

Urban Resilience – Evolution, Co-Creation, and the
Remaking of Space:

A Case Study of West Hartford Center



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Abstract

Dissatisfied with the large urban bias—the overreliance on large cities, spectacular space, and paradigmatic cases—and equally dissatisfied with our urban vocabularies and understandings of suburbanization and gentrification, I seek to explore how urban theory informs us about change in smaller cities and smaller suburban spaces. I argue that much of our urban understandings juxtapose the city as one kind of space and the suburban as another kind of space even though the distinction has become blurred. As a result, I argue that our understandings suburbanization and gentrification fall short of conceptualizing and understanding the remaking of smaller (sub)urban spaces such as West Hartford Center.

Utilizing a case study approach, I explore the space of West Hartford Center and how the Center changed—was remade from a suburban town center to a regional center of middle-class hospitality and sociality—from 1980 to 2012. To accomplish this, I introduce ecological resilience as a metaphor and theoretical framework for thinking about and working through our understandings of urban space, the processes of urban change—suburbanization and gentrification—and how and why (sub)urban space is remade. Through the metaphorical and theoretical lens of ecological resilience, I explore West Hartford Center as a complex adaptive system that has been resilient—having the capacity to absorb shock and disturbance while maintaining its function and structure. In doing so, I explore how the actors and their actions—the business owners, government officials, and consumers—coalesce into a dynamic process of re-creating urban space. Through this approach and my findings, I argue for more contextual geographies of place and geographies what happens; including the need for more and better studies of small city urbanism.

Key words: Small City Urbanism, Suburbanization, Gentrification, Post-Suburban, Urban Ecology, Ecological Resilience.

Chapter I.

The Remaking of Resilient Urban Space: A Case Study of West Hartford Center

1.00 The Large Urban Bias

As of 2010, approximately 249 million Americans lived in urbanized areas (Census, 2010). Of the 249 million persons living in urbanized areas, only 81 million live in the 10 largest metropolitan regions. The majority, 168 million persons or 67% of the United States' metropolitan population, live in smaller (4,500,000 persons or less) metropolitan regions. For example, only nine U.S. metropolitan areas have over 5 million persons, only 14 metropolitan areas have over 4 million persons, and only 17 metropolitan areas have over 3 million persons. The 50th largest metropolitan area has 1,054,323 persons.

Not only do most American urban dwellers live in smaller urban areas—metropolitan and nonmetropolitan (Ori-Amoah, 2007)—, the majority live in suburban places outside the central city (Lang, et al., 2008; Lang, et al., 2009; Frey, et al., 2004; Keil, 2013). According to Wendell Cox (2006), approximately 36% of the population in the 10 largest metropolitan areas live in the central city while 64% live in urbanized areas outside the central city (Cox, www.demographia.com). Gallagher explains (2013: 8-9):

Looking at the broadly defined 'metropolitan' regions of our country, which is where more than 80 percent of Americans live, the percentage of us living in the suburbs is higher, 61 percent ... Over the past half century, the portion of people living in the suburbs has steadily grown, from 31 percent in 1960 to 51 percent in 2010...

Viewing the American urban experience as both a smaller urban and suburban experience raises questions about urban research, urban theory, our understanding of urban places and the contemporary American urban experience. Can urban theory based mostly on the form, function, and 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 (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, 1996a) and Dear (2002), the so-called L.A. School, focus on Los Angeles, today the second largest metropolitan region as being the modern metropolis. Smith (1996, 2002), Lees, et al (2008, 2010), Freeman (2006) and Zukin (1989, 1991, 1995, 2010) most often utilized New York City as their urban laboratory to explore and explain gentrification. Amin and Graham explain, “[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). They continue “[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). While understanding the forces at work in Los Angeles or other large cities is important and provides value to our urban understandings, I am cautious as to how these specific space-time experiences of large cities and metropolitan regions translate to the scale, site, and situation of smaller urban places. Therefore, I argue that our urban understandings are challenged by what can be called the large urban bias—that so much of our urban (and suburban) understandings result from the study of large cities and paradigmatic cases.

This bias should create concern regarding our attempts to understand smaller urban places (Bell and Jayne, 2006, 2009; Jayne, et al, 2010), especially when the majority of urban inhabitants live in smaller cities. Can our urban understandings based mostly on the specific histories, forms, functions, sites, and situations of large urban places help us explain and understand the unique urban experiences of smaller urban places (Paradis, 2000, 2002; Chen and Bacon, 2013)? Or do our urban understandings from large urban places have limits when applied to smaller urban places? For example, Holling and Goldberg explain (1971: 227):

We know that a city of 500,000 residents has more than five times the variety of activities a city of 100,000 has. We also know that below certain threshold levels, certain activities do not occur. Thus, suburban areas and smaller cities just do not have great art museums, operas, symphonies, and restaurants. These activities appear to occur above certain population, or density, thresholds.

Related to this concern of the large urban bias is also how we understand and apply scale to our urban understandings (Jayne, et al, 2010). For example, Richard Florida’s creative class and creative cities indexes are calculated at the metropolitan

scale, yet his theories often privilege the urban core as the locations that foster creativity (Florida, 2002, 2005; see also Glaser, 2013). In addition, this metropolitan approach excludes smaller non-metropolitan cities (Ori-Amoah, 2007). This issue of scale points to another concern—the juxtaposition of what is central city against the suburban or those spaces outside the urban core. Unfortunately, this juxtaposition of city versus suburb often results in the city being privileged as one kind of space over the suburban as another kind of space, often asserting a singularity of suburban space (Kunstler, 1993, 1998; Duany, et al., 2000). Differentiating between that which is urban and suburban may be easy to achieve in large urban places, such as New York City (Jackson, 1985) and may not be as easy in smaller urban places such as Hartford. For example, most of Hartford is more streetcar suburban (Warner, 1967) than urban. Furthermore, the juxtaposition and differentiation can be even more challenging in cities such as Detroit, where the overwhelming majority of Detroit’s land area is occupied by sprawling suburban strips and residential neighborhoods occupied by single family detached housing. How the urban and suburban are conceptualized, that is what constitutes the city versus what constitutes the suburban (Lang, et al., 2008; Teaford, 2008) may also blur our urban understandings (Champion and Hugo, 2004; Nijman in Keil, 2013).

Associated with the large urban bias is also the tendency of urban research and theory to focus on the spectacular and exceptional urban spaces and processes. For example, Hannigan (1998) explores the *Fantasy City*, mostly spectacular sites of consumption in large urban centers. Zukin (1991) explores mostly large urban *Landscapes of Power*, while Duncan and Duncan (2004) explore *Landscapes of Privilege* in Bedford, a wealthy New York suburb in Westchester County. While each of these studies informs us about different kinds of urban places and spaces, Times Square, Disney, and Bedford are limited in their translation to other places and spaces. This generalization of our urban understandings is also seen in popular culture writings about cities. For example, Jane Jacobs’ 1961 seminal work, *The Death and Life of the Great American City* which focused on Manhattan and Greenwich Village, has become a model and ideal for urban neighborhoods and urban lifestyle (Duany, et al., 2000; Kunstler, 1993; Speck, 2012). Joel Garreau’s popular 1991 book *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* explained the new phenomenon of suburban-cities on the edge of large metropolitan regions. Collectively, the experiences and understandings

realized from large cities and spectacular sites are often generalized or co-opted to explain other urban space-times (Amin and Graham, 1997) and to inform urban policy, often traveling down the urban hierarchy from large places to smaller places (Lees, 2000; Bell and Jayne, 2006; Ori-Amoah, 2007). Embedded in this large urban and spectacular bias are Thrift's concerns for grand theories "which aspire to rigorous standards of exactness" (Thrift in Massey, 1999) and "towering structures of categories lowering over ant-like actions of humans" (Thrift, 1996: 4).

Returning to urban theory as a whole, urban space and the processes that shape urban space have been conceptualized, generalized, and at times cast in rigid vocabularies that are assumed to describe and explain most urban spaces and processes. This was the starting point for my research, a general discomfort as to how our urban understandings limit their applicability and how our urban vocabularies may have become so generalized that their force of meaning has been lost. For example, a word as simple and common as suburban (or suburb) has become an enigma in the modern metropolis (Lang, et al., 2008; McManus and Ethington, 2007; Keil, 2013). Suburban may have once adequately and neatly described early commuter suburbs (Jackson, 1985), romantic middle-class bedroom enclaves (Fishman, 1987), and a certain way of life (Fava, 1956; Riesman, 1957; Gans, 1967). But today, the suburban has become elusive, difficult to identify and differentiate from what is city or the urban (Berube, et al., 2005; Fishman, 1987; Katz and Bradley, 2013; Katz and Lang, 2003; Lang and LeFurgy, 2007).

Changes in what constitutes the suburban are evidenced by the many attempts at (re)naming suburban spaces. For example, Techno-city and Techno-burbs (Fishman, 1987), *Edge Cities* (Garreau, 1991), Boomburbs (Lang and Simmons, 2001), *The Geography of Nowhere* (Kunstler, 1993), and Bistrotville (Brooks, 2000) are a few descriptors. However, the limited success of these namings demonstrates how powerful the vocabulary of the suburban is and how it dominates our urban understandings. Unfortunately, when all spaces, other than the rural, outside the historic urban core are cast as suburban (Lang, et al., 2008), it becomes challenging to understand changes (McManus and Ethington, 2007) in spatial formations, socio-economics, lifestyles, and governance (Keil, 2013; Hamel and Keil, 2015) because they become obscured and possibly missed, as they are hidden in the shadows of our suburban vocabulary.

The same is true of our understandings of gentrification. For example, the definition of gentrification has become so generalized (Lees, 2000), that almost any remaking of space (Phillips, 2004), increase of wealth within a neighborhood (Fraser, 2004), or a wealthy New England rural village (Wood, 1997) is defined as gentrification. Once again, such generalizations may obscure our understanding of nuanced, small incremental change, and the remaking of space that is not neatly explained or understood as gentrification.

So how can we better understand smaller urban spaces, suburban spaces, and the remaking of urban space? That is the topic and challenge of this thesis. To accomplish this, I explore small-city urbanism, suburbanization, gentrification, and urban change by introducing and utilizing the vocabulary of ecology, specifically, ecological resilience (Holling, 1973; Gunderson and Holling, 2002; Gunderson, et al., 2010) as a metaphorical and theoretical means of thinking about urban space and the remaking of space. By utilizing ecology and ecological resilience, I attempt to move beyond or overcome the juxtaposition of urban and suburban space and large urban versus (or the exclusion of) small urban space. Therefore, I have chosen West Hartford Center, a suburban space in the smaller metropolitan region of Hartford, Connecticut to explore as a case study.

