s *rightness* provides a means of conceptualizing or reimagining the remaking of space and the consumption of space described by Brooks in Bistrotville (Brooks, 2004: 27).

In addition, I explored emergence and complexity theory in the context of urban space—Jacobs (1961) arguing that cities are problems of *organized complexity*” (Jacobs, 1961: 563). Sawyer explains, “*emergence*—the process whereby the global behavior of a system results from the actions and interactions of agents” (Sawyer, 2005: 2). I argued that “interactions among autonomous individuals result in the emergence of collective phenomena” (Sawyer, 2005: 21-22) and in the context of cities and urban space, “our urban areas are the result of the actions of every citizen, every group, and every institution, every day” (Bruegmann, 2005: 225). This opens up West Hartford Center and the remaking of The Center as an emergent phenomenon.

Last, I explored the remaking of space as emergence and argued that evolution, the “processes of change in which organisms better adapted to their environments increase in number, often at the expense of those less suited...when applied to collectivities of individuals and activities such as those comprised by cities...” (Batty, 2007: 154), allows the reimagining of urban space as platforms. I asserted that “[p]latform building is, by definition, a kind of exercise in emergent behavior” (Johnson, 2010, p. 210) and that these platforms allow specific habitats to emerge. In this context I reimagined the cultural entrepreneurs in West Hartford Center as ‘ecosystem engineers’ who have created a specific kind of habitat that is The Center. Last, I concluded that urban theory has missed the importance of the everyday space and the remaking of everyday space such as The Center. In addition, I pointed out that Thrift explains this in his discussion of efficacy and rightness, when he explains “[o]ne of Stevens’s key tasks was to resonate with the moments of sudden rightness in an ultimately bewildering world, those moments of everyday life when ‘mere’ things seem to light up, seem to become ‘precious portents of our powers’” (Stevens 1960: 174) (Thrift, 2008, p. 52).

I now conclude and argue that urban theory can be reimagined to conceptualize centrality as individualized; urban space as potentiality; innovation as newness, improvement, and overcoming uncertainty; the remaking of space as both innovative and emergent; and we can reimagine each of these concepts in the context of space as a commodity that is produced and consumed. Therefore, a new lens is created to conceptualize and understand the remaking of West Hartford Center. And with this new lens, the kind of space that is The Center can be studied, explored, and hopefully a new vocabulary can be developed to better explain the remaking of space.

Research Methodology

West Hartford Center: A Case Study Approach

Introduction

I have argued that the literature and research on American cities and urbanization has focused mostly on large cities and large metropolitan regions (Burgess, et. al., 1925; Currid, et. al., 2009; Castells and Hall, 1994; Dear, 2002; Greene, 2008; Hackworth, 2005; Hanlon and Vicino, 2007; Lloyd, 2002, 2006; Smith, 2002; Scott and Soja, 1996; Soja, 1996) even though the majority of urban dwellers live in smaller cities and metropolitan regions. In addition, I argued that urbanization in America is dominated by suburban spaces—more urban dwellers live in suburban spaces than in central cities (Jackson 1985; Fishman, 1987, Bruegmann, 2005; Cox, 2006). Unfortunately, there is a disconnect between the locations where urban research takes place (large cities and metropolitan regions) and where the majority of Americans live (smaller cities and metropolitan regions and suburban spaces). In addition, the literature review reveals that much of the writing on urbanization in America has focused on the central city as one kind of space (Park and Burgess, et. al., 1925; Smith, 1996, 2002; Lees, et. al., 2008, 2010; Zukin 1989, 1995, 2010) and suburban space as another kind of urban space (Baxandall and Ewen, 2000; Bruegmann, 2005; Fishman, 1985; Kunstler, 1993, 1998; Jackson, 1985). Unfortunately, this differentiation between the central city and the suburban misses the multiplicity of spaces that exist within metropolitan regions. Therefore, I argue that gaps have been created related to how we understand specific kinds of spaces—more specifically, resilient spaces that have evolved and matured.

The process of urbanization in America has created a multitude of new and remade urban spaces (Brooks, 2004; Castells and Hall, 1994; Fogelson, 2005; Duncan and Duncan, 2004; Fishman, 1987; Garreau, 1991; Teaford, 2008) that are blurring the lines between what has been conceptualized as urban space and suburban space (Fishman, 1987; Garreau, 1991). Much of the literature on specific kinds of remade spaces focuses on spaces in the central city locations that have gentrified or result from state-sponsored regeneration (Freeman, 2006; Smith, 1996, 2002; Hannigan, 1998; Lees, et. al., 2008, 2010, Zukin, 1989, 1995, 2010). Unfortunately, this also creates a void in how we understand the remaking of resilient and successful spaces.

Figure 3. West Hartford Center



West Hartford, a community conceptualized as suburban, has evolved and matured over the past 160 years. The aim of my research is to explore the remaking of West Hartford Center, as a kind of space that is resilient and successful, to gain a better understanding of this space and the kind of experience it provides, as experienced by many businesses and individuals that inhabit this space. In addition, I will explore how this specific space becomes a central place based on its potentiality and in the context of individualized centrality. I will also explore the remaking of West Hartford Center, not as a process of gentrification or state-led regeneration, but as emergence—a self-organizing remaking of a resilient space—a platform and habitat produced by ecosystem engineers (see Johnson, 2010). However, this production of space will be conceptualized in the context of rightness, a reworking of capitalism that “continuously conjure up experiences which can draw consumers to commodities [space as a commodity] by engaging their own passions and enthusiasms, set within a frame that can deliver on those passions and enthusiasms” (Thrift, 2008: 50).

To accomplish this, I have chosen the case study method to study West Hartford Center. Therefore, I will investigate the remaking of The Center, the kind of space that is The Center, and the experience that this resilient space provides by exploring the following questions:

1. What kind of space is West Hartford Center and how can we develop a vocabulary to explain it?
2. How and why did this kind of space emerge—the remaking of space?
3. Who were (and are) the change makers and what were their roles in the emergence of this kind of space?
4. Who are the users of this space, how do they view and experience this space, and what role does it play in their everyday lives?

By exploring these questions, I hope to: one, develop a vocabulary to better understand and describe this space; two, better understand how innovative individuals and businesses self-organize to create a resilient and successful space; three, how The Center fits into the lives and centrality of the individual users of the space; and four, how the consumers influence the production and consumption of this space. Through this process, I hope to gain a greater understanding of urban space as potentiality and to demonstrate the need for more urban research of both smaller metropolitan regions and specific spaces within all urbanized regions—including the study of resilient and successful spaces.

Why a Case Study Methodology?

West Hartford is one of approximately fifty suburban communities within the Hartford metropolitan region and one of dozens of commercial locations within the Hartford region. However, existing theories and perspectives on urban and suburban space fall short of explaining and conceptualizing The Center. Moreover, our understanding of the remaking of space, dominated by the emphasis on gentrification and state-sponsored regeneration, also falls short of explaining and conceptualizing how successful and resilient space is remade. Therefore, a need exists to develop a vocabulary to explain this kind of space and the remaking of this kind of space.

The case study method provides the opportunity to make sense of, explain, and understand, West Hartford Center as a space—the “how and why” (Yin, 2009) of its evolution and remaking and the kind of space that is The Center. Exploring the remaking of this space, how it emerged, and the kind of experience that West Hartford Center provides, opens up the opportunity to explain and conceptualize this kind space and to reimagine urban space as potentiality. In this context, it is logical to employ a case study approach to research this space, its evolution and remaking, and the unique experience that it offers. Yin explains, “[i]n general, case studies are the preferred method when (a) ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context” (Yin, 2009: 2). The context of my research (the remaking of The Center over the past 30 years), the questions to be explored (‘how’ and ‘why’), and The Center as a specific kind of space are captured in Yin’s three criteria for case studies.

Urban spaces are complex, or as Jane Jacobs asserts, “[c]ities happen to be problems in organized complexity... They present situations in which a half-dozen or even several dozen

quantities are all varying simultaneously *and in subtly interconnected ways*. Cities...do not exhibit *one* problem in organized complexity, which if understood explains all” (Jacobs, 1961: 564-565). Applying this idea of urban space as organized complexity to The Center provides an opportunity to better understand the kind space that is West Hartford Center. The Center is a complex space that is organized and defined by not just location, the physical buildings and infrastructure, but by the many people—businesses, owners, and users—that produce, consume, experience, and influence the space in everyday life. From a research perspective and method, Stake explains that “[q]ualitative researchers treat the uniqueness of individual cases and contexts as important to understanding. Particularization is an important aim, coming to know the particularity of the case” (Stake, 1995: 39). Stake continues, “[t]o sharpen the search for understanding, qualitative researchers perceive what is happening in key episodes or testimonies, represent happenings with their own direct interpretation and stories (i.e., narratives). Qualitative research uses these narratives to optimize the opportunity of the reader to gain an experiential understanding of the case” (Stake, 1995: 40). This is the very essence of my research—the search for understanding—as to what this space West Hartford Center is and to document it through the narratives and happenings of the people—business owners and users of The Center.

While there are many challenges (subjectivity, generalization, time, money, and ethical risks) (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009; Lincoln and Guba, and Schofield in Gomm, et. al., 2000) in conducting a case study method, this method will provide the best means of understanding West Hartford Center. For example, Latham explains the ability to capture the essence of a place when he writes, “too often ‘local’ histories and relationships are underplayed as little more than idiosyncratic background noise, when, in fact as can be seen with the present case study [Auckland, New Zealand in his case], it is exactly that noise that needs to be made sense of” (Latham, 2003: 1714). In the case of West Hartford Center, it is important to understand the remaking of this space and how and why The Center has been remade. Therefore, the local history, local actors, and local context become critical in understanding The Center.

Research Questions

As discussed above, West Hartford Center is a resilient space that has matured, evolved, and been remade over time. The Center has been a successful commercial space—to varying degrees—since it began to develop in the 1920s and 1930s. However, although The Center has been

successful, this does not mean that it has remained the same kind of space throughout its evolution. Therefore, a key question related to the kind of space that is West Hartford Center is how and why this space has been remade, maintained its success, and remained resilient. In addition, the vocabulary (suburban, urban, and gentrified) fall short of capturing the essence of and explaining the kind of space that is The Center.

To explore this question I argue that it is important to explore three additional or underlying questions, which provide context and help explain the kind of space that is The Center and explain its remaking:

1. How and why did this space emerge—the remaking of this space?
2. Who were (and are) the change makers and what were their roles in the emergence of this new kind of space?
3. Who are the users of this space and how do they view, experience, and use this space in the context of their everyday lives?

To explore these questions, I will study the remaking of The Center over the past 30 years (from 1980 to 2010). The following is a detailed look at each of these questions and specific questions that relate to each broader question which will help in exploring each broad question.

