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Governing post-suburban growth: international examples of the political and planning challenges of urban development at the edge of capital cities

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Governing post-suburban growth: The Planning and Politics of Post-suburbia

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Introduction: Aims

1. To examine the variety of actors driving urban development at the fringe of capital city regions
 - Has the politics of the suburban ‘growth machine’ (Molotch, 1976) evolved?
2. To consider political tensions in governing post-suburban growth
 - a. Growth v. Conservation
 - b. Growth v. Provision for collective consumption
 - c. Governmental amalgamation or secession

Introduction: Case studies

- Post-suburbia has been defined as a new era (outer suburbs are growing faster than inner suburbs and cities) and as a new settlement space.
- Composite definition of 'Post-suburbia' which allows for both new settlements and evolving suburbs in different national and developmental contexts – Phelps, Wood and Valler (forthcoming, *Environment & Planning A*).
- Six case study localities: Tysons Corner (Washington DC), Croydon (London), Espoo (Helsinki), Getafe (Madrid), Yizhuang (Beijing), Khimki (Moscow)
- To compare and contrast liberal-market, social/mixed and transition economy contexts
- We are here to study Pilar as an extra case (funding from UCL-Abbey Collaborative Research) with Quilmes University

Post-suburbia: Definitions

- A new era?
 - Lucy and Philips (1997) use the term to ‘refer to a time period which is succeeding the suburban era’
in which
‘inner suburban population loss and relative income decline, suburban employment increase, suburban out commuting reduction, exurban population and income increase and farmland conversion’ (Lucy and Philips, 1997: 260 and 259).
- A new settlement space?
 - King Olin and Poster (1995) and others. It is more difficult to put boundaries around growth in the outer suburbs. It does not coincide with government boundaries

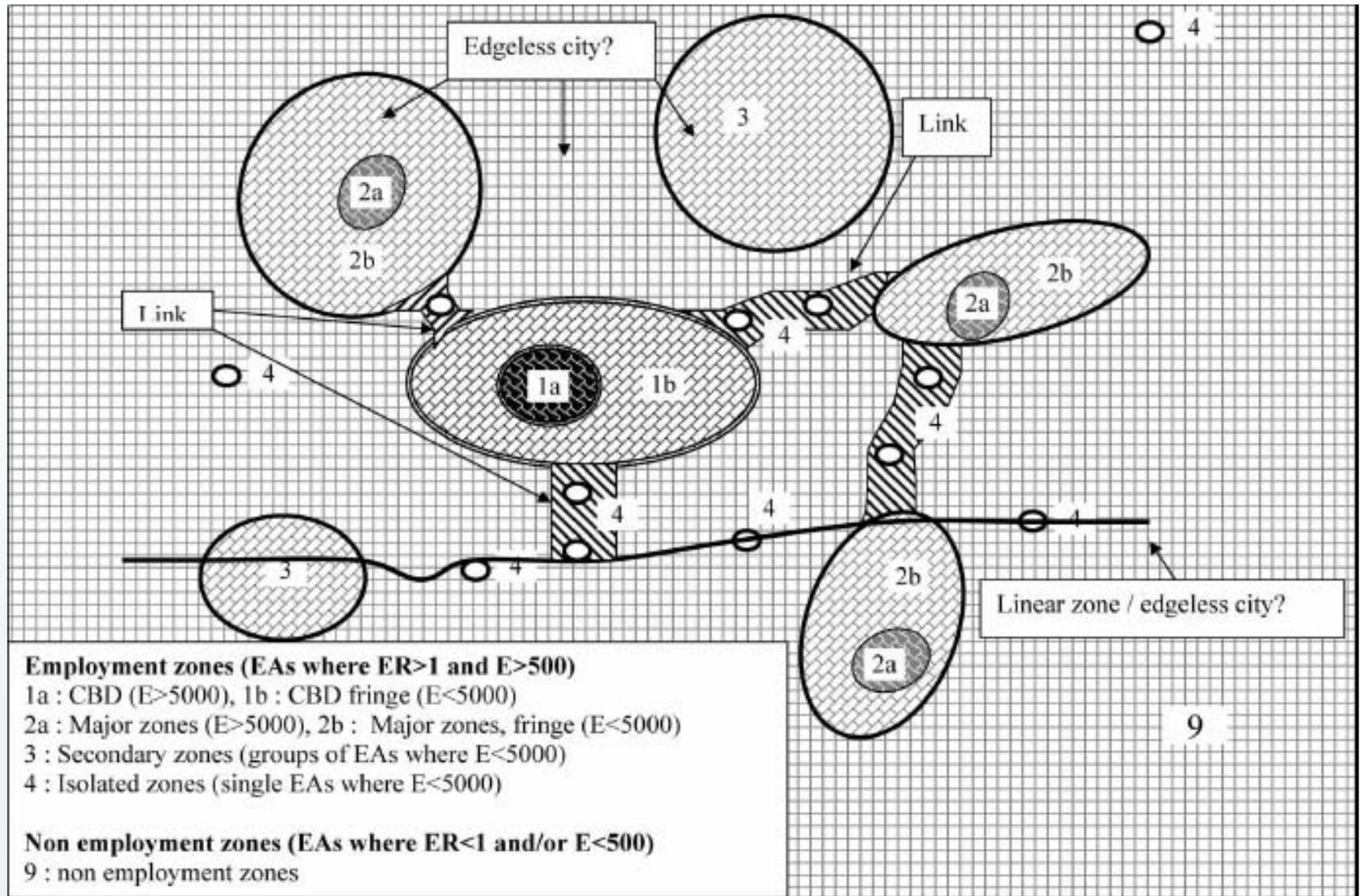


Figure 5. The metropolitan space-economy: some additional concepts.