1.10 The Remaking of Urban Space

I intentionally chose the phrase the remaking of urban space (or the remaking of space) as a means of discussing urban change without having to utilize the vocabularies of suburbanization and gentrification since I am uncomfortable with their meanings, how they have been generalized, and the fact that I agree for their limitations to inform us about specific kinds of urban space. The remaking of urban space in its most simplistic meaning is about urban change and the inevitability of change (Alberti, 2009; Holling and Orians 1971). In other words, regardless of scale, site, situation, spatial organization, form, and function, urban space changes over time. In addition, urban space is fluid, in a perpetual state of flux, and continually being created and re-created. The remaking of urban space, as a phase, recognizes this and allows us to discuss urban change without having to claim a specific kind of change—remaking—as being the result of a specific process, such as suburbanization

or gentrification—freeing us of the specific and generalized meanings of these urban vocabularies.

The remaking of urban space also allows us to engage in a discussion about urban spaces (and the processes that remake urban space) that do fit well into the vocabularies of suburbanization and gentrification. This is important in regard to the site and subject of this case study, West Hartford Center (the Center). The Center is an historically suburban space (Jackson, 1985) that today is a metropolitan (Katz and Bradley, 2013; Teaford, 2006) or post-suburban space (Keil, 2013). While the vocabularies of the metropolitan and the post-suburban indicate that the space of the Center has changed—once a definable suburban space—they are limited in their ability to inform as to what changed in West Hartford Center and to understand why and how that change occurred.

This, from my perspective, results in a gap in our urban understandings in regards to how we understand and explain the remaking of an older suburban town center. Furthermore, as will be discussed in this case study, the Center has always been a vibrant and prosperous space, never suffering the decline and rebirth that is typically described in our urban understandings of gentrification (Lees, et al., 2008, 2010). In recent decades, the Center has experienced a process of socio-economic upgrading similar to gentrification, yet this upgrading does not quite fit with how we typically understand gentrification. In addition, the Center as once suburban and now possibly post-suburban, is outside the central city, the conventional spatial location gentrification.

Specific to the case of West Hartford Center, the urban change or remaking of urban space that the Center has undergone is nuanced, challenging to explain and hard to define as simply a process of suburbanization or gentrification. This nuanced change, simply put, is that the Center went from being and functioning as a town center that serviced the local wants and needs of West Hartford to becoming a metropolitan center of middle class hospitality and sociality. While the Center is still definably suburban in many ways and has experienced an upgrading similar to gentrification, the what, why, and how of the Center's change is still fraught with ambiguity. Therefore, as I attempt to explore and understand this ambiguous

(sub)urban space and why and how it has changed, I will rely on the remaking of urban space as the phrase to discuss urban change.

1.20 Small-City Urbanism and Suburbanization

Before I introduce West Hartford Center, I want to discuss the challenge of small city urbanism and suburbanization. Specifically, the need to understand how West Hartford Center both fits and does not fit into these categories. West Hartford Center is located in metropolitan Hartford, an urban region of approximately 1.2 million persons. Therefore, metropolitan Hartford, in the American urban context is neither large (the global city of New York (Sassan, 2001)) nor small (the non-metropolitan city of Roswell, New Mexico (Paradis, 2002)). Furthermore, metropolitan Hartford is not considered one of the *Second Tier Cities*, especially rapid growth second tier cities (Markusen, et al., 1999). Therefore, I define metropolitan Hartford as a *smaller* metropolitan and urban place that falls somewhere in between large and small. However, I also want to avoid “any minimum or maximum requirements of small urbanity” (Bell and Jayne, 2009: 689) and situate metropolitan Hartford within the broad category of small city urbanism, while recognizing that metropolitan Hartford differs from other small cities and small city urbanism (Burayidi, 2013; Ori-Amoah, 2007; Paradis, 2000, 2002).

Recognizing that metropolitan Hartford falls into the realm of small city urbanism results in West Hartford and West Hartford Center being captured within the realm of small city urbanism (Bell and Jayne, 2006, 2009). However, West Hartford Center is not the historic core or central place of the metropolitan area—nor is it a small city core to a non-metropolitan area. West Hartford is, by conventional definition a suburb (Jackson, 1985). More specifically, West Hartford is an older inner-ring suburban community and West Hartford Center, historically and traditionally, is a suburban town center.

Unfortunately, as a result of site, size, and situation, West Hartford Center—as a (sub)urban space—hides in the shadow of the large urban bias, while being passed over in the sprawling suburban search for *Edge Cities* (Garreau, 1991) and Boomburbs (Lang and Simmons, 2001). West Hartford Center is situated somewhere between the historic core of downtown and the sprawling fringe of the post-suburban

new metropolis. It is both urban and suburban, yet is simultaneously it is neither, as the result of ever-changing (sub)urbanization.

In an attempt to understand the Center and the Center's remaking of urban space, I will introduce and utilize ecological resilience (Holling 1973) by conceptualizing urban space as complex adaptive (ecological) systems (Gunderson and Holling, 2002; Gunderson, et al., 2010). Ecological resilience can be understood as "the capacity of a system [the urban-ecological system] to absorb disturbance and still retain its basic function and structure," (Walker and Salt, 2006: xiii). My reason for drawing on ecological resilience is that at "the heart of resilience thinking is a very simple notion—things change" (Walker and Salt, 2006: 9-10) and the inevitability of urban change. Urban space is not static. Urban space is fluid and pliable. Therefore, urban ecology and ecological resilience, as a metaphor and theoretical framework, provide a means of dealing with scale that fits with the challenge of small city urbanism. For example, we "need to look in detail at the actual political, economic, social, cultural, spatial and physical nature of small cities rather than judging them simply with reference to theories and measurements developed with reference to big cities and metropolises" (Bell and Jayne, 2009: 690). From my perspective, the *political, economic, social, cultural, spatial and physical natures* of urban space—small or large—are the manifold variables of complex adaptive (urban) systems.

1.30 West Hartford, Connecticut

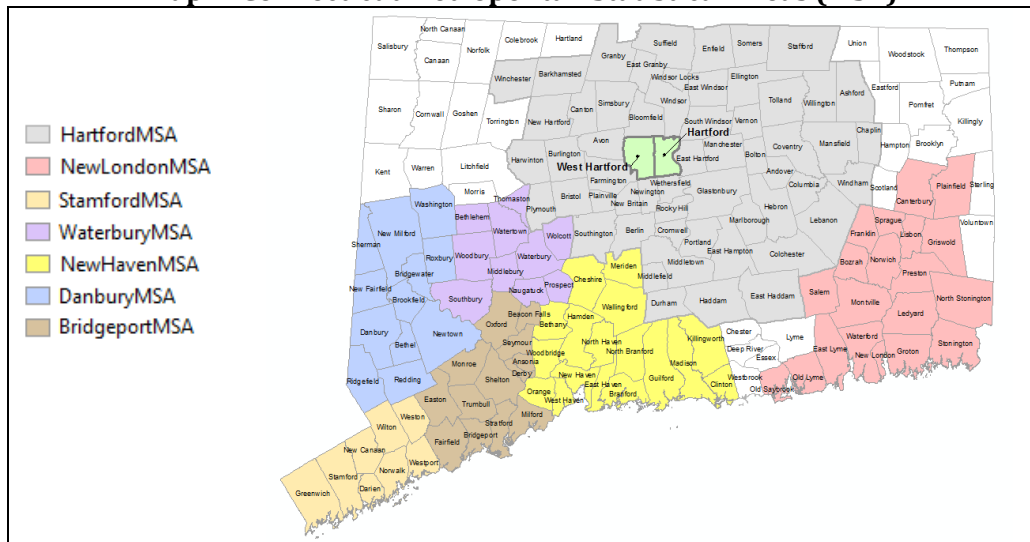
To provide context, this section explores and attempts to further situate metropolitan Hartford and West Hartford in regard to small city urbanism, suburbanization, and the remaking of urban space. Hartford and *suburban* West Hartford, are located in the northeastern United States midway between New York City and Boston, Massachusetts (see Map 1 below)—in one of the most urbanized regions in North America. Connecticut, as of 2010, had a population of 3,574,097 persons (Census, 2010), smaller than that of the 14 largest metropolitan regions in the United States. However, 91 percent, or 3,196,309 persons in Connecticut live in urbanized areas (Census, 2007).

Map 1. Northeast United States



Connecticut, unlike most states, does not have one dominant city, but a constellation of many smaller central cities—Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford (all less than 145,000 persons). While the central cities are small, the metropolitan regions are not so small. For example, metropolitan Hartford is the state’s largest region with 1,212,381 persons (Census, 2010). Of the 1,212,381 persons in the MSA, 924,859 persons or 76.8 percent live in urban areas (Census, 2010).

Map 2. Connecticut Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA)



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

West Hartford, an inner ring suburb and one of 57 communities (municipalities) that make up metropolitan Hartford (see Map 2 above), has an estimated population of 63,268 (U.S. Census, 2010) or 5.2 percent of the total metropolitan population. The boundary between West Hartford and Hartford is approximately 2 miles west of Hartford’s downtown (the central business district),

and West Hartford Center is 3.7 miles west of Hartford's downtown. West Hartford Center is one of many suburban town centers in the metropolitan region. In addition, the region is crisscrossed by numerous commercial strips and retail, office, and industrial development nodes.

Amin and Graham claim “[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). Metropolitan Hartford is indeed a *juxtaposition of contradictions* (Chen and Bacon, 2013: 5-6):

While Hartford is a small city, it is not as small when understood within the context of its metropolitan region. Hartford is the 188th most populous city in the country, and yet the 43rd most populous metropolitan area. With a municipal population of 124,060 and metro population of 1,188,241 spread throughout 57 municipalities, the population of Hartford makes up only 10 percent of its metropolitan area, one of the lowest percentages for any American urban region. The small municipality of Hartford has consistently ranked as one of the absolute poorest cities in the United States, while the Hartford metropolitan region surprisingly took the top spot among the world's wealthiest regions, where a substantial upper middle class raises its per capita income above such well-established global cities as New York and Zurich.

Chen and Bacon continue (2013: 8):

For instance, in 2000, the U.S. Census revealed that Hartford has the second highest poverty rate of any American city. And yet in the same year Hartford's MSA has the nation's sixth highest median income. This unfairly represents Hartford as one of the most economically depressed cities and most socioeconomically polarized regions in the country. In actuality, Hartford's region is extremely differentiated. For instance, the city has the nation's most diverse 'suburbs' in terms of resident income.

The contradictions of metropolitan Hartford create an interesting challenge in understanding and situating West Hartford Center within the region (see Appendix VI). Metropolitan Hartford has always been a polycentric region, beginning with the original settlements of the three separate, but neighboring, river communities of Windsor, Wethersfield, and Hartford in 1635 and 1636 (Love, 1914). In addition, the “three river towns subsequently sent out new groups in the vicinity which led to the founding of ten additional towns” (Reps, 1965: 122) by 1650. This settlement pattern is understandable in the context of the pre-industrial, pre-urban, and agrarian economy (Wood, 1997).