The Kind of Space that is West Hartford Center: How does the remaking of The Center, the change makers, and its users and their experiences help us to define, develop a vocabulary, and help us better understand the kind of space that is West Hartford Center?

- How do we understand and define (or best explain) the kind of space that is The Center?
- Is The Center an urban space or suburban space or some other kind of space?
- Does The Center provide urban experiences or suburban experiences or some other kind of experience?
- How can The Center help us to understand other resilient spaces and the remaking of a multitude of other kinds of spaces?

The Remaking of West Hartford Center as a Kind of Space: How does the remaking of The Center help us to understand the kind of space that The Center has become?

- How and why did The Center remake itself between the late 1980s and 2010?
- Why did this remaking of space take place when it did?
- What was it about this specific time and space that allowed for this remaking of space to occur?
- What were the key factors or ingredients involved in this remaking of space?

The Change Makers – Property and Business Owners and Cultural Entrepreneurs:

Who were (and are) the change makers—the key actors—that influenced or played a role in the remaking of The Center as a kind of space?

- What roles did these actors play in the remaking of this space?
- What was it about this space—West Hartford Center—that attracted them?
- What were they doing differently in this space than in other spaces in the metropolitan region?

The Users of West Hartford Center – The User Perspectives of this Kind of Space: How

do the users of The Center help us to better understand this kind of space and the experiences that The Center provides?

- Who are the users of this space (age, race, income, etc.)?
- Where do the users come from (neighborhood, town, and/or regions)?
- How do they utilize this space?
- What are their experiences in this space?
- How do they define, explain, and understand this space?

Research Methods

This section will discuss and explain the specific research methods that I will utilize to study West Hartford Center. The methods are designed to explore the above questions with the intent of providing an understanding of the kind of space that is The Center and the remaking of this space. To accomplish this, I have divided the research into four topical areas that coincide with the research question. They are: The Historical and Regional Context, The Evolution and Remaking of The Center, The Change Makers—Businesses and Cultural Entrepreneurs, and The Center as a Public Space – The Users and Experiences.

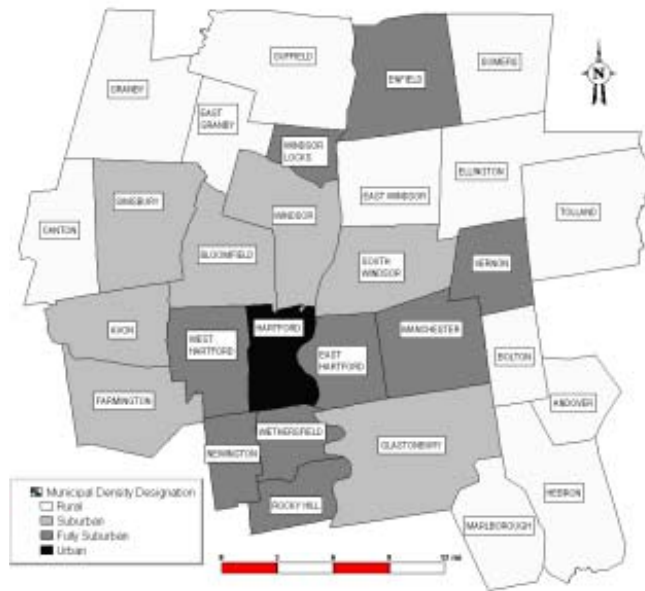
The Historical and Regional Context

The Historical and Regional Context portion of my research will provide an understanding of how West Hartford and The Center evolved as a suburb and as a space. This historical account of suburbanization in the Hartford region will focus on the westward expansion of Hartford into West Hartford. This will include early suburban ideals and forms, those influential individuals documented by Jackson (1985) and Fishman (1987) who lived in Hartford, the development of Nook Farm as an early suburban community, the emergence of the urban and suburban streetcar

system in Hartford, and the historical development of The Center in the 1920s and 1930s. To accomplish this, I will review historical documents, maps, newspaper articles, and I will interview local historians (see Yin, 2009; Clifford. et. al., 2010).

The regional context will explore West Hartford today, its place and role within the metropolitan region, and how it is conceptualized and understood. This will include a review of demographics, regional plans, and local plans. For example, the 2003 report, *Trends Shaping Our Region*, by the Capitol Region Council of Government (CRCOG) identifies four kinds (rural, suburban, fully suburban, and urban) of communities in the region (see Map 1 below). In this context, West Hartford is conceptualized as fully suburban. Since my research will focus on the remaking of West Hartford Center from 1980 to 2010, this section will be utilized to establish the history, evolution, and context of The Center prior to this period from 1980 to 2010.

Map 1. Subareas of the Capitol Region



The Evolution and Remaking of West Hartford Center

The intent of this portion of my research is to explore the emergent remaking of The Center from 1980 to 2010. Therefore, I will draw upon research related to creativity, innovation, complexity theory, and emergent self-organizing behavior to create a framework for understanding how the individual actions of business owners—the cultural entrepreneurs—collectively remade The Center during this time.

To accomplish this, I need to understand the changes that have occurred in The Center from 1980 to 2010. The changes that I believe will best inform an understanding of this remaking of space are the ownership of property, the kinds of businesses that occupy The Center, and number of establishments serving alcohol (this being a manifestation of sociality). Therefore, I will conduct a detailed analysis of changes related to property owners, the mix of commercial uses, and establishments serving alcohol. To accomplish this, I will utilize the GIS map layers for properties (parcels) and buildings, the tax assessment records, and the building permit and certificate of occupancy records from the Town of West Hartford to analyze these changes. I will map the ownership, first-floor commercial occupants, and location of liquor permits in 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010. This will allow me to observe the changes occurred in ownership, the kinds and mix of businesses, and the number and density of establishments serving alcohol that occurred over this time. Additional mapping of the years 1995 and 2005 may be included.

Mapping the ownership of properties will help inform what was occurring related to property ownership during this time. Who are the owners? Are there a few owners or many owners? Do business owners own their buildings or do they lease their space? Are the property owners local? This will help to inform the implication of property ownership as it relates to the remaking of this space. In addition, it will help to determine if further study is needed related to owners and ownership. For examples, do I need to conduct interviews with property owners and which owners may be best to pursue.

Mapping the first-floor commercial occupants will help to inform us about the kinds of businesses that existed in The Center during each of the years noted above. This will allow me to analyze the kinds of businesses that existed in one year versus another, the mix of businesses, and the kind of changes that were occurring. Other related questions to this change will included the rate of turnover, which businesses were succeeding (lasting many years) or not, and vacancy rates.

I anticipate that the mapping and analysis of the changes in the kinds of establishments in The Center will not only demonstrate the changes that were occurring during this time, but also inform of the changes in the *kind* of business establishments that occupied The Center. I assume, based on my existing knowledge of The Center, that the changes in the kind of establishments in The Center will show a move away from service oriented establishments to retail and restaurants. For example, I assume that there will be a shift from low-end coffee shops to cafes serving quality coffee and that family oriented restaurants will be replaced by fine dining, ethnic cuisine, and alcohol consumption. For a lack of a better term, I assume the mapping and analysis will

demonstrate an ‘up-scaling’ of The Center, among other changes, such as the number of locally owned establishments versus national chains, increases in rents, and the creation of a sidewalk-culture—focused around outdoor dining. In general, I assume that greater potential for sociality will have emerged in The Center during this time.

Mapping the establishments serving alcohol will help to inform what kinds of changes were occurring in The Center. For example, an increase in the number of restaurants and bars may indicate an increase in sociality occurring in The Center or how the users of this space viewed and utilized this space—in establishments that are more conducive to sociality and spending long periods of time in The Center.

Documenting and analyzing these changes—through the mapping of ownership, occupancy, and liquor permits—in the kinds of establishments in The Center will provide the framework for studying how this change—the remaking of West Hartford Center—occurred. It will allow me to explore what was going on at specific points in time during this period, which businesses were opening, and which businesses were closing. It will also allow me to identify businesses/owners that were early pioneers and possibly innovative—providing a product and/or service that was different from what was currently being offered. This will provide the context for the two remaining areas of my research: The Change Makers—Businesses and Cultural Entrepreneurs, and West Hartford Center as a Space – The Users and Experiences.

To best understand the changes that were occurring in The Center, as demonstrated by the mapping and analysis, I will also supplement the mapping and analysis with newspaper accounts of The Center during this time. I am hoping that remarks in these accounts will demonstrate that change was occurring, that The Center was becoming a new kind of space. For example, a statement such as, “Bricco, at the site of the old LaSalle Market on LaSalle Road, is the latest to enter the fray among Asian, European and contemporary American restaurants competing for diners' dollars” (Hartford Courant, 1996: B-1) informs us of a change that was occurring and demonstrates the emergence of a dining culture in The Center. In addition, based on what is learned from the mapping of changes, I will also conduct interviews of property owners, business owners, real estate professionals, and government officials to gain personal accounts of what they saw as occurring in The Center during this time. These interviews and personal accounts will supplement the data analysis with human accounts, experiences, and perspectives that provide a greater depth of understanding.

The Change Makers—Businesses and Cultural Entrepreneurs

I argue that the remaking of West Hartford Center has not been the result of state-sponsored regeneration—redevelopment schemes or plans (see Peck and Ward, 2002; Hannigan, 1998; Smith, 1996, 2002; Zukin, 2010). Therefore, I argue that the remaking of West Hartford Center resulted from emergence—the self-organizing actions of individuals and businesses that coalesced to create a remaking of space (see Jacobs, 1961; Johnson, 2001; Lloyd, 2002, 2006; Batty, 2007). While much has been written on creativity, innovation, and emergence, as discussed in the literature review, the focus is often on large urban places (Castells and Hall, 1994; Hall, 1998; Lloyd 2002, 2006), technology based innovation (Amin and Roberts, 2008; Castells and Hall, 1994; Hall, 1998; Thrift, 2008), and business practices designed to foster innovation (Johnson, 2010; Thrift, 2006, 2008). Unfortunately, the literature does not conceptualize these ideas in the context of the remaking of urban space. Therefore, I argue that creativity, innovation, and emergence provide a means to understanding the changes—the remaking of space—that have occurred in The Center.

This portion of my research is designed to gain a greater understanding of the businesses and business owners in The Center. This will include understanding: Who are they? Why did they choose The Center? What was their vision for their business and how did it relate to and possibly influence The Center? What were they doing and how was it different than what was already there? Therefore, I will target the businesses, owners, and managers with the intent of better understanding how they viewed and understand The Center as the kind of space in which to locate their business. In addition, through this process I intend to identify those businesses and owners—who I will call Cultural Entrepreneurs (the ecosystem engineers in Johnson, 2010)—who were the early innovators and who may have played an important role in the remaking of The Center and creating the kind of space and experience that is West Hartford Center.