Post-suburbia: politics

- Suburbia was driven by what Molotch (1976) calls growth machine politics
 - Importance of land based business interests (speculation in land ownership, development industry and construction industry)
 - A focus on exchange value of land rather than its use value (quick profit)
 - Land-extensive patterns of development part and parcel of suburban politics and ideology of small government and protection of residential and environmental amenity
- Post-suburbia has a different politics (Teaford, 1997)
 - Balancing of new economic necessities with traditional suburban ideology and politics
 - Greater interest in use value of land

Post-suburbia: growth tensions

- Growth v. Conservation
 - Some residential suburbs have acquired employment uses while others have been born post-suburban in having a greater balance of jobs and residents
 - Local politics may reflect this contradiction with periodic pro-growth and anti-growth oriented government
- Growth v. Provision for collective consumption
 - Rapidly growing suburban communities typically have a deficit of provision for ‘collective consumption’ (services such as water, sanitation, schools, hospitals, parks and infrastructure such as road and rail)
 - Post-suburban politics is a politics of ‘retrofit’ (Phelps & Roitman, Urban Affairs Review, under review).

Post-suburbia: growth tensions

- Governmental amalgamation or secession
 - Uneven benefits of urban sprawl – especially in terms of local government tax base – but also deficits in services and infrastructure may drive amalgamation or secession
 - In the U.S. evidence of secession, but elsewhere stronger tendencies towards amalgamation (e.g. China, some in UK)

Tysons Corner: From Edge City to City?

- Tysons Corner is the classic edge city (Garreau, 1991) seen in the United States
- It grew in a land-extensive suburban format as a result of land based business interests.
- However, it has reached its limits and a new model of development is likely.
- The extension of metro rail from Washington DC out to the airport will allow greater densities of development
- It may result in some 'retrofitting' of parks and civic amenities.
- Tysons is about to enter a post-suburban stage of growth and local politics

Tyson's Corner: From Edge City to City?

'The world is being used as a model for Tysons and we are trying to use Tysons as a model for the rest of the United States' (Partner, KGP Design Studio).



By weaving a grid into Tysons the east west traffic lanes can increase from today's 6 lanes (Rt. 7) to 30 east west lanes. Using one-way pair's traffic lights can be timed for rush-hour flow. There are currently 26 north-south lanes across Rt. 7. With a new grid there can be 84 lanes in the north-south direction. This will solve a lot of existing traffic problems. The grid can also provide up to 14,000 on street parking spaces during non-rush hour periods.

Getafe: Mayor Pedro Castro and the capital of Madrid!

- Getafe grew rapidly from the 1960s with private developers licensed under the Franco dictatorship building houses without services and amenities
- Getafe became famous as a centre for the grass roots social movements spoken of by Manuel Castells
- Trade unions and residents associations lobbied for the improvement of basic services – water, refuse, schools.
- They formed the basis of support for left wing political parties at the local scale after the fall of Franco
- Today the ‘política de ladrillo’ survives but the additional services and amenities are grander
- Getafe is no longer a dormitory – it is post-suburban.



Getafe: Mayor Pedro Castro and the capital of Madrid!

From a grass-roots politics over collective consumption in 1960s, Mayor Pedro Castro has fashioned Getafe from a dormitory to the 'capital of the South' and now the capital of the Madrid region?

Khimki: ‘The time we have is the money we don’t have’

- At the periphery of Moscow city, Khimki is in the Moscow regional government territory.
- It has grown rapidly as an accessible location and as a result of competition between Moscow and Moscow region governments
- It looks something like a U.S. edge city but its growth is the product of different politics
- Speculative development in a context of great uncertainty (access to finance, incomplete system of property rights, land use planning system).
- Growth has been uncoordinated and as yet there is little sense of place or planning – not yet post-suburban?



Khimki: ‘The time we have is the money we don’t have’

‘Wild capitalism’ has seen a massive growth of employment and residential development with Khimki the locomotive of the Moscow Oblast economy.

Pilar: gated communities and suburban growth?

- Want to investigate the contribution of private sector forces to the wider development of services and amenities
- Kirby and Webster argue that impact of gated communities on public realm and city-building is ambiguous
- Gated communities seem to have transformed a small town to a larger suburb and even a post-suburb (given the addition of retail and other employment)
- However growth has not improved the tax base of local government as in the United States
- Wider planned improvements in service and amenity and a sense of place are yet to be seen?

Conclusions and discussion

- Different actors driving suburban development
 - Tysons Corner: big business interests interested in retrofitting an edge city
 - Getafe: Socialist Mayor has orchestrated place making
 - Khimki: Regional government and private sector developers have failed to produce coordinated development
 - Pilar: a growing role of gated community developments in promoting further private sector growth in services and infrastructure?

Conclusions and discussion

- Many of the challenges of managing growth are the same
 - Deficits in infrastructure and services have been made good in Getafe but not so in Tysons Corner, Khimki and Pilar?
 - There are minimal concerns for conservation in each of these settlements given their relative youth
 - There is little prospect at the moment of these places being absorbed into larger governmental entities
 - Pilar is different due to the scale of the gated communities

Thank you

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