Hartford did not become the largest settlement in the metropolitan region until 1800 with a population 5,347 persons, 12.5% of the region's 42,721 persons (State DECD). By 1850, Hartford's population grew to 13,555 persons and the region had grown to 125,032 persons (State DECD). It is during the second half of the nineteenth century and first quarter of the twentieth century that Hartford became a central place (Baldwin, 1999). Similar to Los Angeles, Hartford's centrality rose from its early adoption of a suburban streetcar system (Baldwin, 1999). Los Angeles's, unique polycentric urban experience (Fishman, 1987; Hall, 2002; Jackson, 1985), most often contrasted with Chicago (Dear, 2002), is often credited to the Pacific Electric Railway. Hall explains, it is "the largest electric interurban system in the United States, serving 56 communities within a 100-mile radius of Los Angeles ... [with] 1,164 miles of service..." (Hall, 2002: 304). He continues, "in the first decade of operation, 1900-10, the interurban transformed southern California: the population of Los Angeles County nearly tripled..." (Hall, 1998: 807).

The small urban center of Hartford and its surrounding region experienced a similar pattern of settlement and metropolitan growth based on the suburban streetcar network (Map 3 below). The first streetcar line was opened in 1863, and it was a suburban line that connected Hartford to Wethersfield (CT-MCM, 2004). Four more suburban lines were added in 1893 (CT-MCM, 2004), and by 1910 lines were built to all the suburbs (CT-MCM, 2004). In 1910 the Hartford region had over 200 miles of track (CT-MCM, 2005) connecting Hartford and 21 surrounding communities (see Map 3 above). Similar to Los Angeles, the Hartford region experienced significant growth during the streetcar era. For example, from 1850 to 1900, the period when the majority of the streetcar system was built, the MSA area population more than doubled from 125,032 persons to 281,883 persons (CT, DECD).

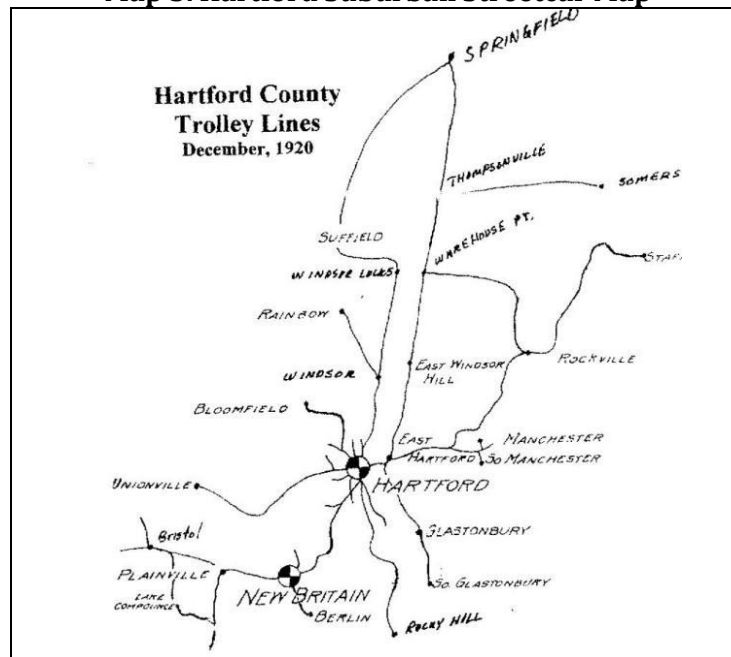
It is during the streetcar era that Hartford became the central place to the polycentric region (Baldwin, 1999: 44-45):

...the trolley system was actually beginning to create a new spatial order. In the 1890s the trolley system made central Hartford the hub of a metropolitan region. Rails radiated from downtown to surrounding towns and villages, drawing them more fully into Hartford's orbit ... the trolleys brought people from outlying towns into Hartford to shop and to work.

By 1900 metropolitan growth was outpacing Hartford's central city growth (Chart 1 below)—Hartford's *metropolitan revolution* (Katz and Bradley, 2013)

occurred between 1900 and 1920. In addition, Hartford urbanized at the same time that it suburbanized. Simultaneously, the centripetal forces of industrialization and transportation that were drawing the region in to Hartford as a central place, were creating centrifugal forces that propelled the city's outward growth. The forces of suburbanization were being fueled by Hartford's growing metropolitan centrality.

Map 3. Hartford Suburban Streetcar Map

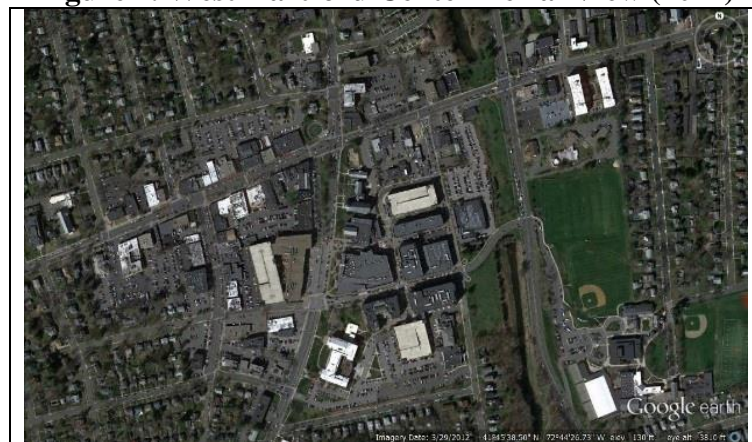


The spatial history and organization of the Hartford metropolitan region is complex. Therefore, situating West Hartford and West Hartford Center in the context of urban theory and within metropolitan Hartford is also complex. Regardless, for lack of a better word, West Hartford is *suburban*, even though I am uncomfortable with using the word suburban, in that it often implies similarity across the multiplicity of communities in the suburban realm (McManus and Ethington, 2007; Keil, 2013). West Hartford Center is a mature *suburban* town center (see Figure 1. below). In the 1980s West Hartford Center was a vibrant town center that adequately met and serviced some of the retail, service, and hospitality needs of the community, but it became a sleepy town center after 6:00pm with most shops and businesses closing (Grant, R. Mahoney, VanWinkle, Interviews).

Today, West Hartford Center has become the regional center for middle-class hospitality and sociality (Feldman, Interview)—servicing the region, in addition to the local community. This change, moving from the suburban town center to a regional center of middle class hospitality and sociality, raises questions as to how and why it

occurred. How did this change in the function, appeal, and centrality of the Center occur? Was the Center's remaking planned, a grand redevelopment scheme to brand or theme the Center? Who were the actors and did they coordinate this change? If not, was this change emergent and self-organizing? Answering the how and why also raises further questions regarding how to describe and explain this space of West Hartford Center. Is West Hartford Center still suburban? Or has the Center become urban? What are the vocabularies that help us to understand not only the space of the Center but also the Center's remaking? Is the Center's remaking explained and understood as gentrification, state-led regeneration, or something else?

Figure 1. West Hartford Center Aerial View (2012)



1.40 The Case of West Hartford Center

Uncomfortable with the large urban bias, I set out to explore a smaller suburban space in a smaller metropolitan region. In doing so, I wanted to utilize this smaller suburban space as a means of thinking carefully about urban theory and our urban understandings—mostly based on large urban bias—and apply them to West Hartford Center as means of seeing how they help or limit our understandings of smaller urban space. Therefore, the aim of this case study is to explore how this wealthy and older suburban town center, located in a smaller metropolitan region has changed, matured, evolved, and adapted (McManus and Ethington, 2007) over the past three decades. To understand this process of change, this case study examines the remaking of urban space—and how the Center as a resilient (Holling, 1973; Gunderson, et al., 2010) urban space can further inform our urban understandings of the remaking of urban space. To accomplish this, I have investigated the remaking of West Hartford Center through the exploration of the following four questions (the first

being the primary question and questions two through four being supporting or exploratory 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 (consumers) of this space, how do they view and experience this space, and what role does it play in their everyday lives?

By exploring these four questions, the research unfolded and organized around understanding how this space has been created—or co-created—by three key groups of actors: business owners, government, and consumers. To explain how this research was conducted, the unfolding and unpacking of the Center, the Center’s remaking, and my findings, I will present this thesis in nine chapters, including this introduction.

The first four chapters set the foundation for understanding the research and situating West Hartford Center in our urban understandings—urban studies, urban theory, and planning theory. Chapter I is this introductory chapter. Chapter II and Chapter III provide literature reviews. Chapter II, *Urban Theory – Conceptualizing Urban Space and the Remaking of Space* will focus on our understandings of small city urbanism, urban and suburban space, and gentrification. The intent will be to explore how we conceptualize these understandings and how they often fall short of informing us about the space of the Center and the Center’s remaking. Chapter III *Ecological Resilience: Urban Ecology and the Remaking of Urban Space* will introduce and explore ecological resilience (Holling, 1973; Gunderson, et al., 2010) and how the ecological resilience paradigm can help us think about urban change and the remaking of urban space. The aim of Chapter III is to construct a metaphorical and theoretical framework, based on ecological resilience, for conceptualizing and exploring the remaking of urban space—specifically the remaking of West Hartford Center.

Chapter IV *Methods – Research Methodology* will present my research methodology and the specific methods that were employed. The chapter will also explain why a case study approach was chosen along with a mixed methods approach. Chapter V *Urban-Ecological Resilience – Understanding Change* explores how we

understand change—what changed in the Center from 1980 through 2012. This will be accomplished through the presentation and analysis of a storefront tenant database that was constructed to understand and explain how the use of storefronts, turnover in occupants, and overall use of the Center changed between 1980 and 2012. Ecological resilience (Holling, 1973; Gunderson, et al., 2010), specifically, *episodic change* will help us explore and think carefully about urban change and the remaking of urban space.

Chapter VI *Entrepreneurs and Restaurateurs – Emergence and Innovation* will explore how hospitality uses changed in the Center during the 1990s and then further explore how the hospitality uses continued to evolve from 2000 to 2012. The aim will be to show how small changes (slow moving variables), emergent and self-organizing actions, and small scale innovation can coalesce into meaningful changes in urban space.

Chapter VII *Government Intervention – The West Hartford Way* will explore how government—the local state—intervened in the remaking of West Hartford Center. This will include situating West Hartford’s interventions in the context of small city urbanism and suburban governance. The chapter will also explore how West Hartford’s interventions differed from conventional approaches and how these differences can be understood and explained through urban resilience and a resiliency approach to (sub)urban governance (Holling and Orians, 1971; Holling and Goldberg; Walker and Salt, 2006).

Chapter VIII *Consumption and Production of Space – Consumers and the Co-creation of Space* will explore the users—the consumers—of West Hartford Center. This will include exploring who the consumers of the Center are and how the consumers engage, understand, and experience the Center. The chapter will conceptualize the consumers as active participants and how the active consumer is a co-creator—a producer—of space.

The thesis will conclude with Chapter IX *Conclusion* where I will explore how West Hartford Center, a resilient urban-ecological space, informs our urban understandings and the remaking of space. In doing so, I will address my research questions, explaining West Hartford Center as a kind of urban space, the vocabularies we can use to describe it, and how the remaking of West Hartford Center occurred.

Chapter II.