To best understand these business owners and businesses, I will utilize an interview method. While other research methods could be used to explore and explain The Center, for example, comparative urban analysis to compare and contrast West Hartford and The Center to other spaces, or surveys/questionnaires to ask the owners questions, I believe that interviews will provide the best means of understanding the complex changes and motivations that were (and are) occurring in The Center. For example, Yin states, that a survey methodology can help to understand the “who, what, where, when, how many, and how much” (Yin, 2009: 8) questions related to The Center. However, such a method does not provide the in-depth personal account or story. Therefore, my reason for not using a survey method is twofold: first, I can answer the *who, what,*

where, when, how many, and how much through my analysis of government record, permits, and newspaper accounts, as proposed and discussed above. Second, the interview method will provide a more detailed and personalized account by those involved in the remaking of The Center. I believe this is critical to developing a vocabulary to explain and understand the kind of space and the remaking of this space. I hope that through their personal accounts and stories, the business owners and managers (the cultural entrepreneurs) will explain how they understand this space, how their business and business model fit into this space, and help identify the potential they saw within this space (including their ability to influence and shape this space).

To accomplish this, I will interview between 30 to 50 business owners and managers. To identify possible business owners and managers for interviews, I will call upon existing relationships I have with people who have been involved in The Center, know the owners, and can introduce me to the owners. One example is Naomi Lerner, a West Hartford resident and marketing consultant who has been doing marketing/advertisement work with many, if not most, business in The Center over the past 15 years. I will also post advertisements in the local community paper, Hartford Magazine (where many of the businesses advertise), and will make my rounds to the businesses to introduce myself.

Through the business owner interview process and other outreach I intend to identify 10 to 15 business owners who were either early innovators or significant in the remaking of West Hartford Center. It is my intent to conduct additional interviews with these owners/innovators to explore their business ideas and perspectives when they first chose The Center and opened their business. Through this process, I hope to explore what they were doing that was different or innovative and how their actions may have influenced the remaking of The Center and the kind of space that is The Center.

West Hartford Center: The Users and User Experiences

The final section of research will focus on the users (the consumers) of this space, their experiences, and how they influence this space. I argue that the users are critical to understanding the remaking of West Hartford Center and the kind of space that is The Center. Therefore, as discussed in my literature review, I will explore how The Center fits into the individualized centrality of the users and how the users, as both consumers and producers influence the production of this space.

To accomplish this, I intend to utilize two research methods, interviews and user diaries. My reason for using interviews will be to gain a personalized individual perspective and understanding of how the users understand and conceptualize this space. How do they view and think of The Center? Why do they go to The Center? How do they experience The Center? The interview method will allow me to explore the user perspectives of The Center. Understanding that the users, in most cases, will not be well informed as to the research and debates on how urban and suburban spaces are conceptualized, the interview approach will allow me to engage in discussions with the users to better understand how they view and use this space. The interview method will allow me to further explore their answers/responses to questions and dig deeper into what they think of this space and how they utilize this space.

In the literature review I argued for an individualized centrality where individuals experience the city and urban spaces based on personal decisions, needs, and desires. Therefore, it will be important to understand how this specific space fits into the users' individualized city and experiences. To understand this, I have chosen the users' diaries method. The diaries will allow me to understand the multiplicity of spaces within metropolitan Hartford that the users are visiting and how The Center fits into their city and their lives. Latham explains, "[a]s geographers we are often concerned with the everyday rhythms and textures of people's day-to-day lives. In particular, we often want to understand the special and temporal context within which particular social practices occur" (Latham, in Clifford, et. al., 2010: 189). My intent is to do just that through the users' diaries.

To accomplish this use of diaries, I will utilize four diary techniques to create a comprehensive diary for the users to document their activities. These four techniques are: diary-logs to document the movements and places visited throughout the urban region; written diaries, to document the time the users spend within The Center; photographic diaries to supplement the users' experience within The Center; and diary-interviews at the end of the process to discuss in greater detail their diaries and experiences (see Latham in Clifford, et. al., 2010: 192-194). By utilizing these four methods, I will be able to analyze how the users utilize urban spaces, this specific space, and their use and experience in this space. The challenge in utilizing the user diary method will be to ensure that the routines of the users intersect with West Hartford Center during the period of time (a week/seven days) in which they are making their entries in their diaries. To address this challenge, I will need to provide specific instructions to the users that will ensure they use the diaries during a week when they know they will be going to The Center.

To accomplish this portion of my research, I will interview of 30 to 40 users of The Center. While the process of selecting persons for interviews will rely strongly on willing participants, I will try to capture a diverse cross section of users by age, race, and gender. Therefore, I will attempt to develop a sample population that is half male and half female. I will target a population between the age of twenty and sixty nine with an equal distribution by gender across age cohorts of 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60-69. To find willing participants, I will utilize a word of mouth process through my network of friends and colleagues to identify persons who frequent The Center and who may be willing to participate in this research study. I will not utilize friends or colleagues as subjects, ensuring that all potential subjects are at least a degree (a friend of a friend) removed from me. I will also publish advertisements in the local newspaper and Hartford magazine to find participants.

In addition to the interview participants, I intend to recruit 15 to 20 persons to complete the user time-space-budget diaries based on Latham's (2003, Clifford, et, al., 2010) research methods. My intent is to capture a similar cross-section as the interview participants. In addition, I may utilize some of the interview participants for the user diaries. I will utilize the same methods for recruiting participants as those discussed above to find participants for the user interviews.

Other Techniques

In addition to the review of historical documents and plans, cultural entrepreneur and user interviews and user diaries, I will also utilize participant observations (see Lauier in Clifford et. al., 2010) of The Center and its users. This will include the use of field notes and photographs of the time I spend in The Center conducting my research. I intend for these observations to also inform my research and to provide an additional perspective to the personalized accounts of the business owners and users.

I also plan to construct a West Hartford Center social networking page on Facebook. The intent of this social networking page is to forward Latham's (2003) argument that "human geography needs to be more imaginative, pluralistic, and pragmatic in its attitude towards both (a) methodology and (b) the kinds of final research accounts it produces." Therefore, I will utilize Facebook and the 'Group' page options to create a West Hartford Center page that will allow anyone on Facebook and interested in The Center to share their thoughts, comments, stories, and photos related to West Hartford. This page will not indicate that it is designed as part of a research project. The intent is to create a means of documenting unsolicited comments and perspectives on The

Center. I am hopeful that such a page and the unsolicited remarks on the page will provide another dimension of perspectives on The Center. Depending on content, I may directly contact individuals who participate on the page and provide interesting perspectives to gain a more thoughtful understanding of their perspectives through a formal interview.

Conclusion

As proposed, this research project is exciting yet challenging. For example, the research questions are many and complex and each question could be the foundation to a specific research project. However, to explore my primary research question, the kind of space that is West Hartford Center, requires an understanding of the businesses and individuals that participate in this space and have shaped the remaking of this space into a specific kind of space. In addition, there is a void in how we understand the remaking of resilient urban spaces and how creativity, innovation, and emergent behavior at the scale of the individual or small business owner can influence, or at the very least, participate in this remaking of space. Therefore, I have constructed a research method that will allow me to explore these complex concepts in the context of this specific space and its remaking.

I approach this research project with caution, understanding that it is not intended to produce a definitive answer or understanding of these complex concepts and this complicated space. While I am hopeful to develop a vocabulary that will help us to better understand and discuss the kind of space that is West Hartford Center, I am also interested in opening a door to a means of conceptualizing urban space as organic and pliable. I hope to demonstrate how the individual actors, the producers and consumers of space participate in the production and consumption of space—influencing and shaping the space into an experience that fits into some aspect of their lives. In the end, I would hope that my research informs and inspires additional research on smaller urban places and space, the multiplicity of spaces that make our urban environments, and creativity, innovation, and emergence as a means of understanding the remaking of space.

Case Study

West Hartford Center: A Historical and Regional Context and Mapping the Remaking of Space

Introduction

The intent of my case study is to provide the historical and regional context of West Hartford and The Center and to explore the remaking of The Center. To accomplish this, the first section will introduce the Hartford region and West Hartford. To do this, I will explore some of the demographics of West Hartford, the region, and a few other communities within the region to provide some context to West Hartford. The second section will explore the historical context of West Hartford and The Center. This will include the outward and westward expansion of urbanization from the historical core of Hartford along Farmington Avenue to West Hartford Center. The third section will explore change and the remaking of West Hartford Center as a space. This will include mapping the development of properties from 1920 to today, sales and change in ownership between 1980 and 2010, and land use as of 2010. In doing so, I will explore concepts related to the remaking of space and how the further mapping of change will open up a means of exploring and understanding the remaking of The Center.

West Hartford and the Hartford Region

I have argued that the American urban experience is a smaller metropolitan experience and a suburban experience. Therefore, West Hartford and The Center provide an interesting location to study of the remaking of a smaller suburban center in a medium size metropolitan region. In addition, West Hartford is located in the Northeastern United States between New York City and Boston, Massachusetts, one of the most urbanized areas in America. Connecticut, as of 2007, had an estimated population of 3,502,309 persons (Census, 2007), a population smaller than that of the 13 largest metropolitan regions in the United States. However, 3,196,309 persons or 91 percent of Connecticut's population lives in urban places (Census, 2007). Therefore, Connecticut is a highly urbanized place even though it is a small state without a large city or large metropolitan region.