Urban Theory: Exploring and Conceptualizing Urban Space and the Remaking of Space

2.00 Introduction

The primary question I seek to explore through my research is “What kind of space is West Hartford Center, and how can we develop a vocabulary to explain it?” To answer this question, I first need to situate West Hartford Center within urban theory and our urban understandings. Therefore, this chapter is the first of two chapters (including Chapter III) that will explore urban literature in an attempt to situate West Hartford Center within contemporary American urban understandings. The aim of this chapter is to create a foundation of understanding around how we conceptualize and understand small city urbanism, suburbanization, and gentrification (as a primary means of understanding urban change), allowing for these concepts to be drawn into the discussion on West Hartford Center in the later empirical chapters.

To accomplish this, the chapter will be presented in five sections: the first section will explore small city urbanism in the context of urban governance, planning, and regeneration. The second will explore how we understand the urban—urban space—as a means of creating a foundation for our understanding of the suburban. Section three will then explore how we understand the suburban—suburban space. Section four will explore gentrification and how urban space is remade. Section five will then explore similarities in how we conceptualize gentrification and suburbanization. The chapter will end with a brief conclusion and transition to Chapter III.

2.10 Small City Urbanism

As discussed in the introduction, metropolitan Hartford and West Hartford Center fit within the framework of small city urbanism, yet West Hartford Center does not fit perfectly. West Hartford Center fits within small city urbanism, primarily because it is not part of a large metropolitan region, nor is it a large urban jurisdiction in its own right. However, even though the Center is a space of small city urbanism,

the Center does not fit perfectly with how small cities and small city urbanism are conceptualized and understood. Therefore, the Center creates challenges of context in regard to scale, situation, and governance of small city urbanism.

In regard to scale, the Hartford metropolitan area is a *smaller* (Chen and Bacon, 2013) urban region that is somewhere in between the scale of large (Sassan, 2001) and small (Paradis, 2000, 2002) city urbanism. West Hartford, when considered as a municipal jurisdiction, is approximately 65,000 persons, and on its own it could be considered a small city. However, it cannot escape from being part of the metropolitan area. As a result, from the perspective of scale, West Hartford Center is ambiguous and hard to categorize, even though it is clearly outside the realm of large city urbanism. Metropolitan Hartford and West Hartford Center highlight why Bell and Jayne “argue against any minimum or maximum requirements of small urbanity” (Bell and Jayne, 2009: 689).

West Hartford Center, being embedded within and part of the metropolitan area leads to the challenge of situation. The Center’s situation is metropolitan, whereas much of the small city urbanism focuses on non-metropolitan cities (Burayidi, 2013; Champion and Hugo, 2004; Christopherson, 2004, Garrett-Petts, 2005; Ori-Amoah, 2007; Paradis, 2000, 2002). Bell and Jayne explain “small cities must often (but not always) be theorized and hence defined in terms of the political and economic systems of a metropolitan region -- as a small city that is part of a city-region or indeed as a small city that is regionally dominant” (Bell and Jayne, 2009: 691). Therefore, we need to recognize and understand the differences between metropolitan and non-metropolitan cities.

West Hartford’s situation is further complicated by the Center being suburban, part of the “non-central city” (Keil, 2013: 9) metropolitan realm, unlike a smaller metropolitan city, such as Middletown, Connecticut that is a historic core and central city (Burayidi, 2013). Bell and Jayne further explain that “at present any attempt to offer a rigorous definition of what constitutes a small city is problematic due to gaps in current research” (Bell and Jayne, 2009: 691). West Hartford Center reveals yet another challenge and gap in small city urban research and understandings—our understanding of smaller suburban spaces within smaller metropolitan regions.

The challenges of scale and situation that may arise in the smaller and suburban space of West Hartford Center require that we also consider the conceptualization and implications of urban governance. Specifically, we must consider how our understandings of both large and small city urban governance inform us about governance in the smaller suburban space of West Hartford Center. More specifically, how do our understandings of large and small, metropolitan and non-metropolitan, urban governance inform us about smaller metropolitan suburban governance and its implication in regard to the remaking of urban space?

Urban governance, planning, and regeneration—in both large and small city urbanism—are commonly conceptualized and explained, in regard to how urban space is remade, through a framework of government (i.e. planning, urban design, urban policy) as a primary driver of urban change (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Burayidi, 2001, 2013; Peck and Ward, 2002; Larice and Macdonald, 2013). For example, the influence of government planning, grand redevelopment schemes, business improvement districts, tax increment financing, and public-private partnerships are often privileged as the key drivers of state-led large urban regeneration (Larice and Macdonald, 2013; Smith, 1996, 2002; Zukin, 1989, 2010; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Lees, et. al., 2008, 2010). In addition, similar governance practices are also evident and viewed as key drivers of state-led small urban regeneration (Burayidi, 2013; Champion and Hugo, 2004; Christopherson, 2004, Garrett-Petts, 2005; Ori-Amoah, 2007; Paradis, 2000, 2002).

It is not surprising that similar governance practices appear in both large and small city urbanism, since the tendency to generalize theories and practices down the urban hierarchy is well documented (Lees, 2000; Orori-Amoah, 2007). For example, Holling explains that “once a theory is formed, once it seems to resolve paradoxes, and once it passes some empirical tests, proponents are sorely tempted to extend its application beyond its natural context” (Holling, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 19). However, in the case of small city urbanism, this generalization down the urban hierarchy may be in part the result of “planners and other urban practitioners in small cities...have[ing] to rely on models and policies [from larger cities] that may not be suited to their particular situations” (Orori-Amoah, 2007: 4).

Related to this generalization of urban theories and practices down the urban hierarchy is the utilization of standardized approaches to address urban issues. Examples include, the promotion of twelve step programs by urban policy think-tanks (Leinberger, 2005), the utilization of templates such as the National Main Street Program (Buranyidi, 2001, 2013; Smith in Orori-Amoah, 2007), and the influence of categorizing “eight key principles that underscore successful downtown development efforts in small cities” (Robertson in Burayidi, 2001: 9).

The challenges of scale, situation, and governance, in the context of small city urbanism, highlight the need for not only more research on smaller cities, but also more dexterous and sophisticated approaches to small city urbanism (Bell and Jayne, 2009; Jayne, et al, 2010; Latham, 2003). Bell and Jayne “suggest that absolute size is less important, and that a more sophisticated understanding of a wider range of practices and processes than have dominated research to date is vital” (Bell and Jayne, 2009: 690). In comparison to the large city urbanism of say *Fantasy City* (Hannigan, 1998) and *Landscapes of Power* (Zukin, 1991), Paradis, in his study of the small non-metropolitan city of Roswell, demonstrates the importance of more dexterous approaches and sophisticated understandings (2002: 38):

Purely, structure-based arguments that explain downtown redevelopment as logical responses to larger processes, however, do not take into account contingencies of locality, history, and agency rooted in specific places. These contingencies demand a greater appreciation in geographical analysis while, at the same time, recognizing the significance of extra-local processes and trends.

West Hartford Center, located in a smaller metropolitan region and as a suburban center, provides an opportunity to explore another kind of space within the lexicon of small city urbanism. The Center affords us the opportunity to capture and understand some of “[w]hat is lost as a consequence of the bias towards large cities” (Bell and Jayne, 2009: 683), including the informal, nuanced, local context, and emergent forms of urban governance (Jacobs, 1961, 1966; Molotch, et al., 2000; Carpenter, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002).

Unfortunately, much of our urban theory (Fainstein and Campbell, 2011; Short, 2006) and planning theory (Fainstein and Campbell, 2012; Birch, 2009; Fishman, 1982, 2000), at times fall short of conceptualizing and explaining smaller urban spaces and suburban spaces (Keil, 2013) such as West Hartford Center. That is

not to say our urban understandings are wrong or irrelevant to the Center's remaking—they do help to inform. What it does say is that the partial understandings provided by large-urban accounts may miss the nuances as to how various forces and structures organize in smaller spaces (Bell and Jayne, 2006, 2009; Latham, 2003; Paradis, 2000, 2002).

2.20 Exploring the Urban

In the simplest of terms, West Hartford Center is a *suburban* town center. But how does the phrase 'a suburban town center' inform us about this space? From it, we know the Center is part of the suburban realm, outside the central city, and part of a suburban community. But what is the suburban and how do we understand the suburban as a kind of urban space? How do our understandings of the suburban help us understand West Hartford Center? To answer these questions, I will explore the suburban and what is conceptualized as suburbia. However, since the suburban is part of the urban realm and symbiotically related to the central city, I first want to explore the city and what is urban.

The symbiotic relationship between city and suburb is important, since our urban understandings have created meaningful differentiations and juxtapositions between what is urban (the city) and what is suburban (areas outside the central city) (Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987; Nicolaidis and Wiese, 2006). While the central city and the suburban are both forms of urban space, they are generally viewed as different kinds of space. "For 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). This is an important distinction, since in America we under conceptualize the suburban as "the political distinction between suburb and central city" (Teaford, 2008: ix-x) and we often pass over the suburban areas within our cities.

From Teaford's explanation, the urban can be defined in its simplest form as the central city (the political state) and the historical core of today's metropolitan region. This understanding gives rise to the concept of centrality (Park and Burgess,

1925; also see Latham, et. al., 2009; Hall, 1998), the city as a central place (Wood, 1997). The urban or city can also be defined by its physical form (Larice and Macdonald, 2013; Duany, et. al., 2010; Cole, 2011): architecture, the grid-iron street formation (Warner and Whittemore, 2012), and high density multi-story development (Fogelson, 2001). While these physical forms are essential parts of the urban, other factors also influence how we conceptualize the city. Jane Jacobs (1961) describes an urban lifestyle, a way of life that focused on the neighborhood, the block, or place-based understanding of community (Latham, et. al., 2009). For Jacobs, this way of life played out as a dance, her sidewalk ballet as the essence of the urban lifestyle and experience. From Jacobs' perspective, the urban also included a mixture of forms (the short block, diversity in architecture, and density of buildings), a mixture of uses (commercial and residential), and of social relationships (neighbors, store owners, and chance meetings) that coalesce to create an interesting and authentic urban environment, experience, and lifestyle (see also Mumford, 1961; Duany, et al., 2000; Kunstler, 1993, 1998; Zukin, 2010).

Another means of understanding the urban (or city) is through examining the negative attributes. For example, “[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). For Mumford, in “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 city is not simply dangerous, but juxtaposed against the natural beauty and tranquility of the countryside and the suburban. The urban or city, in regard to physical forms (architecture, streets, and density) or its sociality (the sidewalk ballet, neighborhood, and community) is conceptualized as positive (Jacobs, 1961; Mumford, 1961). However, urban or city is also conceptualized as negative when viewed through the lens of the socio-economic ills of crime, poverty, disease, and anti-social behavior (Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1985). Therefore, the urban and city, are simultaneously conceptualized and understood as positive and negative depending on which attributes are being considered. Fishman’s,

“suburbia can never be understood solely in its own terms” (Fishman, 1987: 27) highlights the symbiotic relationship that results as the city defines the suburban and the suburban defines the city. This symbiotic relationship of the urban and suburban creates a paradox of sorts, where the urban cannot be understood without being juxtaposed against the suburban and vice-versa, which then begs the question whether one can be conceptualized or understood without the other.