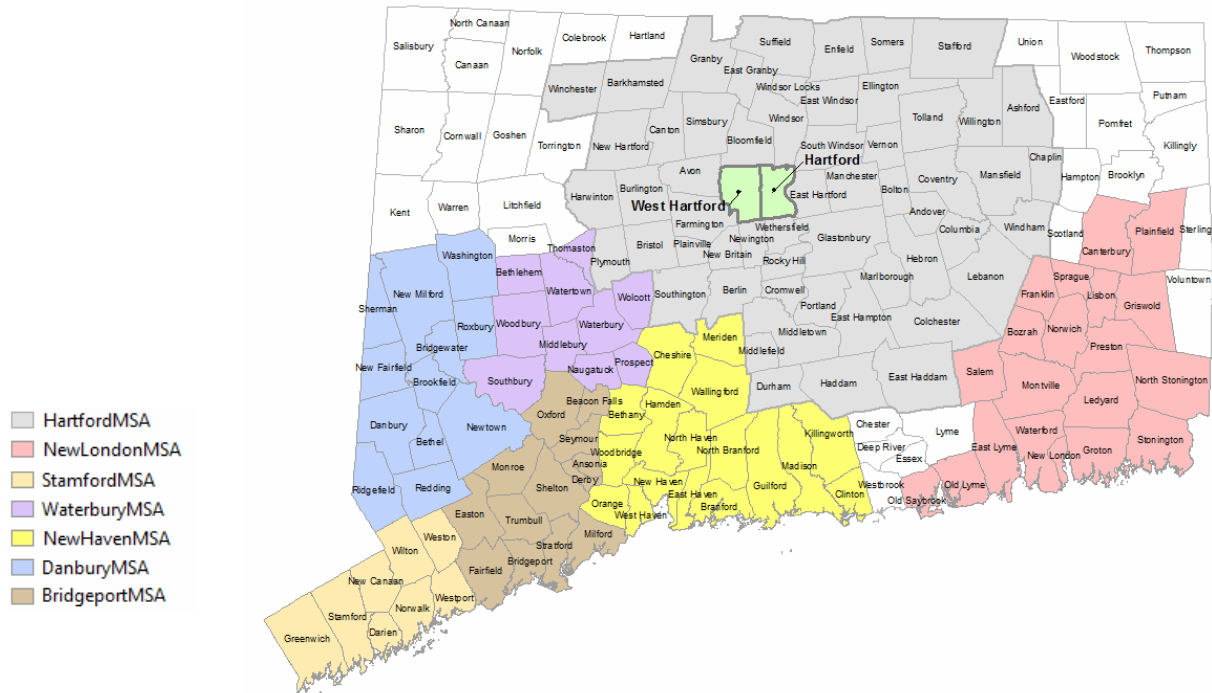
Map 2. Northeast Corridor



Connecticut however, does have a number of small central cities and regions including Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford (all cities of less than 145,000 persons) and smaller cities and metropolitan regions, including Danbury, New London, and Waterbury. Hartford is the state capital and the largest urbanized region in the state. In 2007 the Hartford metropolitan region had a population of 1,189,113 persons, the 41st largest metropolitan region in the United States (Census, 2007). Hartford, the central city, had an estimated population of 124,563 persons or approximately 10 percent of the total metropolitan population (CERC, 2008, Town Profiles). Ninety percent of the metropolitan population lives in the urbanized areas outside the central city, making metropolitan Hartford a mostly suburban region.

Today, West Hartford, one of many suburban communities in the Hartford metropolitan region, has an estimated population of 65,137 (State of CT, DECD) or 5.4 percent of the total metropolitan population. The boundary of West Hartford with Hartford is approximately 2 miles west of Hartford's downtown (the central business district). West Hartford Center, which started to develop as a commercial retail strip in the 1920s, is approximately 3.7 miles west of Hartford's downtown—the location of the original settlement of Hartford in 1636 (see Love, 1914).

Map 3. Connecticut Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA)



The Hartford MSA is the large grey area in the center of the state.

The Hartford region has many suburban town centers (Manchester, Windsor, Wethersfield, Glastonbury, and Bloomfield, to name a few), commercial strips (Berlin Turnpike, Silas Deane Highway, Silver Lane/Spencer Street, and Route 44, to name a few), and retail, office, and industrial development nodes (Day Hill Road, Exit 23 Rocky Hill, Westfarms Mall, and Buckland Hills Mall, to name a few). However, in the context of these many suburban spaces, The Center is somewhat unique. For example, it is not the center of an old industrial mill town such as Manchester that has been engulfed by the suburban growth of the region. Nor is it the small village center of historic Old Wethersfield—one of the oldest settlements in the region and state (see Love, 1914). West Hartford Center, also, is not the 1940s and 50s commercial strip of the Berlin Turnpike that continues to evolve as a present-day suburban commercial strip. Nor is The Center the massive indoor retail shopping mall with the associated and surrounding retail agglomeration as seen in Buckland Hills or WestFarms. Nor is it one of the corporate office parks that decorate the landscape near interstate exit ramps, such as Exit 23 in Rocky Hill or the office and industrial parks of Day Hill Road in Windsor.

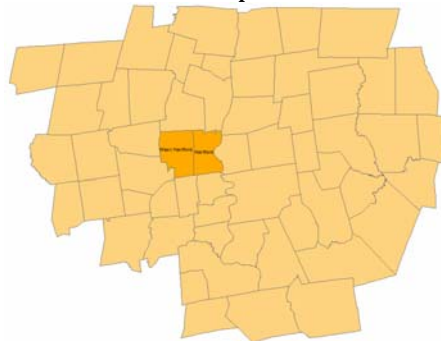
Figure 4. West Hartford Center



Aerial view of West Hartford Center (2008).

To generally introduce the Hartford Region and West Hartford, I will explore recent demographics in the Hartford region, West Hartford, and a few communities within the region. To do this, I will utilize data compiled by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), the regional planning agency. The CRCOG area is smaller than the metropolitan statistical area. CRCOG consists of Hartford and 28 surrounding communities with a total population of 721,321 in 2000. I have chosen to use the CRCOG 2003 report, *Trends Shaping our Region: A Census Data Profile of Connecticut's Capitol Region* since it provides a comprehensive review of demographic trends in the region and by town based on U.S. Census data (2002) and additional housing sales data compiled by CRCOG in 2006.

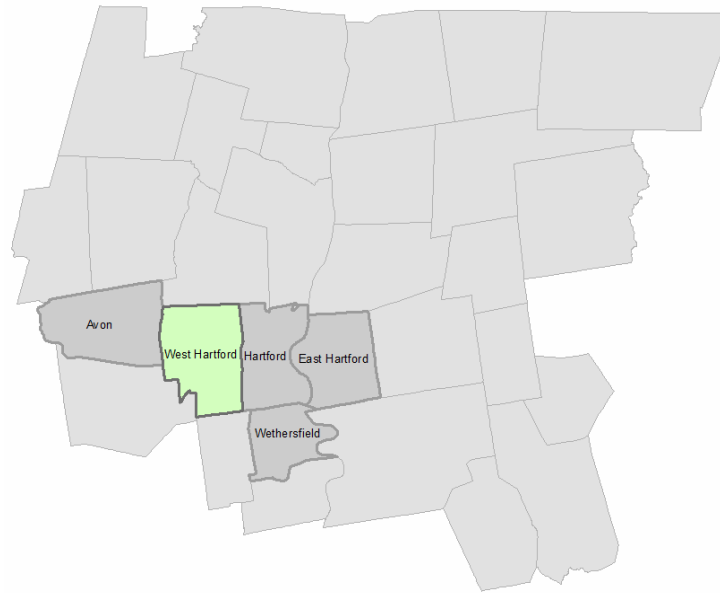
Map 4. The Hartford Metropolitan Statistical Area



In addition to reviewing demographic data at the scale of the Capitol Region and West Hartford, I provide data on four other communities: Hartford, East Hartford, Wethersfield, and Avon. My reason for doing is this to provide a comparative context, not analysis. Hartford is the

central city and urban core of the region. East Hartford, a suburban community east of Hartford, is a mature industrial suburb (the home of Pratt and Whitney). Wethersfield is one of the original settlements dating back to the 1630s and today is a mature suburb that is mostly residential with limited commercial development. Avon is a younger suburb west of West Hartford and is the wealthiest community in the Hartford region.

Map 5. Comparative Towns



The following table provides historic population data for each of these five communities and the Capitol Region. In general this table demonstrates the continual growth in population in the Capitol Region over the past 250 years.

Table 2. Population

Town	1756	1800	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900
Avon	0	0	1025	1001	995	1059	987	1057	1182	1302
East Hartford	0	3057	2237	2389	2497	2951	3007	3500	4455	6406
Hartford	3027	5347	9789	12793	13555	29152	37743	42551	53230	79850
West Hartford	0	0	0	0	1202	1296	1533	1828	1930	3186
Wethersfield	2483	3992	3853	3824	2523	2705	2693	2173	2271	2637
Capitol Region	23,723	42,721	50,458	54,399	64,480	84,877	97,125	107,541	123,513	159,097

Town	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Avon	1337	1534	1738	2258	3171	5273	8352	11201	13937	15832
East Hartford	8138	11648	17125	18615	29933	43977	57583	52563	50452	49575
Hartford	98915	138036	164072	166267	177397	162178	158017	136392	139739	121578
West Hartford	4808	8854	24941	33776	44402	62382	68031	61301	60110	63589
Wethersfield	3148	4342	7512	9644	12533	20561	26662	26013	25651	26271
Capitol Region	193,338	253,532	318,477	345,027	418,641	546,545	669,903	668,479	709,382	724,320

The table also indicates changes in the spatial location of population over the past 250 years. For example, Hartford and Wethersfield, as original settlements, were established communities well before the other communities in the region. In addition, the outward expansion of population and the incorporation of individual communities began in the early 1800s. The table also shows the beginning of suburbanization in the second half of the 1800s. Large scale suburbanization began in the first half of the 1900s, a period when Wethersfield and Avon more than doubled, East Hartford almost quadrupled, and West Hartford experienced a tenfold growth in population. The latter half of the 1900s demonstrates the continued outward growth of population as Avon continues to grow to the year 2000. Wethersfield reaches build-out in 1970 and levels off, while East and West Hartford peak in 1970 and then decline in population. This decline in population is the result of a decrease in household size, not a loss in population to outward migration. Hartford's population peaks in 1950 and continues to decline to the year 2000. The loss of population in Hartford is a result of both outward migration associated with post-war suburbanization and the decline in household size. These changes in population demonstrate the spatial shift in population away from the central city to suburban areas, while the shift toward suburbanization begins and mirrors the historic timeframe of suburbanization in American (Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987).

The phenomenon of post-war suburbanization resulted not only in the loss of population in central cities but also in the loss of wealth and investment in the central city. This loss of investment in the central city and the increase of investment in the suburbs can be seen in the median home sale price of single family homes between 1978 and 2006.

Table 3. Median Home Sale Price for Single Family Units: 1978-2006

Town	1978	1986	1994	2002	2006
Avon	\$237,323	\$409,604	\$326,866	\$422,971	\$495,000
East Hartford	\$139,120	\$169,303	\$156,482	\$143,289	\$185,000
Hartford	\$142,187	\$156,040	\$124,627	\$112,638	\$160,000
West Hartford	\$198,637	\$267,218	\$222,848	\$249,147	\$300,000
Wethersfield	\$204,588	\$245,762	\$235,709	\$201,635	\$255,000
Capitol Region	\$171,854	\$226,257	\$199,794	\$208,472	\$259,900

Source: Capitol Region Council of Governments, 2006 (Adjusted for inflation)

The table above demonstrates the shift in capital and value to the suburban communities. While the value of housing does increase in Hartford, its housing value is far less than that of all of the suburban communities. The table also demonstrates the direction of the shift in the greatest wealth in the region to the west of Hartford. The mature industrial suburb of East Hartford experiences the lowest housing values, while West Hartford and then Avon (further west of

Hartford) experience the greatest increase in property values. However, it is evident that while mature West Hartford has experienced a significant increase in property value, it is not as high as that of Avon, a younger suburban community.