So what is the urban or city? The perspectives above collectively unpack the urban as not simply the central city, but as a complex mosaic of the built environment and the socio-economic qualities of this environment (Holling and Orians, 1971; Amin and Thrift, 2002). It is a density of multi-story buildings, gridiron streets, a mixture of architecture and uses, and lively sidewalks that provide a dense experience of sociality. It is gritty and possibly a place of danger. Unfortunately, when these conceptualizations of the urban or city are applied to West Hartford Center, they result in a mixed message and partial understanding. The Center’s architecture, uses, street design, sidewalks, and sociality display many traits of the urban and yet, these traits are not fully realized in what the urban theorists above have described. The Center’s building design, scale, and massing are mixed. Uses are mixed, but dominated by commercial use, and most residential uses are adjacent, not within the Center. The sidewalks provide a dense ballet of sociality, but it is neither the same dance, nor the same performers that Jacobs (1961) described. In addition, the Center is not a place of danger, crime, and social ills as described by Riseman (1957) and Mumford (1961) and the Center’s spatial location is suburban. So if the Center cannot be fully understood as urban or city, can it be understood as suburban?

2.30 Exploring the Suburban

To begin, to understand the suburban as a location, I return to Teaford’s (2008) explanation above and the suburban in the American tradition being understood as a separate political state outside of the central city. While this distinction provides some context for differentiating between urban and suburban places, it does not tell us much else about suburban space, other than being conceptualized as a separate political state outside of the central city.

The suburban is also part of the urban or the process of urbanization or suburbanization. “The 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” (Fishman, 1987: 19). What Fishman is describing is not only the importance of urban expansion (spatial growth or urbanization), but also the importance of a critical mass of an emergent wealthier class that could afford an alternative to urban living. In this regard, suburbanization is not simply about spatial location, but also about changes in the socio-economic structures of urban society.

Related to changes in socio-economics is the economic symbiosis between city and suburb—the divergence in centrality of work and home—which becomes key to understanding the suburban as a location and lifestyle choice. “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), highlights the suburban, at least historically, as physically removed from the urban core, but economically tethered to the city. Therefore, the suburban can be understood as a location outside the urban core (within or beyond the city limits) that is economically bound to the city—as is the case for Jackson’s (1985) claiming of Brooklyn Heights as America’s first commuter suburb.

In this regard, whether the suburb is within the city limits or beyond is less important than the spatial separation between the urban and suburban and the economic relationships that tether the suburb to the city (Braxandall and Ewen, 2000; Bruegmann, 2005; Kruse and Sugrue, 2006). While spatial separation and economic relationship are historically important (Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987), they are less significant and more difficult to distinguish as the processes of urbanization or suburbanization have expanded in space and time, filling in the spatial and economic gaps that once separated city and suburb (Fishman, 1987; Bruegmann, 2005). The modern suburb has become more self-sufficient (Fishman, 1987; Teaford, 2008) and the urban and suburban have melded into vast metropolitan regions (Katz and Bradley, 2013; Keil, 2013; Hanlon, et al., 2010; Mattingly in Lang and Miller, 1997).

With the spatial and economic relationships between city and suburb blurred (Drummond and Labbe in Keil, 2013) and in a constant state of flux, the physical form become an easy means of differentiating between what is conceptualized as urban and as suburban. In regard to form, the suburban has been defined in the terms of picturesque landscapes (Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987), the country cottage or single family house (Davis, 1835; Downing, 1841; Beecher, 1841; Clark, 1976; Archer, 1983, 2005; Jackson, 1985), large house lots and ornamental lawns (Wiedenmann, 1870; Jackson, 1985), and curvilinear street layouts (Bushnell, 1864; McLaughlin and Beveridge, 1977; Fishman, 1987; Sutton, 1997). Historically, these forms, combined with the outlying country location, have conceptualized the suburban as the ideal space of middle-class habitation—the idyllic blending of country and city (Sutton, 1997; Roper, 1973; Fishman, 1987; Martinson, 2000) that can still be seen in today’s contemporary suburbs (Duncan and Duncan, 2004).

In addition to spatial location, economics, and form, the suburban can also be conceptualized as a way of life (Fava, 1951; Riseman, 1957). The suburban way of life is often associated with domesticity (Fishman, 1987; Marsh, 1990; Beecher, 1841; Bushnell, 1864; Beecher and Stowe, 1869) and conspicuous consumption (Jackson, 1985; Veblen, 2009; Stowe, 1865). Jackson explains conspicuous consumption through Weidenmann (1870) and the ornamental lawn. “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” (Jackson, 1985: 60). Braxandall and Ewen (2000) also explain how the urban middle-class of New York City looked to the lifestyles 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).

When viewed collectively, suburban location, economic ties to the city, form, domesticity, and the suburban way life can be conceptualized as economic, social, and cultural forces being organized and reorganized around existing settlement patterns (Wood, 1997; Baldwin, 1999) and changing transportation technologies and systems (Warner, 1962; Hall, 2002). To say this another way, the economic, social, and cultural forces manifest as the spatial manifestation of shifting centrality. For

example, Harris explains that as the process of suburbanization continues to spread outward, older suburban spaces are “becoming more central” (Harris in Keil, 2013: 37). Another example, is the modern manifestation of domesticity and the suburban way of life as “the way in which our lives are now centered inside the house, rather than on the neighborhood or the community [...] 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). Filion further explains, “[t]ime budgets and work and consumption behavior are tributary of the nature of activities present in suburbs and their distribution” (Filion in Keil, 2013: 40). In this regard, the suburban, not simply as location and economic ties, but as form, domesticity, and a way of life has created a *new American city* (Bushnell, 1864) that spreads out across the landscape.

Central to the criticism of this shift away from an urban way of life (Jacobs, 1961; Mumford, 1961) to a suburban way of life (Kunstler, 1993; Marshall, 2005) is the retreat into the private space of home and family. Mumford explains (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.

What is most interesting about these critiques of the suburban is that they have remained constant for decades (Riesman, 1957; Jacobs, 1961; Jackson, 1985; Kunstler, 1993; Hayden, 2003; Beauregard, 2006), even though the “success of the American suburbs, like that of a film panned by the critics but a hit with the public, is best measured by the size of its audience” (Lang in Lang and Miller, 1997: 5; see also Beuka, 2004). This creates a complexity in our understanding of the suburban. For example, Zukin who is critical of the suburban as a “Wal-Mart wasteland” (Zukin, 2010: 104) also recognizes that “[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 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, 1982: vi; see also Ekers, et al. in Hamel and Keil, 2015). Zukin’s (1991) metropolitan deconcentration has become, for Teaford (2006) and Katz and Bradley (2013) the *metropolitan revolution*. “Our language has not yet caught up with the realities. Often when we refer to cities we are actually referring to the broader economic, environmental, and infrastructure networks of the entire metropolitan region of which a city is a part. In this sense, it is difficult to separate the city from its larger metro region—or separate the metro from the city. In today’s world, the two are inextricably linked” (Katz and Bradley, 2013: vii). This metropolitan perspective draws the suburban into what is conceptualized as the urban, or for Keil (2013), the post-suburban.

The difficulty of separating the urban and city (or the suburban) from the metropolitan is evident in recent criticisms claiming the suburbanization of the city (Hammett and Hammett, 2007). Nijman explains, the “blurring between city and suburb has been reinforced in recent years by a ‘return’ to the city of middle- and upper-middle class households. Many city centers have witnessed the gentrification of once derelict neighborhoods, especially in the United States” (Nijman in Keil, 2013: 168). Add to this *suburbanization of the city* the urbanization of the suburbs (Lang, et al., 2008) and the urban, suburban, metropolitan, and post-suburban become even more blurred. For example, Muller explains, “suburban downtowns are evolving into more complex and sophisticated activity centers [...] many suburban downtowns are maturing into full-fledged urban centers as their land-use complexes diversify and perform even more important economic, social, civic, and recreational functions” (Muller, 1997: 46-47).

Is it possible that the city is not simply being suburbanized (or the suburbs urbanized), but that spatial location, form, and lifestyle that historically defined and differentiated the urban and suburban have now become less meaningful and an inadequate means of defining or differentiating the urban and suburban? That qualities of middle and upper class habitation—clean, safe, and aesthetically pleasing—are now found in both the city and suburbs and dominate both suburban and gentrified spaces of the urban (Bruegmann, 2005). Add to this claim of the suburbanization of the city the claim of a *metropolitan revolution* (Teaford, 2006;

Katz and Bradley, 2013), the urban renaissance that often relies on metropolitan scale statistics (Florida, 2000, 2005; Glaser, 2012), and the attempts to differentiate between what is urban and what is suburban become even more convoluted (Fishman, 1987; Katz and Lang, 2003; Berube, et al., 2005). Keil explains (2013: 8):

we might now speak about living in an era of post-suburbanization where the suburbs as the newly built subdivisions at the city's edge are fading into memory and give way to complex, variably scaled, functionally differentiated, and socioeconomically mixed metropolitan structures that contain rather than constrain nature.

Other than form, the political state, and possibly density, there appears to be little difference between the urban and the suburban. The urban and suburban have melded together to form a metropolitan space that is a constellation of spaces (Keil, 2013) no longer understandable simply as one or the other—urban or suburban. As a result, space is now more often defined and understood by the qualities of space. Often these qualities are what appeal to a middle or upper class consumers (Bruegmann, 2005: 4):

Gentrification at the center and sprawl at the edge have been flip sides 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.

Unfortunately, what is missed or lost in the critiques of the banal suburban and the suburbanized urban is the "importance of spontaneous, loosely institutionalized, emergent trends within cities" (Latham, 2003: 1702) and slow variables of change (Walker and Salt, 2006) that have remade space once definable as urban, city, or suburban into a multiplicity of new hybrid spaces that escape these simple definitions. For example, by paying attention to the slow moving variables of change (Walker and Salt, 2006), the shift away from the urban and the suburban to the hybrid spaces of the metropolitan (Teaford, 2006; Katz and Bradley, 2013) reveals that slow moving changes in structures such as the traditional family (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Gallagher, 2013) have the ability to remake and reorganize domesticity and centrality. That is, the move away from the traditional family and conventional practices of say eating

the family dinner at home (Urry, 2007), results in new social practices that can draw domesticity out of the home and into public spaces, creating new public cultures (Latham, 2003; Bell, 2007).

New forms of public culture (Latham, 2003; Calhoun, et al., 2013) reorganized around existing settlement patterns (Wood, 1997) can result in the rise of centrality in new locations and the emergence of new hybrid space. For example, older suburban centers that were once quiet in comparison to the traditional central business districts (Fogelson, 2001) can and have become vibrant spaces (Muller, 1997) of middle class consumption. Brooks identifies one of these affluent inner-ring suburbs and calls it “bistroville” (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.