This shift in investment and wealth is also evident in the changes in median household income between 1969 and 1999. The table below shows changes in income, both in total median household income and in the percent of median household income in relation to the regional median household income.

Table 4. Median Household Income, 1969 - 1999

Town	1969	1979	1989	1999	1969%	1979%	1989%	1999%
Avon	\$14,484	\$31,565	\$66,602	\$90,934	138.0%	152.1%	158.3%	170.6%
East Hartford	\$10,568	\$19,314	\$36,584	\$41,424	100.7%	93.1%	86.9%	77.7%
Hartford	\$6,475	\$11,513	\$22,140	\$24,820	61.7%	55.5%	52.6%	46.6%
West Hartford	\$12,998	\$24,843	\$49,642	\$61,665	123.9%	119.7%	118.0%	115.7%
Wethersfield	\$13,247	\$23,284	\$43,888	\$53,289	126.2%	112.2%	104.3%	100.0%
Capitol Region	\$10,493	\$20,755	\$42,077	\$53,305	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Capitol Region Council of Governments, 2006

The table demonstrates that median household income has been increasing in all five communities and in the Capitol Region as a whole. However, Hartford has experienced the smallest gains and has the lowest income levels in the region, while Avon has experienced the greatest gains and is the wealthiest community in the region. However, the percent of median household income, as a percent of that of the Region, has declined in each community except Avon. This demonstrates the increase in income (wealth) within the region and the very high incomes in Avon and other wealthy communities. In this context, West Hartford is interesting. While West Hartford has historically always been a wealthy community, its comparative wealth in the context of the Capitol Region has been declining, and in 1999 it has only 115.7% of the wealth of the regional median—significantly less than that of Avon, at 170.6%. The table above and table 3 demonstrate that the process of suburbanization has not and is not uniform across suburban locations.

Further spatial shifts—beyond population, wealth and income—can also be seen in educational attainment. The following table provides the change in population 25 years of age or older with college degrees from 1990 to 2000.

Table. 5 Age 25 or Older Completing Bachelor’s Degree or Higher

Town	1990#	1990%	2000#	2000%
Avon	5,205	52.4%	6,893	62.0%
East Hartford	4,794	13.6%	4,536	13.4%
Hartford	11,628	14.4%	8,664	12.4%
West Hartford	20,258	46.6%	23,022	53.0%
Wethersfield	5,420	28.3%	6,571	33.3%
Capitol Region	135,136	28.3%	158,456	32.4%

Source: Capitol Region Council of Governments, 2003

The table demonstrates that wealth and educational opportunity and attainment are related. Avon, West Hartford, and Wethersfield all demonstrated an increase in the total population and percent of population with four year degrees or higher—as did the Capitol Region. However, Hartford and East Hartford, experienced decreases in total population and percent of total population with four years or more of post-secondary education.

The final aspect of demographic change that I want to explore is the changes in minority populations. The following table demonstrates increases in minority populations between 1990 and 2000 in the central city, suburban communities, and throughout the Capitol Region.

Table 6. Estimated Minority Population Share of Capitol Region Population Growth, 1990-2000

Town	1990 Total Population	1990 Total Minority	1990 Percent Minority	2000 Total Population	2000 Total Minority	2000 Percent Minority
Avon	13,937	474	3.4%	15,832	1,007	6.4%
East Hartford	50,452	8,368	16.6%	49,575	20,018	40.4%
Hartford	139,739	97,125	69.5%	124,121	100,288	80.8%
West Hartford	60,110	4,934	8.2%	61,046	10,518	17.2%
Wethersfield	25,651	932	3.6%	26,271	2,314	8.8%
Capitol Region	709,404	147,450	20.8%	721,320	198,039	27.5%

Source: Capitol Region Council of Governments, 2003

Minority populations increased by almost 50,000 persons between 1990 and 2000. Hartford, with the highest minority population and percent of minority population, increased from 69 percent to over 80 percent, and East Hartford, the mature industrial suburb, increased its minority population from 16.6% to 40.4%. Avon, the wealthiest community, increased its minority population from 3.4% to 6.4%. West Hartford doubled its percent of minority population from 8.2% to 17.2%. While East Hartford experienced very limited growth in wealth and a significant increase in minority population, West Hartford experienced moderate growth in wealth and a significant growth in its minority population. The table above demonstrates that significant segregation, both economic and ethnic, exists within the region. However, in the context of the region, West Hartford

with its moderate growth in wealth and greater growth in minority population is more diverse—economically and ethnically—than other locations in the region.

This exploration of demographics provides a general context of the Capitol Region and West Hartford as one of many communities within the region. It was not my intent to come to any specific conclusions, but rather to show the differences in demographic experiences that each of these communities have experienced and how West Hartford, as a mature suburb, is neither the wealthiest nor the poorest community. Nor is it a community that is significantly growing or declining. West Hartford is a community in the middle—spatial location, population, property value, income, and education. In addition, the Capitol Region is a wealthy region overall, yet it has significant disparities in wealth, education, and minority population across its many communities. However, while West Hartford is in the middle, it is a community that has a greater diversity in income, ethnicity, and wealth than other communities and the region.

West Hartford and West Hartford Center – A Historical Context

West Hartford began to develop as a suburban community in the 1850s and is still evolving today. The time-frame of West Hartford's incorporation and development as a suburban community coincides with suburbanization in America. Jackson explains, “[t]he new ideas about the house and the yard did not enter the nation’s consciousness through the efforts of any person or group of individuals. Dozens of people...helped create a new suburban vision of community between 1840 and 1870” (Jackson, 1985: 61). This proto period of suburbanization (1840-1870) is when West Hartford was incorporated into a separate suburban municipality.

Hartford was first settled in 1636 by the Reverend Thomas Hooker and 100 of his followers (Love, 1914). From the beginning Hartford was an innovative place. In 1639, the Court of Common Council adopted the Fundamental Orders, recognized as the first written constitution establishing a constitutional democracy (Love, 1914). In 1788 the “[f]irst U.S. woolen mill” (Arnold, 1985: 23) was established in Hartford, ushering in the start of the Industrial Revolution in America. Hartford would continue to innovate throughout the Industrial Revolution in manufacturing, publishing, insurance, bicycles, firearms, automobiles, and aviation (see Arnold, 1985; Hall, 1998). Therefore, it is not surprising that Hartford would also innovate regarding urban form and suburbanization.

Hartford, from 1636 to 1800 was a small urban village based first on an agricultural economy and later on an industrial economy (see Love, 1914; Arnold, 1985). In 1800 Hartford's population was 5,347 and it grew to 13,555 by 1850. However, Hartford was one of many small urban villages in what today is the Hartford region. The population of the region was 56,915 in 1800 and then 82,727 in 1850 (State of CT, DECD). However, from 1850 to 1900, the period when a regional street car system was developed, the region nearly tripled to 220,475 persons (State of CT, DECD).

West Hartford was initially the Western Division of Hartford, an agricultural community that established its own church in the 1700s and was the birthplace (1758) and home of Noah Webster (Arnold, 1985). Webster, a school teacher, published the *Blue Back Reader* (his famous spelling book), and in 1828 he published (the first) *American Dictionary of the English Language*. West Hartford incorporated as a separate municipality from Hartford in 1854 (www.west-hartford.com). According to the State of Connecticut, in 1850 West Hartford had an estimated population of 1,202 persons. It had 1,296 persons in 1860, six years after its incorporation into a separate municipality. By 1900 the population of West Hartford had more than doubled to 3,186. The population almost tripled to 8,854 by 1920, and almost tripled again by 1930 to 24,942. By 1940 West Hartford's population was 33,776 (State of CT, DECD). This significant increase in population demonstrates that suburbanization in the Hartford region was well established prior to World War II.

West Hartford's development as a suburb is interesting due to the fact that Hartford was a cradle of American suburbanization. Both Jackson (1985) and Fishman (1987) recognize a number of individuals who were influential in the history of American suburbanization. Jackson explains (Jackson, 1985: 61):

The new ideas about the house and the yard did not enter the nation's consciousness through the efforts of any person or group of individuals. Dozens of people, including the park planner Fredrick Law Olmsted, the social reformer Charles Loring Brace, and the Transcendental thinker Ralph Waldo Emerson, helped create a new suburban vision of community between 1840 and 1870. But three authors whose productive lives spanned the years between 1840 and 1875—Catharine Beecher, Andrew Jackson Downing, and Calvert Vaux—were the most important voices in shaping new American attitudes toward housing and residential space.

Both Jackson (1985) and Fishman (1987) note other significant individuals, such as Horace Bushnell, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Timothy Dwight, and Jacob Weidenmann, to name a few, who were promoting new ideals of the home, family, morality, nature, and landscape design. However,

by focusing on larger urban areas, Jackson and Fishman missed the significance of spatial, religious, and personal connections that united these individuals as a network of families and friends linked together by the Puritan history and religious teachings of New England, the Yale Divinity School, and the small urban centers of Litchfield, New Haven, and Hartford, Connecticut. More important, the relations between these individuals would center in Hartford and a small suburban development known as Nook Farm.

Timothy Dwight, a “Yale theologian” (Jackson, 1985) and a teacher at Yale Divinity, was the leader of the New American Evangelical movement. Dwight taught Lyman Beecher, the most influential Calvinist preacher in America (Mullin, 2002), who was at the Litchfield church from 1809 to 1825 (Sklar, 1972). Catharine Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, John Pierce Brace (father of Charles Loring Brace), and Horace Bushnell all grew up together in Litchfield (Mullins, 2002; Roper, 1990; Wood, 1991, 1997; Sklar, 1973). Horace Bushnell would follow in the footsteps of his mentor Lyman Beecher and attend Yale Divinity and in 1834 become the minister of North Church in Hartford (Mullin, 2, 2002). Catharine Beecher, in 1823, would begin her career teaching domesticity in Hartford where she would found the Hartford Female Seminary (Jackson, 1987; Sklar, 1972) and hire John Pierce Brace as a teacher and principal (Sklar, 1972). Charles Loring Brace, growing up in Hartford, would become best friends with Fredrick Law Olmsted, (Roper, 1990; Wood, 1997) and both would attend lectures and sermons by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Bushnell, and Henry Ward Beecher (Roper, 1990). While the relationships between these individuals run far deeper than I explain here, their relationships call into question Jackson’s claim that the “new ideas about the house and the yard did not enter the nation’s consciousness through the efforts of any person or group of individuals” (Jackson, 1985: 61) and how we understand the history of suburbanization based on large urban places.

West Hartford is an early American suburb that developed west of Hartford, the city that Horace Bushnell, Catharine Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Fredrick Law Olmsted, Charles Loring Brace, and Jacob Weidenmann would each call home for significant periods of time between 1820 and 1890 (Sklar, 1973; Roper, 1990; Favretti; 2007). In addition, Horace Bushnell, Catharine Beecher, and Harriet Beecher Stowe all lived in Nook Farm, along Farmington Avenue, the arterial road that connects Hartford’s urban core with West Hartford Center.