West Hartford Center, essentially, is *bistroville* and while Brooks may view these spaces as ‘clearly suburban,’ such a claim does not fit with the critiques of suburban banality (Kunstler, 1993; Zukin, 2010). Bistroville is simply one example of a multiplicity of hybrid spaces that have emerged and shape the metropolitan city (Brooks, 2004; Katz and Bradley, 2013). Therefore, if we are to better understand these new spaces of the metropolitan and the why and how of their remaking, then we not only need to understand the slow variables of change, but must also further unpack our urban and suburban vocabularies that may limit our ability to conceptualize these new hybrid spaces. For example, Harris explains (Harris in Keil, 2013: 37):

It is fruitless to try to identify the moment when my block, and others like it, ceased to be suburban, or when a periurban districts become solidly suburban. Indeed, to speak of zones at all is as much a matter of convenience as of reality. They are products of a continuous process, made up of innumerable

events. By the time residents become aware that neighborhood-wide change has happened, it's history.

In addition, we also need to move beyond the critiques that reduce these new spaces as being simply suburban or dismissed as a *geography of nowhere* (Kunstler, 1993; 1997).

2.40 Exploring Gentrification

I now want to explore gentrification, including state-led urban regeneration, as a means of understanding the remaking of urban space. The reason for this is that gentrification is the closest of the urban understandings we have in urban and planning theory (Fainstein and Campbell, 2011, 2012) to make sense of the remaking of West Hartford Center. In addition, I further explore how the processes of suburbanization and gentrification are conceptualized in similar ways in our urban understandings.

The word gentrification was first coined by Ruth Glass in 1964 as a means of understanding neighborhood change (Glass 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, the concept of gentrification has attracted much interest, inspired volumes of research, and created many debates on its causes and effects. However, gentrification existed long before 1964. Lees explains, “[g]entrification...began before the term itself was coined [...] for example, the Haussmannization of Paris. Baron Haussmann...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 reconstruction of central Paris is important because it provides a historical context for both gentrification and state-sponsored regeneration. While Glass was describing an organic and mostly naturally occurring phenomenon of urban change in London, the Haussmann plan and redevelopment of central Paris, link both gentrification, state-led regeneration, and suburbanization (Keil, 2013).

Zukin provides a simplified definition. 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 drive out the previous, lower-class residents” (Zukin, 1989: 5). Freeman explains gentrification as “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 *higher class* persons into a neighborhood is a key ingredient of gentrification. However, gentrification as defined above is also dependent on the displacement, “the negative consequences of gentrification—the rising housing expense burden for poor renters, and the personal catastrophes of displacement, eviction, and homelessness...” (Lees, et. al., 2008: 73). While the influx of wealth and displacement of the poor, together help to define gentrification, the process and outcomes can also be more textured and nuanced. For example, Freeman explains, “[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 and at the same time they expressed concerns about displacement.

Understanding gentrification as both an influx of wealth and displacement of those with lesser means raises the question of how gentrification can help us understand the remaking of West Hartford Center—a commercial town center of a mostly wealthy suburban community. Zukin explains that gentrification can result in

the displacement of not only the poor, but also of businesses. For example, “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).

Zukin’s recognition of business displacement also as a form of gentrification demonstrates the complexity of how our understandings of gentrification have widened. In fact, there are now many definitions of gentrification. “As 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 and marginalization of low-income groups” (Lees, et. al., 2008: 129). Lees also recognizes ‘new-build gentrification’ 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). Lees also defines “‘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). This is possibly the closest form of gentrification in regard to West Hartford Center.

With so many forms of gentrification being defined, it may be reasonable to assume that *any* socio-economic upgrading of space—residential or commercial—can be defined and understood as gentrification. However, claiming that any socio-economic upgrading of space is gentrification can be a risky proposition for two reasons. First, such a claim could imply that neighborhoods and properties should remain constant, as they are, and cannot change over time without running the risk of gentrification. Second, such a claim could also imply that the flow of investment capital into an area is undesirable because of the risk of displacement. The

generalization of gentrification to include most forms of economic upgrading of space has resulted in gentrification being viewed as the primary means of explaining and understanding the remaking of urban space. Unfortunately, such a generalized understanding of gentrification may also limit our ability to understand the remaking of space, especially the remaking of spaces that have always been wealthy and where poorer persons or marginal businesses have not been displaced.

It is not that I disagree with our understandings of gentrification or the legitimate concerns of inequities and the threat of displacement. My concern is that the generalization of our understandings of gentrification has resulted in most of our understanding of the remaking of urban space as resultant from the “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). Is it reasonable to pit the inequities of capitalist property markets and capital accumulation against the ideals of home, community, family, and everyday social life? In the context of urban space and the remaking of space, the extent to which urban environments are created and re-created to simply favor capital accumulation is questionable. In addition, even if the remaking of space favors capital accumulation, can we not question the extent to which it is at the expense of home, community, family, and everyday social life?

I find the perspective of the political economists too limiting. It limits the possibility that the remaking of urban space may be a two-way street, a symbiotic relationship between capitalist producers and consumers. For example, 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” (Thrift, 2008: 33). Perhaps 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). In regard to the remaking of urban space, the production of space coalesces with the consumption of space. Middle-class ideals of the consumer class are projected onto the space, shaping the production of the space (at times even co-opting space (Thrift in Massey,

et al., 1999)) into the kind of space the middle-class not only inhabitants, but desires to consume. Consumers, living their everyday lives are “imagineering...an alternative urbanism” (Ley, 1996: 15) and “[c]onsumption has quite literally helped to build a new world” (Latham, 2003: 1713) through new forms of public culture. These perspectives open up the opportunity for new understandings of the remaking of space. The possibility is that consumers also act as producers, and through their symbiotic relationship with capitalist producers they co-create urban space.

In addition to the generalization of gentrification, our understandings of gentrification often come from large cities—London and New York (Smith 1996; Butler with Robson, 2003)—and then generalized and applied to other places (Lees, 2000) regardless of site, situation, size, or scale. One size fits all is not uncommon in urban theory (Amin and Graham, 1997), especially in regard to gentrification. Zukin, in the context of loft living, demonstrates this large urban bias 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...” (Zukin, 1989: 1). However, the majority of urban dwellers in America live in smaller urban places (Ori-Amoah, 2007), such as metropolitan Hartford, that have not experienced the same scale or intensity of gentrification as have large urban places such as New York City.

Lees, who argues to reenergize the study of gentrification (Lees, 2000) 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).

Lees also 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 plans 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 little to help us understand the remaking of West Hartford Center. However, it does apply to Hartford and provides context to understanding the remaking of the Center.

Hartford, since 1954 and the conception of the City’s first redevelopment scheme, Constitution Plaza (Hartford Courant, 1954: 19; Condon in Chen and Bacon, 2013), has utilized large redevelopment schemes similar to those implemented in most large cities. Such schemes have included building sports arenas, riverfront redevelopment, downtown housing (including lofts), shopping malls, entertainment districts, and tourist attractions (Kaplan, et. al., 2009). However, Hartford’s continual implementation of such schemes for the past 60 years has resulted in little success in revitalizing Hartford (Chen and Bacon, 2013) even though these efforts have succeeded in transforming and remaking the physical space of Hartford’s downtown. This difference in outcomes questions the scale at which gentrification, and more specifically, state-sponsored regeneration schemes take place and their ability to regenerate smaller cities (Bell and Jayne, 2006). Ironically, while the City of Hartford and the State of Connecticut invest greatly in such grand regeneration schemes in Hartford, West Hartford Center, four-miles west of Hartford’s downtown, was successfully remade without the implementation of grand redevelopment schemes.

Hartford further demonstrates the limitations of ‘one size fits all’ urban policy in the context of housing and neighborhood regeneration policy. One example is Hartford’s utilization of the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, cited by Zukin (2010), Freeman (2006) and Hackworth (2007), as a gentrification scheme in New York City—the primary funding mechanism for its neighborhood reinvestment schemes. Poland explains in a report on Hartford’s Healthy Neighborhood program that the City of Hartford neighborhood redevelopment strategies, including LIHTC have done little more than cluster low-income households into already low-income neighborhoods (Poland, 2009).

While the LIHTC program may be utilized as and work as a tool of gentrification in New York City, the same is not the case in Hartford. While the Hartford experience fits with Lees' (2000) claim of the spread of such policies down the urban hierarchy, the negative consequences of Hartford's experience reveals that gentrification and the tools of neoliberal urbanism may not play out the same in smaller cities and highlights the need for better understandings of small city urbanism (Bell and Jayne, 2006; 2010). Furthermore, in regard to understanding the remaking of West Hartford Center, a smaller suburban space, highlights the need for better understandings of suburban governance (Hamel and Keil, 2015; Keil, 2013).

2.50 Gentrification or Suburbanization

What is interesting about the gentrification literature is that it returns us to the discussions and the debates of the urban and the suburban discussed above. For example, the Haussmann plan and the rebuilding of central Paris creates an interesting historical link between gentrification (Lees, et. al., 2008) and suburbanization (Keil, 2013). Fishman, in his historical account of the differences in American and French urbanization, explains 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 result, for Fishman 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 also demonstrates an early form of state-sponsored regeneration and public-private partnerships. “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 raises at least two questions: First, are gentrification and suburbanization simply the results of similar socio-economic forces only differentiated by spatial location and configuration?

Second, are gentrification and suburbanization simply specific forms of middle-class habitation of space?

Smith 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). While there may be truth to Smith’s statement about the negative perspective of the American city (Riesman, 1957; Mumford, 1961), 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) pinpoint 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 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 explains that in eighteenth century London, the poor and working class were “defined as ‘uncivil’...as savages...” and that 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 historical suburban accounts and ideologies that played a role in middle-class suburbanization—a move away from the poor rather than the displacement of the poor. This returns us to and once again challenges our understanding of gentrification as the suburbanization of the city (Hammett and Hammett, 2007).

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 can alter how we view the ‘urban wilderness’. In addition, Smith’s references to ‘edge cities’ (Garreau 1991) creates another interesting juxtaposition of gentrification and suburbanization—the edge city, for Smith, representing “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. Said another way, the edge city, while urban in form, is less authentic than the central city due to its suburban location. Add to this Lang’s (2003) argument against edge cities in favor of *edgeless cities* and Lang’s, et al., (2008) claim of *urbanizing suburbs* and our understanding of urban, suburban, gentrification, and overall urban change become, once again, even more convoluted.

Our convoluted urban understandings are interesting in the context of Amin and Thrift’s claim that “[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 or the *metropolitan revolution* (Katz and Bradley; 2013). The result, one could argue, is that the remaking of space (be it through gentrification or suburbanization) becomes a socio-economic and socio-cultural manifestation of upper- and middle-class values and 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, he also recognizes there is little difference in middle-class ideals—the spatial difference is simply consumer preference.

Zukin, while explaining the phenomenon of *loft living* provides insight into what could be deemed as cultural changes in middle-class ideals and the spatial configuration of suburban land use (1989: 68):

Of course, a middle-class preference for strictly residential neighborhoods predates 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 further notes that over time the first occupiers of the lofts, the artists, are often displaced by wealthier non-artists. “In 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” (Zukin, 1989: 5), but the commercial operations that were there before. 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 a middle-class preference for separation of use.

In describing the media influences in the “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 explains, “[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), possibly shed light on West Hartford Center. The remaking of the Center may be a manifestation, not simply of suburban ideals, but of a middle class ideal, or for Smith (1996), the manifestation of shifting demand in locations—centrality organizing around established settlement patterns (Wood, 1997) and once suburban locations becoming more central (Harris in Keil, 2013). In this context, it is possible that gentrification (urban) and suburbanization (suburban) are less about spatial location and physical form and more about middle class preferences and habitation of space.

From this perspective, suburban West Hartford Center, like the East Village, may also be “an oasis of authenticity in Wal-Mart wasteland” (Zukin, 2010: 104).

The idea of the city as authentic and the suburbs as in-authentic is common in both the gentrification and suburban literature. For example, Duany claims “[s]uburban sprawl ... 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 “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 similar to what 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). He continues “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 imperialist nostalgia is ironic in the context of Zukin (1989, 2010), a self-proclaimed gentrifier and loft liver.

Duncan and Duncan (2003) in *Landscapes of Privilege*, 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 New York’s gentrified neighborhoods (Freeman, 2006; Lees, et. al., 2008; Smith, 1996; Zukin, 1989, 2010), provide similar perspectives from suburban residents. Their accounts of Bedford demonstrate just how similar a wealthy suburban community is to a wealthy gentrified neighborhood. The wealthy residents of Bedford ironically share the same anti-suburban views expressed by others above. For example, “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).

Phillips, while arguing for a geography of rural gentrification, provides a similar finding regarding perspectives of suburbs, by citing Caulfield, 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 some regard, ‘landscapes of desire’ and rural gentrification sound and appear similar to the New England Village as settlement ideal (Wood, 1991, 1997). Ironically, Wood (1997) describes Litchfield, Connecticut today, one of two of the original New England Villages that were idealized in the early nineteenth century, as *gentrified*.

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 the gentrification of urban spaces in New York City, Duncan and Duncan provide similar reasoning to explain Bedford. “In 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, urban, historic, gentrified neighborhood or a historic, small town suburban community.

The political economy perspective emphasizes the importance of government intervention 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 (Zukin, 1989; Brenner and Theodore: 2002; Hackworth, 2007). Duncan and Duncan highlight similar forces at work in suburban Bedford (Duncan and Duncan, 2004: 7):

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.

If gentrification is the suburbanization of urban space, then the suburbanization of Bedford is the suburbanization of an already suburban space—or the gentrification of the suburban. Either way, this crosspollination of gentrification and suburbanization calls into question the value of spatial location as a means of defining or understanding either. Duncan and Duncan continue (Duncan and Duncan, 2004: 9):

Since 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...one views nothing industrial or distasteful.

The 'highly controlled space' and 'aesthetic production' of Bedford is not very different from the 'highly controlled space' of Union Square or the 'aesthetic production' of lofts in Lower Manhattan (Zukin, 1989, 2010). The behaviors of upper- and middle-class residents of Bedford to create and maintain their ideal suburban space are effectively 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.

What is interesting about the elite Bedford suburb and the elite gentrified New York City neighborhoods is that they are all part of the same metropolitan region and subject to the same socio-economic forces of globalization (Harvey, 2006; Hamel and Keil, 2015). Therefore, the value of understanding these spatially different spaces is not simply their specific location (urban and suburban) or conditions (economic and social), but we must also view them as two specific kinds of a multiplicity of (sub)urban spaces, within the same metropolitan region, that are continually changing and being produced and consumed (McManus and Ethington, 2007). Nijman and Clery explain, "in reality the suburbs as a spatial entity is a momentary piece of an

urban puzzle that is always reconfiguring, spatially, economically, socially, and in terms of governance. In the United States, at least, urbanization (including suburbanization) is an ongoing process, following, in large part, the coupled logistics of investment and (re)development...” (Nijman and Clery in Hamel and Keil, 2015: 59). Therefore, within this multiplicity of post-suburban metropolitan 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’ or ‘suburbanizing’ (gain in capital), others are declining (loss of capital), and still others are stagnating or maintaining the status quo (no change in capital).

In this context, capital (investment and 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 stagnate, deteriorate, and decline (Bushnell, 1847; Downs, 1981). Therefore, in the case of manufacturing districts in Lower Manhattan where the lofts emerged, changes in the structure of the economy—the shift from the industrial to the service economy (Baxandall and Ewen, 2000; Smith, 1996; Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987)—removed capital from this location. The conversion and construction of lofts, be it naturally occurring (gentrification) or state-sponsored (regeneration), at its most basic level, is little more than the remaking of urban space (reinvestment) and the shifting location of centrality organized around existing settlement patterns (Wood, 1997).

2.60 Conclusion

This chapter has explored our understandings of urban governance, urban space, suburban space, and gentrification in an attempt to understand the remaking of urban space. In doing so, the urban and gentrification have been juxtaposed against the suburban and suburbanization in an attempt to explore how these vocabularies create challenges in how contemporary urban studies conceptualize and understand urban space and the processes that remake space. While these vocabularies are helpful in providing context for differentiation of space and processes, they have also been generalized to the point that at times they fall short of providing a clear understanding of what they are describing in regard to specific spaces and processes. In addition, the juxtaposition of these words and understandings against one another reveals the

similarities in the critiques of both gentrification and suburbanization—how these understandings quite possibly may be the flipside of the same coin (Bruegmann, 2005).

The similarities are interesting and should raise questions, and possibly concerns, as to what exactly it is that urban studies are describing and debating since the discernable differences appear to be little more than the spatial location, form, and density of gentrified and suburbanized space. Furthermore, many, if not most, of the accounts and critiques are forged from the perspective of the political economy. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the critiques of gentrified and suburbanized space result in such similarities since the political economy often relies on the broad and towering structures (Thrift, 1996) of global capitalism and neoliberal urbanism (Harvey, 2000, 2005, 2006; Smith, 1996, 2002) to explain urban space and the remaking of urban space.

While these contemporary accounts of gentrification, suburbanization, and the remaking of urban space provide value and understanding, we need to be cautious of how these accounts are developed and based on the experiences of mostly large urban places and spectacular spaces. While these understandings can and do provide help in understanding smaller urban spaces, we need to be aware of their limitations, not losing sight of nuanced differences, situational characteristics, and the local context, history, and experience (Paradis, 2002). To say it another way, local context and experiences of smaller urban places—the local character of place (Molotch, et al., 2000)—may also be as interesting and important when looking at how urban spaces are created and re-created.

The case of West Hartford Center is designed to explore a smaller suburban space that has experienced changes that are similar to gentrification as a means of thinking carefully about how these urban vocabularies and understandings work (or don't work) in a smaller suburban space. In addition, the case of West Hartford Center is designed to explore and understand the local context, teasing out the nuances, and highlighting the localized experiences and contingencies of a smaller suburban space. To accomplish this, Chapter III will shift away from these urban vocabularies and understandings by introducing the vocabularies and understandings of ecological resilience (Holling, 1973; Gunderson and Holling, 2010) as a metaphor and

theoretical framework for thinking about, working through, and understanding urban change and the remaking of urban space.

Chapter III.

Ecological Resilience: A Metaphor and Theoretical Framework for Understanding the Remaking of Urban Space

3.00 Introduction

In the last chapter, I explored our urban vocabularies and understandings of suburbanization and gentrification as our means of conceptualizing and understanding space and the remaking of space. In doing so, I highlighted the limitations of these urban vocabularies and understandings to inform us about the kind of space that is West Hartford Center and the Center's remaking. As a way to move beyond these limitations and to provide a means for conceptualizing and understanding the remaking of urban space, this chapter will focus on urban ecology (Holling and Orians, 1971; Holling and Goldberg, 1971; see also Alberti, 2009; Reed and Lister, 2014) and how an urban ecological perspective can provide a framework for thinking about urban space and the remaking of urban space. The intent is to expand our understanding of urban ecology and ecological metaphors by introducing ecological resilience as a lens for conceptualizing, exploring, and understanding urban space and the remaking of urban space. In doing so, I will create an ecological resilience framework for the remaking of urban space.

To accomplish this, the chapter will be presented in five sections. The first section will explore urban ecology as a metaphor and look at how the urban-ecological metaphor has been utilized in urban theory. The second section will introduce ecological resilience (Holling, 1973) and how this boundary oriented perspective of resilience can help to inform us about urban space and the remaking of space. The third section will explore urban-ecological resilience and how *resiliency thinking* (Walker and Salt, 2006) can help us make sense of cities and urban space as a complex adaptive system. In section four I will attempt to bridge the gap between ecological and urban theory by exploring and applying the concept of ecological resilience to our urban understandings. Section five will explore how the urban-ecological resiliency framework can inform us about planning and urban governance and help us to conceptualize an ecological management approach to planning and

urban governance that will in later chapters help us conceptualize and understand West Hartford's government intervention into the Center's remaking. The chapter will then end with a short conclusion and transition to the empirical research and case of West Hartford Center.

3.10 Urban Ecology as a Metaphor

Ecological metaphors have been utilized in urban theory for a century. "Patrick Geddes...was one of the first to apply concepts from biology and evolutionary theory to the study of cities and their evolution ... [and] Lewis Mumford...expanded the notion of ecological regionalism" (Alberti, 2009: 8). Pickett et al., explains (2008: 139-140):

In the early 20th century, ecological factors were used to explain specific urban processes, such as the spread of disease in cities, and concepts of ecological succession and zonation were adopted to explain competition between different social groups and the spatial layout of neighborhoods (Park and Burgess 1925). By the middle of the last century, ecologists had begun to apply the ecosystem perspective to cities to estimate urban material budgets (e.g. Boyden et al. 1981). Sterns made a notable effort to bring urban ecology within the fold of mainstream ecology.

McDonnell further explains "the 'Chicago School' of urban sociology...pioneered the use of ecological theory and terms to describe the structure and function of cities" (McDonnell in Niemela, 2011: 8). Park and Burgess (1925) used ecological terms, such as invasions and succession, to explain physical and socio-economic change in cities and neighborhoods. Hoyt (1939) further utilized this ecological terminology with filtering and vacancy chains. Kaplan, discussed Hoover and Vernon's *Anatomy of a Metropolis* (1962) and Downs' (1981) stages of neighborhood change as 'life-cycle notions of neighborhood change' (Kaplan, et al., 2009: 227). In addition, Hall while discussing urban innovative milieus explains "they resemble nothing so much as huge and complex ecosystems...that is what they are, human ecosystems" (Hall, 1998: 500). Duany's rural-to-urban transect is drawn from ecology and used to demonstrate "a sequence of human habitats of increasing density and complexity" (Duany and Speck, 2010: 39).

Ecology, ecological metaphors, and resilience have recently been used in urban theories regarding concerns of climate change (Calthorpe, 2011) and for

designing more sustainable cities (Coyle, 2011). In this regard, urban ecology and urban resilience have been conceptualized as the relationship between the built and natural environment. For example, the Resilience Alliance explains (2007: 17):

Urbanisation creates new types of landscapes, which are often diverse mosaics of different land-uses and habitats. Urban green spaces in all their manifestations (e.g. parks, gardens, green roofs, urban farms) are by their very nature highly patchy and also highly dynamic, influenced by both biophysical and ecological drivers on the one hand and social and economic drivers on the other.