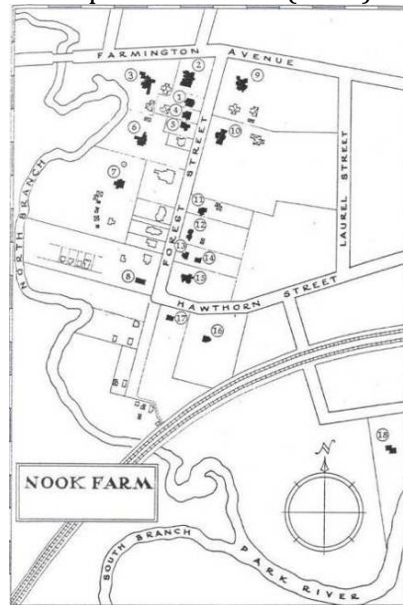
Figure 4. Harriet Beecher Stowe House, Nook Farm



Notice the suburban lawn and picturesque setting.

Nook Farm was purchased in 1851 by John Hooker (husband of Isabella Beecher, half-sister of Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe) and Francis Gillette (Andrews, 1969), coinciding with the development of Llewellyn Park, the New Jersey suburb of New York City referenced by Jackson (1985), Fishman (1987), and Hall (2002) as a significant early middle-class suburb in the English tradition. Fishman notes, “Jackson calls it ‘the world’s first picturesque suburb’; but, as John Archer has recently demonstrated, Llewellyn Park comes directly out of the half-century-old English tradition” (Fishman, 1987: 125). While Llewellyn Park and Nook Farm developed during the same decade, Nook Farm was purchased, developed, and inhabited by Evangelicals—the same Evangelicals who are recognized as influential in developing and spreading the American suburban ideology (Fishman, 1987).

Map 6. Nook Farm (1885)



Source: Harriet Beecher Stowe House

The location of Nook Farm is approximately one mile west of the urban core of Hartford. In 1850, it was approximately a half mile beyond the continuous developed urban area of Hartford—a suburban location. The border of Hartford and West Hartford is approximately a mile west of Nook Farm, and West Hartford Center is one and a half miles west of the border.

Figure 5. Stowe-Day House, Nook Farm



Notice the suburban lawn and picturesque setting.

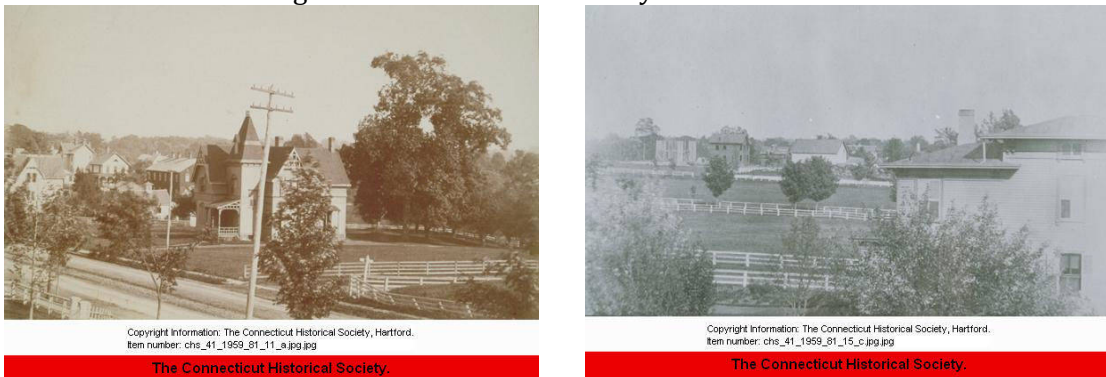
Hartford, an early adopter of a streetcar system, developed an intercity streetcar system that allowed 21 spatially separate urban and agricultural villages to grow simultaneously. “Public transportation in Hartford began in 1859, when the Hartford & Wethersfield Horse Railroad was granted a charter by the General Assembly” (Connecticut Motor Coach Museum, 2004: 7). The first line, a suburban line, connected the separate settlements of Hartford and Wethersfield and began to carry passengers in 1863. A second line, the Farmington Avenue line, was added in 1872 and extended to West Hartford Center in 1889 (Connecticut Motor Coach Museum, 2004: 7). The Hartford streetcar system began with the omnibus, and by 1894 the entire system was electrified (Connecticut Motor Coach Museum, 2004: 7).

Map 7. Hartford Streetcar Map



The Farmington Avenue streetcar line would shape the development pattern between Nook Farm and West Hartford Center as a streetcar suburb (see Warner, 1967). However, the design of homes and lots would follow the teachings and suburban forms of Beecher, Olmsted, and Weidenmann. The following two photos, taken in 1889 along Farmington Avenue near the city boundary with West Hartford, demonstrate the suburban housing designs. The suburban forms and designs that emerged in Hartford in the 1840s and were displayed throughout Nook Farm from the 1850s on would influence residential development styles throughout Hartford, West Hartford and the region. However, much of the area between Nook Farm and West Hartford Center also demonstrates the remaking of space and how Hartford, as it continued to grow, urbanized after it suburbanized—an urbanization of suburban space.

Figure 6. Suburban Homes Beyond Nook Farm



Farmington Avenue [ca. 1889]. Note the streetcar tracks in the center of the road.

The following two photos, taken today in the same area of Farmington Avenue, demonstrate how this once suburban space within the city limits has been remade into a more urban form as the result of post-1900 industrialization and growth.

Figure 7. The Remaking of Suburban Space into Urban Space



Farmington Avenue [2011]. The photo of the left shows the location of the house on the left above today. The photo on the right shows the approximate location where the two photos above were taken from.

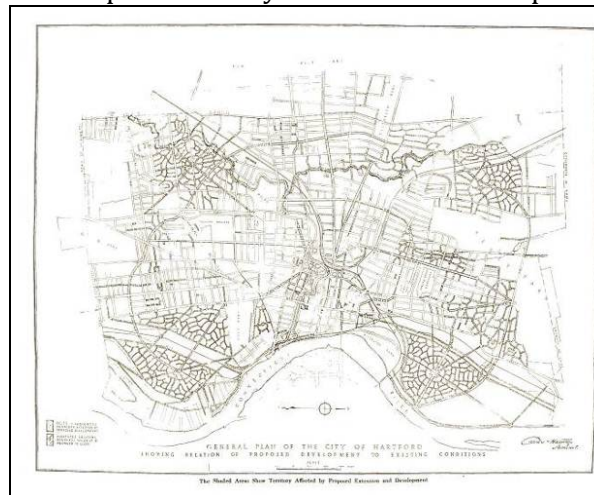
The early influences of suburban ideology and design in Hartford are also evident in the *1912 City of Hartford Plan*. While Hartford is known for establishing the first permanent planning commission in America in 1907, the city also produced one of the earliest city plans in America. As with most plans of that time, the Hartford plan was influenced by the City Beautiful movement (see Hall, 2002) and focused on government buildings and public spaces in the city center.

What are even more interesting about the *1912 City of Hartford Plan*, is its recommendations for privately owned undeveloped land beyond the central city. The Plan incorporated the suburban ideals of Beecher and the Evangelicals (see Fishman, 1987) and the suburban designs of Olmsted and Weidenmann (see Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987) and recommends a suburban form of future development. Two maps in the plan titled “General Plan for the City of Hartford: Showing Proposed Program for Development” and “Suggested Types of Layouts for Factory Sites and Workingmen’s Housing” recommended and depicted outlying undeveloped land to be developed into small ‘garden city’ style neighborhoods near factory locations. These new neighborhoods were designed with curvilinear streets, single family lots, and single family homes with ornamental lawns. The following quotes come from the second map mentioned above and demonstrate the incorporation of these suburban forms (City of Hartford Plan, 1912):

A scheme of development for outlying district to give a system of streets on a uniform plan, taking advantage of the lay of land, with plots of ground suitable for small houses and susceptible of picturesque and individual treatment.

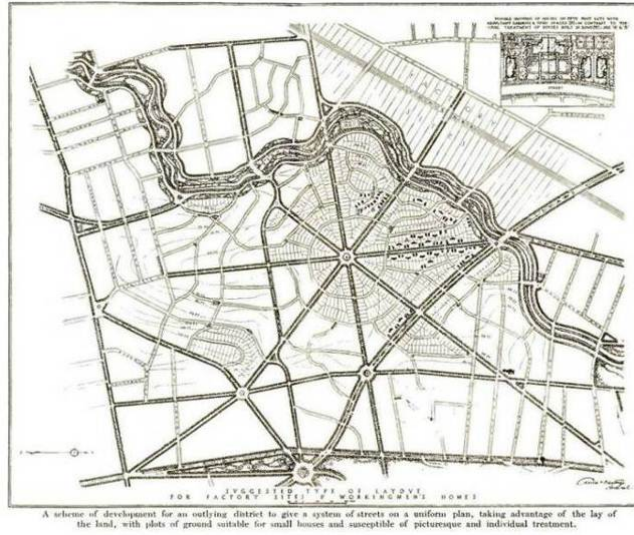
Possible grouping of houses on fifty foot lots with resultant gardens & open spaces in contrast to the usual treatments of houses built in rows.

Map 8. 1912 City of Hartford Plan Map



Notice the outlying areas with curvilinear street layouts.

Map 9. 1912 City of Hartford Plan Map



Recommended development of workingmen's housing on individual lots and a curvilinear street design.

The phrases and words used in these quotes, 'taking advantage of the lay of the land', 'small houses', 'picturesque', 'individual treatment', 'gardens', and 'open space' are all used by Jackson (1985) and Fishman (1987) to explain the emergence of suburban forms in England and America, including the suburban designs of Olmsted and the landscape designs of Weidenmann (see Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987; Favretti, 2007). In addition, the phrase 'in contrast to the usual treatments of houses built in rows' demonstrates intent—not to build in the urban form of row houses, but to develop detached homes, on small lots, with individual gardens (yards), in picturesque settings. The majority of growth in the western portion of Hartford and West Hartford occurred after the *1912 City of Hartford Plan*, and West Hartford developed not only as a suburban location (outside the central city), but in the suburban style promoted by the influential persons that promoted suburban ideals and the designs.

West Hartford Center is a suburban center that developed and evolved with the urbanization and suburbanization of the Hartford region. The development of The Center as a commercial location began in the 1920s and experienced success between the 1930s and 1970s. During this time, The Center was part of the outward movement of central city retailers to the suburbs, and it became home to the suburban location of Sage Allen (Hartford Courant, 1930), a downtown Hartford department store. Lord & Taylor, another downtown department store opened its first suburban location in 1954 at Bishop's Corner, a suburban strip mall approximately one mile

north of The Center (Faude, 2004: 47). In 1961 Sears Department Store opened at Corbin's Corner (closing its downtown location), a retail plaza at a highway interchange approximately 1.5 miles southwest of The Center (Faude, 2004, p. 75-76). In 1974, across the street from Sears, the Westfarms Mall anchored by G. Fox (a downtown Hartford department store) and J.C. Penny opened with over 100 stores. By the late 1970s and 1980s, The Center stagnated as it struggled with competition from the arrival of many department stores, retail strip developments, and enclosed malls in suburban locations. While much of the literature documenting the outward movement of retail from the central city to suburban locations (Jacobs, 1961; Jackson, 1985, 1996; Kunstler, 1993, 1998; Mumford; 1961) and the impact on central city downtowns, none of them recognizes that existing suburban centers, such as West Hartford Center, were also impacted.

Map 10. Map of West Hartford Center (1915)



Note that the intersection on the center of the map is West Hartford Center. You will notice the single family homes and lots along Farmington Avenue and Main Street and the lack of commercial development. Also note the suburban tract lots at the bottom of the map.

The following pictures document the development of The Center in the 1920s and on to the 1960s. These pictures also demonstrate the remaking of space. The Center, which as seen in the map above is a residential area in 1915, is remade into a commercial strip during the 1920s. The first five pictures below show nose in parking and a police officer directing traffic in the 1920s and 1930s. However, the sixth picture shows parallel parking and a traffic light at the intersection. Also notice the change in signage on the building façade in figures 9 and 12. While these are very small changes, they demonstrate the slow process of change—evolution—and the remaking of space.

Figure 8. The Center



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The Connecticut Historical Society

Corner of Main and Farmington [ca. 1920s]

Figure 9. The Center



Copyright Information: The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford
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The Connecticut Historical Society

Corner of Main and Farmington [ca. 1920s]

Figure 10. The Center



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File: cha_m7_2000_103_8.jpg

The Connecticut Historical Society

Farmington Avenue, West Hartford Center [ca. 1935]

Figure 11. The Center



Copyright Information:
The Connecticut Historical Society, Graphics Collection.
File: cha_m7_2000_103_6.jpg

The Connecticut Historical Society

Farmington Avenue, West Hartford Center [ca. 1935]

Figure 12. The Center



Copyright Information:
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File: cha_m7_2000_103_2.jpg

The Connecticut Historical Society

Corner of Main and Farmington [ca. 1935-1940]

Figure 13. The Center



Copyright Information:
The Connecticut Historical Society, Graphics Collection.
File: cha_m7_2000_103_13.jpg

The Connecticut Historical Society

Farmington Avenue [ca. 1963]

By the late 1970's and 1980's The Center was a retail, service, and business area trying to compete with changes in the location, size, and style of retailing. The Center was defined by lower-end uses, a few niche and high-end boutiques, and some vacancies. It was not a place where people spent any significant time shopping, dining, or socializing. This is not to say that The Center was abandoned or that it did not play a role in the life of the community—it did, but it was not the town or regionally significant center that it has become today. However, in the early to mid-1990s The Center slowly began to change; it began a process of remaking itself. Higher quality restaurants and shops began to appear, vacancies declined, and by 2000 The Center had arrived, not just as a successful town center, but as a regional destination, a place that attracts people from throughout the metropolitan region and beyond. For example, the arrival of The Center can be seen in the remarks in an October 22, 1999 article in the Hartford Courant (Hartford Courant, 1999: D-1):

"West Hartford Center has been a magnet for the past three or four years," said Beth Shluger, a restaurant enthusiast and former director of the Hartford Restaurant Association. "I've seen it as an entertainment spot for a number of years. But, of course, with the opening of Max, that's going to help the evening trade even more."

Ah, yes, Max. Perhaps no business has been more eagerly anticipated than the unveiling of Max's Oyster Bar. Delayed more times than there are pizza toppings at Harry's, Max's is finally set to open next week. More than just an opportunity for unbridled belon slurping, the opening of the swank restaurant is expected to increase the foot traffic in the center and increase its already substantial cachet. The owners of Max hope the restaurant will have regional appeal and be a destination spot for diners beyond the four corners of West Hartford.

Today, 15 or so years after The Center's remaking began, it is still growing, evolving and redefining itself. The core of The Center is occupied by many locally owned businesses mixed with some national chains. The success of The Center has attracted much attention and new investment and development. For example, in 2007 a large mixed-use lifestyle center known as Blue Back Square (named after Webster's Blue Back Reader spelling book) opened in an area adjacent to the traditional center, in what was once a somewhat marginal frame area to The Center occupied by two automobile dealerships. Blue Back Square includes 600,000 square feet of high end national retail (Crate and Barrel, REI, Cheese Cake Factory, New York Health and Fitness, to name a few), commercial offices, medical offices, and high end apartments and condominiums totaling 107 residential units. Ley (1996) describes a similar phenomenon, the addition of high end retailing, in gentrified communities where once a community attains a level of success, generates interest, and creates traffic, national chain retailers and shopping center/malls appear.

Mapping the Remaking of Space in West Hartford Center

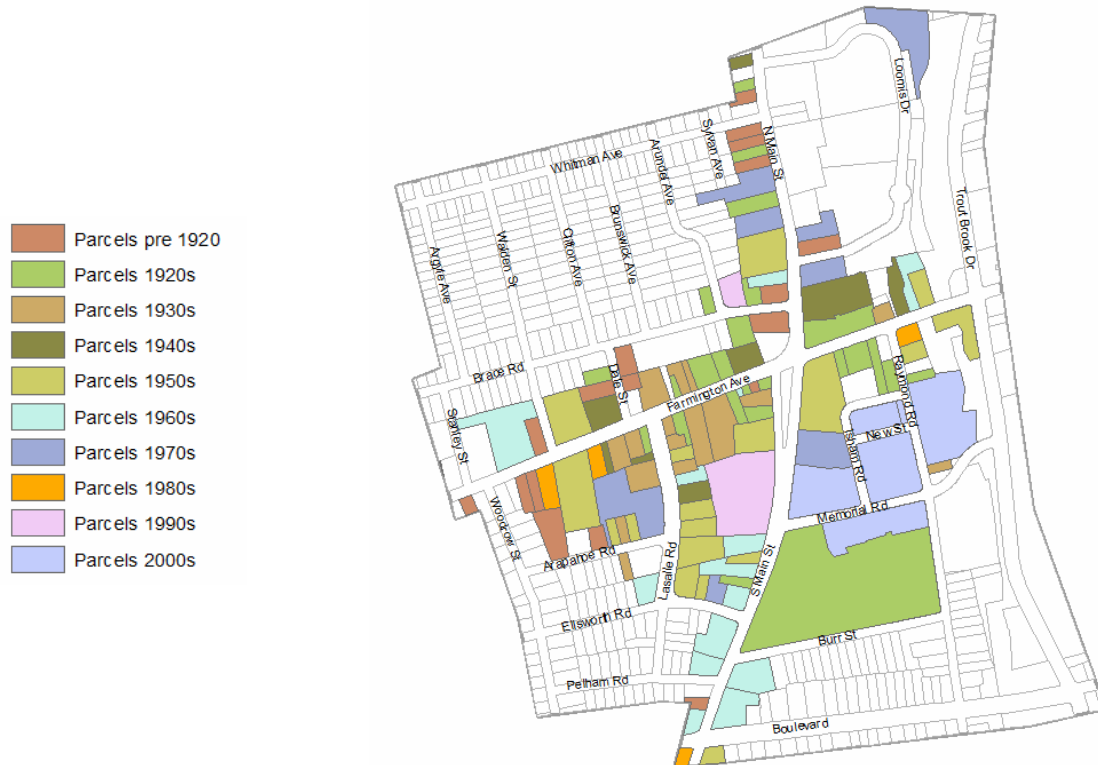
In my literature review, I demonstrated that urban theory related to urban and suburban space and gentrification and regeneration do little to help explain or understand the remaking of The Center and kind of urban space that is West Hartford Center. Therefore, my research will focus on the remaking of The Center from 1980 to 2010. During this period of time, The Center went from being an uninteresting or mundane town center to being a fashionable and vibrant regional center of sociality. In addition, I argue that this change, the remaking of space, has occurred with little or no government intervention in the form of development schemes or plans other than the late addition of Blue Black Square in 2007. The evolution of The Center since the 1920s and this recent remaking of space raise interesting questions. For example, since gentrification and regeneration fall short of explaining The Center, how do we understand urban spaces that are resilient and successful? How do we understand the remaking of space when it does not result from gentrification and regeneration? How do we understand urban spaces that work—be they gentrified, state-sponsored regenerated, or resilient and emergent?

In the case of West Hartford Center, we need to understand the remaking of this space and why and how The Center has been remade. Why is The Center resilient? How did this remaking of The Center occur? Who were (and are) the producers, the actors, the innovators, and the consumers of this space? What were and are they doing to make this space resilient and successful? Therefore, the local history, local actors, and local context become critical in understanding the space. Latham explains, “too often ‘local’ histories and relationships are underplayed as little more than idiosyncratic background noise, when, in fact as can be seen with the present case study [Auckland, New Zealand in his case], it is exactly that noise that needs to be made sense of” (Latham, 2003a: 1714). My research will study this local noise that has continually remade West Hartford Center.

To demonstrate the mapping of the remaking of space, I have created three maps that explore how this space has evolved over time. The first map (Map 11 below) depicts the development of properties from the 1920s, by decade, to today. To create this map, I utilized the Town of West Hartford Assessor’s property databases and the year that each of the buildings in The Center today was built. The map depicts the parcel shaded by colors that correspond with the legend and decade that the building was constructed. What this map shows is that development of The Center has been a slow and evolutionary process of over the past 90 years. This demonstrates

that The Center was not designed as a singular kind of space through a master plan or by one developer, but that its present day form and buildings are the result of many separate decisions and investments made over many years by many individuals—resulting in a diversity architecture, building type, massing, and so on (see Jacobs, 1961).

Map 11. West Hartford Center – Property Development by Decade



Source: Town of West Hartford, Assessor’s Database and GIS Layers

The development of The Center over decades demonstrates the emergence of The Center. Each property developing one by one based on the individual decisions of property owners at specific points in time. This is what Sawyer explains as the “successive symbolic interactions among autonomous individuals result in the emergence of collective phenomena” (Sawyer, 2005: 21-22) and Bruegmann’s “our urban areas are the result of the actions of every citizen, every group, and every institution, every day” (2005: 225).

The second map (Map 12.) below displays the change in ownership of property in The Center between 1980 and 2010. To create this map, I utilized the Town of West Hartford Assessor’s property databases and the year of the most recent sale of property that resulted in an actual change in ownership. (This did not include transactions of \$1 between holding companies that are owned by the same individuals or companies.) The map depicts the parcel shaded by colors that

correspond with the legend and date of transaction. Consisting of a total of 140 properties in The Center, 45 properties changed ownership between 1980 and 2010. Six of those sales occurred between 1980 and 1989, zero occurred between 1990 and 1994, 10 occurred between 1995 and 1999, 16 occurred between 2000 and 2004, and 13 occurred between 2005 and 2010.

The changes in ownership become interesting in the context of the remaking of West Hartford Center and recent changes in The Center. Previously, I mentioned that by “the late 1970’s and 1980’s The Center was a retail, service, and business area trying to compete with changes in the location, size, and style of retailing. The Center was...not a place where people spent any significant time shopping, dining, or socializing.” Essentially, I was explaining that The Center was not very interesting during the 70s and 80s. This is reflected in the real estate market since only six sales occurred during the 1980s. In addition, it is not surprising that zero sales occurred between 1990 and 1994 since the real estate market crashed in 1989 and the Hartford region did not begin to recover until 1995.

Map 12. West Hartford Center - Change in Ownership (1980 – 2010)



Source: Town of West Hartford, Assessor’s Database and GIS Layers

The 10 sales between 1995 and 1999 correspond with both the recovery of the overall real estate market and with the period in time when noticeable change began to occur in The Center. I stated above, “in the early to mid-1990s The Center slowly began to change; it began a process of remaking itself. Higher quality restaurants and shops began to appear, vacancies declined, and by 2000 West Hartford Center had arrived, not just as a successful town center, but as a regional destination...” The change in ownership raises questions about what was going on, who were the new owners, and what were they doing?

To provide a preliminary look at property ownership, changes in ownership, and what ownership may reveal about The Center, I reviewed Town of West Hartford property records and the Connecticut, Secretary of the State Business filing records. The following table provides ownership information for properties on LaSalle Road. The table reveals that there are 12 properties on LaSalle Road and total of 8 property owners. Of the eight owners, five are local to West Hartford, two are within the region (Farmington and Avon), and one is from lower Fairfield County, Westport, CT, in the Metro New York region. The owner from Westport is interesting for two reasons. First, the Secretary of State records indicate that Lexham Street Retail, LLC and Lexham West Hartford, LLC are foreign, not domestic companies. Second, Lexham West Hartford, LLC has owned 53 LaSalle Road since before 1980 and Lexham Street Retail, LLC (the same owner) purchased 25 LaSalle Road in 2003. This raises the question, why did Lexham wait over two decades to invest in the second property?

Table 7. LaSalle Road Property Ownership

Address	Owners	Year of Sale	Owner Location
12 LaSalle Road	Clark, Nanci R. Et. Al.	Pre-1980	West Hartford
21 LaSalle Road	Gelin, Howard L.	1987	West Hartford
25 LaSalle Road	Lexham Street Retail, LLC	2003	Westport, CT
26 LaSalle Road	Clark, Nanci R. Et. Al.	Pre-1980	West Hartford
34 LaSalle Road	36 LaSalle LLC	2002	Farmington, CT
45 LaSalle Road	46-48 LaSalle Road, LLC	Pre-1980	Windsor, CT
52 LaSalle Road	Sinatro Brothers	Pre-1980	West Hartford
53 LaSalle Road	Lexham West Hartford, LLC	Pre-1980	Westport, CT
64 LaSalle Road	Sinatro Brothers	Pre-1980	West Hartford
78 LaSalle Road	Sinatro Brothers	Pre-1980	West Hartford
124 LaSalle Road	124 LaSalle Road. LLC	2000	West Hartford
125 LaSalle Road	LaSalle Road Associates, LLC	Pre-1980	West Hartford

A general look through the town and state databases reveal similar ownership patterns in other areas of The Center—many individual owners, some owners with multiple properties, and the majority of owners being local to West Hartford and the region. Another interesting pattern that can be seen in the table above and was noticeable in the other property records is that the more

recent property sales were purchased by LLC's versus the properties that have not changed owners since before 1980 being owned by individuals. Does this indicate a change in ownership from individual to investment groups?

This brief look at property owners raises questions that require further inquiry, demonstrating the need for my research and interview research method. In addition, the mapping of change in ownership and the significant increase in sales that occur between 1995 and 2000 indicate that something was happening in The Center, and hopefully the interviews will reveal what was going on. The 16 sales between 2000 and 2004 indicate that the real estate market continued to be active and that there was a continued and increasing interest in The Center and the same is true for the 13 sales between 2005 and 2010, even though the national and local real estate markets crashed in late 2008.

The third and final map (Map 13.) below is a 2011 map of land use. While it is a snapshot of the present and does not show change in use over time, it demonstrates the diversity of uses that exist within The Center today. I chose this map to demonstrate the ability to map the use of properties. A key aspect of my proposed research and method is to map the tenant mix of first floor commercial space (use) between 1980 and 2010. While conducting the research for this case study it became evident that I will need to build a database and create new digital map layers to accomplish this. The reasons for this are: one, the assessor's database related to permits and certificates of occupancy turned out to be incomplete and questionable as to accuracy. Therefore, I will need to verify permits, occupancy certificates, and the tenants to complete the database. Second, I will also need to create a new building layer for the GIS mapping since the existing layer is only a graphic representation of buildings and not linked to the database. In addition, since most buildings have more than one first floor commercial space, the new building layer will need to account for and map multiple tenants. While creating the database and new building layer will take some additional work and time, I am not concerned about it and may use a GIS student from the Geography Department where I teach to build the graphic layer and link the database. The map of change in ownership demonstrates that mapping change in use/tenants will be a powerful tool in exploring change in The Center between 1980 and 2010. Therefore, it is worth the time and effort to create the database and new building layer.

Map 13. West Hartford Center - Land Use Map 2010



Source: Town of West Hartford, Assessor's Database and GIS Layers

Conclusion

As stated above, the intent of this case study was to provide the historical and regional context of West Hartford and West Hartford Center and to explore the remaking of The Center as a space. The intent was not to answer questions, but rather to explore possibilities and demonstrate how I could explore the remaking of space and the kind of space that is The Center. I believe that I have demonstrated both the remaking of space and the capability of my research methods to explore the questions I have proposed and the new questions that will arise as I further map change in The Center and interview property owners, business owners, and the users/consumers of The Center.

-

Work Plan and Research Schedule

Work Plan

The intent of this section is to provide a detailed work plan for my research project. I have provided a two year (24 month) period for my research fieldwork, analysis, and writing my dissertation. I believe, based on the amount of work and my personal/professional commitments, that two years is a reasonable timeframe for completing my research. In addition, I set this timeframe understanding that I have until April 2014 to complete my program. That provides an additional 10 months beyond my work plan to complete my research if things do not go as planned and my research takes longer than expected.

To best explain my work plan I have divided the tasks into five categories: Mapping, Regional/Historical Context, Interviews, Analysis, and Writing. The following is a detailed description and explanation of each category of tasks:

Mapping: The mapping portion of my research will involve the mapping of property owners, businesses/use, and liquor permits from 1980 to 2010. While a sample of this mapping is part of my upgrade report case study, additional mapping and analysis will need to be completed. I plan to complete this mapping in months 2 through 5 and have provided time for additional mapping in months 20 through 23 to map findings that can be explained spatially.

Regional/Historical Context: This portion of my research will involve further research and analysis into the history and development of West Hartford and The Center in the context of suburbanization and how West Hartford and The Center fit into the metropolitan region. While aspects of this are addressed in the case study, I assume additional research and analysis will need to be conducted. Time has been allocated in months 3 through 6 to complete this portion of my research. The intent is to get this work out of the way early in the process.

Interviews: The interviews of business owners, cultural entrepreneurs, and users will be the most intensive portion of my research and fieldwork. Therefore, I will begin the

interviews early in month two and they continue through month seventeen. I estimate and plan for a total of 136 interviews. This accounts for all business interviews, repeat interviews with the cultural entrepreneurs, user and diary interviews, and some additional interviews with government officials and others. Based on the fifteen month period of time for interviews and a total of 136 interviews, this works out to approximately nine interviews a month or just over two interviews per week. As the schedule (see below) indicates, I assume some months will include fewer than 9 interviews and others will include more than 9 interviews. These fluctuations account for both my schedule and the time of year, such as the holiday season in December, when it may be difficult to schedule interviews.

Analysis: The analysis portion of my research involves all of the analysis and activities related to the project. For example, transcribing and analyzing interviews is included in the analysis portion of my research. As indicated in the schedule (below), the analysis will be an ongoing process throughout the research project.

Writing: The writing of my dissertation will be an ongoing process throughout the research project.

Work Plan Schedule

The following table provides a summary of my research schedule by month, years, and research task, as discussed above.

West Hartford Center Case Study Work Plan Schedule

Month	Maps	Regional	Interviews	Diaries	Analysis	Writing	Remarks
2011							
1. June							
2. July			[O/4] [U/0]				
3. August			[O/8] [U/2]				
4. September			[O/6] [U/4]				
5. October			[O/4] [U/4]				
6. November			[O/4] [U/4]				
7. December			[O/2] [U/4]				
2012							
8. January			[O/2] [U/2]				
9. February			[O/4] [U/4]				
10. March			[O/6] [U/4]				
11. April			[O/4] [U/3]				
12. May			[O/6] [U/3]				
13. June			[O/8] [U/4]				
14. July			[O/8] [U/4]				
15. August			[O/8] [U/4]				
16. September			[D/4] [D/4]				
17. October			[D/4] [D/4]				
18. November							
19. December							
2013							
20. January							
21. February							
22. March							
23. April							
24. May							
June							

O = Owner Interviews – U = User Interviews – D = Diary Interviews

Possible Thesis Organization

The Remaking of Resilient Urban Space: A Case Study of West Hartford Center and the Kind of Space that is West Hartford Center

Chapter	Title
1. Introduction	The Remaking of Resilient Space: The Kind of Space that is West Hartford Center
2. Literature Review	Reimagining Urban and Suburban Space: The City as Potentiality
3. Literature Review	The Remaking of Space: Gentrification and Regeneration
4. Literature Review	Reimagining Creativity, Innovation, Emergence and the Remaking of Space
5. Research Methodology	West Hartford Center: A Case Study Approach
6. Description of Development	The Development of West Hartford and The Center: A History
7. Mapping Change	GIS Mapping of Change and the Remaking of Space
8. Business Owners	Remaking of Space: A Business Perspective
9. Cultural Entrepreneurs	Innovation and the Remaking of Space
10. Users	The Users of Space
11. Users Diaries	The Individual and Space
12. Conclusions	The Remaking of West Hartford Center as a Kind of Space
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