Batty (2007) in his exploration of complexity theory and modeling of cities uses evolutionary processes and ecological metaphors. For example, Batty explains "[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). Batty also utilizes the ecological concept of a phase transition to provide a metaphor for conceptualizing a process of change in urban systems (2007: 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 the functional structure of cities, if not in their spatial structure.

Calthorpe (2011) uses resilience to explain and argue for urban diversity and redundancy in urban networks. Coyle conceptualizes resilience in a symbiotic relationship with sustainability and argues that communities designed with sustainable practices are more resilient (Coyle, 2011). Burayidi (2013), in his case studies of new approaches to revitalizing small and medium size downtowns, claims such approaches result in *Resilient Downtowns*. Wood and Brunson (2010) explore 'geographies of resilient social networks' in their study of 'the role of African American barbershops'. However, like Coyle (2011) and Burayidi (2013), Wood and Brunson (2010) don't define resilience and social resilience. Coyle (2011), Burayidi (2013), and Wood and Brunson (2010), leave the reader to assume the common usage of the word resilience. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines resilience as "the ability to become strong,

healthy, or successful again after something bad happens” or “the ability of something to return to its original shape after it has been pulled, stretched, pressed, bent, etc.” Unfortunately, as I will discuss later, our common understanding of resilience is both narrow and different when compared to how resilience has been defined in ecological theory (Holling, 1973; Gunderson, et al., 2010).

Ecological metaphors and resilience, in the context of urban theory, also combine the natural and urban environment (Alberti, 2009). For example, Bures and Kanapaux explain “[r]esilience theory provides a framework for understanding social and demographic changes within an urban system while acknowledging the influence of the ecological system on social structures and functions” (Bures and Kanapaux, 2011: 1). Pickett (2003), working with the metaphor of ‘cities of resilience’ and focused on urban watershed structure, functions, and management, argues for the incorporation of humans in “ecosystems as learning and active agents of change” (Pickett, et. al., 2003: 376).

However, this combining of the natural and the urban environment creates limits, especially in regards to utilizing ecology as a means to explore and understand cities, urban space, and urban processes. Mugerauer critiques what he views as a tepid attempt at an integrated urban ecology by Pickett, et. al., (2008). Mugerauer explains (2010: 3):

Thus, the exclusionary categories ‘ecological’ and ‘social’ perpetuate fundamental conceptual barriers to an integrative theory: they need not only to be corrected, but replaced as we develop another way of thinking that affirms that the ecological includes the human and other-than human, that is, all biots in their interconnected communities within geo-physical-chemical and climatic contexts.

In fact, the authors have what is needed when they say, at the end of their essay, that their and others’ results lead to a theory that ‘suggests that urban ecosystems are complex, dynamic, biological-physical-social entities, in which spatial heterogeneity and spatially localized feedbacks play a large role.

Mugerauer’s argument is similar to arguments in urban theory regarding how we conceptualize non-human species and material objects and processes in urban theory—arguing for a more expansive, inclusive, and dexterous urban theory (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Latham and McCormack, 2004). Conceptualizing urban ecology and resilience as the relationship between the natural and built environments and the impacts of the built environment on the natural environment often results in the urban

being viewed as something other than and detrimental to the ecological. For example, the Stockholm Resilience organization defines urban sprawl as (www.stockholmresilience.org):

a phenomenon that plagues cities in both developing and industrial countries. It is an uncontrolled or unplanned extension of urban areas into the countryside that tends to result in an inefficient and wasteful use of land and its associated natural resources.

While it is understandable that urban ecology and resilience would be conceptualized in a bound relationship between natural ecosystems and urban environments—since natural ecological systems are being used as metaphors for urban and human systems—such a relationship limits our understanding of the urban as ecological. Cities and urban space can be conceptualized as ecological systems (Holling and Orians, 1971; Holling and Goldberg, 1971) and humans are a part of this urban ecology (Stearns, 1978; Packett, et. al., 2003; Packett, et. al., 2008; Mugerauer, 2010).

Mugerauer, in fact, recognizes an urban ecology—cities as ecosystems—when he explains “the authors [Pickett, et al., 2008] have what is needed when they say, at the end of their essay, that their and others’ results lead to a theory that ‘suggests that urban ecosystems are complex, dynamic, biological-physical-social entities, in which spatial heterogeneity and spatially localized feedbacks play a large role’ (Mugerauer, 2010: 3). Therefore, I argue that urban ecology (Holling and Orians, 1971) and ecological resilience (Holling, 1973; Gunderson, et al., 2010) can be conceptualized as both a metaphorical and theoretical framework for thinking about cities, urban space, and specifically, the remaking of urban.

By invoking ecology and ecological metaphors I recognize the risk of unleashing past and present criticisms of human ecology, urban ecology, and the large urbanism of the Chicago School of urban sociology that have been discussed and debated for decades (Hawley, 1944; Schnor, 1961; Maines, et al., 1996; Catton, 1994; Marseden, 1983; Stearns, 1977; Dear, 2002; Slater, 2014). Concerns of the influence and emphasis of Social-Darwinism, competition, invasion and succession, and social-spatial organization (Schnor, 1961; Maines, et al., 1996; Slater, 2014) and the exclusion of non-human, biological, and environmental consequences are justified (Vasishth and Slone in Dear, 2002; Wolch, et al., in Dear, 2002). For example, Levine, et al., specific to ecological resilience, explains (2012: 2):

Ecological resilience appears value-free because only the ‘system’ is valued, not the wellbeing of individual creatures. Indeed, in judging the health of an eco-system, hidden value judgments may be made about which species’ survival matters. The paradigm encourages value-free analysis by focusing on outcomes and symptoms of resilience, avoiding looking at the power relations that are at the root of much vulnerability. The quest for objectivity remains an illusion, though, because exploitation too can be resilient, so any ‘scientific’ analysis still had to judge which is resilience-to-be-supported and which is resilience-to-be-fought.

However, it is not my intent to resurrect social-Darwinism and build upon the human and urban ecology of the Chicago School (Park and Burgess, 1921, 1925; Hawley, 1944, 1950). Nor is it my intent to use ecological resilience without value judgment. I utilize ecology and ecological resilience as a means of thinking through urban change, the remaking of space, and specifically the remaking of West Hartford Center. It is not my intent to argue that cities or urban spaces are simply or only ecological systems where everything is naturally occurring and therefore beyond or outside of our control. In fact, I believe *the foundations of ecological resilience* (Gunderson, et. al., 2010) that I will introduce and utilize can open up our thinking about human and urban ecology and to some extent can challenge the arguments of social-Darwinism.

Ecology, and ecological metaphors, as a means of thinking about and conceptualizing cities and urban spaces as urban-ecological systems return us to complexity—cities as complex, dynamic, and adaptive systems. With her argument, *the kind of problem a city is*, Jacobs (1961) pulled complexity theory into urban theory by claiming cities as problems of “*organized complexity*” (Jacobs, 1961: 563). Since Jacobs (1961), complexity and emergence have become popular areas of research in social sciences (Sawyer, 2005), popular culture (Johnson, 2001, 2010; Taylor, 2001), and in the study of cities (Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999; Thrift, 1999; Latham, 2003; Batty, 2007). Latham explains (2003: 1715):

An emergent system is a system in which the individual components of a given system relate together in such a way as to form some sort of coherent self-organizing whole, but for which there is no overarching co-ordinating or ordering entity that gives rise to this pattern of organization. Instead, the component parts collectively combine to generate something that has an observable pattern of macro-behaviour, a macro-behaviour that is capable of changing dynamically in response to changes in the outside environment. That is to say, there is a scalar difference between the local interaction of individual

parts of the system and the system's macro-behaviour ... Emergence, then is about understanding 'bottom-up systems, not top-down.'

Johnson further explains "bottom-up systems, not top-down ... are complex adaptive systems" (Johnson, 2001: 18; see also Sawyer, 2005) and Folke similarly explains "ecosystems are complex, adaptive systems that are characterized by historical dependency, nonlinear dynamics, threshold effects, multiple basins of attraction, and limited predictability" (Folke, et al. in Gunderson, et al., 2010: 122). Cities can be conceptualized as urban-ecological systems—complex and adaptive systems that result from the "the actions of every citizen, every group, and every institution, every day" (Bruegmann, 2005: 225).

Emergence—self-organizing behavior—can also help us to conceptualize urban centrality, at both the metropolitan scale (Park and Burgess, 1925; Soja, 1989; Dear, 2002) and individual scale (Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987; Brooks, 2000; Bruegmann, 2005). Wood (1997) in his discussion of the New England experience of centrality helps us to unfold understandings of urban centrality that are less about the Chicago versus Los Angeles debates (Dear, 2002, 2005; Greene, 2008; Hackworth, 2005; Shearnur 2008; Soja, 1989) and more about complex adaptive systems. "The development (and later decline) of the central-place system [in early New England] was not so much the emergence of new locations or places offering central goods as it is a shift in scale—the development of centrality at already established places or the elaboration of the existing settlement system" (Wood, 1997:91). Woods continues, "[t]he rule is that the older system previously determined always determines the more recent system developed under other economic laws and conditions..." (Wood, 1997: 91). Thinking carefully about centrality in this way, the reorganization of economic activity around the existing settlement system, highlights the self-organizing and adaptive qualities of urban systems. That is, urban space can be conceptualized as a sort of platform (Johnson, 2010)—the existing physical structure and settlement pattern and system—that social, economic, and other forces organize and perform on.

"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). Johnson 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 platform and platform building provide a means of thinking about and conceptualizing urban space and the remaking of space. For example, 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). Cities and urban space can be conceptualized as ecosystems (Holling and Orians, 1971; Gunderson, et al., 2010; Alberti, 2009; McDonnall in Niemela, 2011), similar to that of the coral reef—a habitat of human life—where people and businesses create, inhabit, and re-inhabit all kinds of spaces. Urban space can be seen as the ecological habitat of the human species—entrepreneurs, businesses, organizations, governments, and consumers. Therefore, a coffeehouse, occupying a storefront space originally designed as a hardware store, may be compared to the *songbird sitting in an abandoned woodpecker’s nest* (Johnson, 2010). Urban ecology, from this perspective is an argument for the naturally occurring forces of social-Darwinism or neoliberalism (Slater, 2014), but is also a means of thinking about how urban space is inhabited, utilized, and remade.

Johnson (2010) also explores a critical species who exists in ecosystems, known as an ‘ecosystem engineer’ or what Folke refers to as *keystone species* (Folke, et al., in Gunderson, et al., 2010). Johnson explains this as “the kind [of species] that actually creates the habitat itself” (Johnson, 2010: 182). The ‘ecosystem engineers’ or ‘keystone species’ as a metaphor allows us to think about and conceptualize specific actors that inhabit specific urban spaces. An example is entrepreneurs who, through the creation of their businesses, create their own space/habitats, but collectively contribute to the creation of a greater habitat—an ecosystem—that is urban space. The coffeehouse does not simply create a space for itself, the coffeehouse also contributes to the neighborhood, the urban ecosystem. “The reef helps us understand...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).

Ecology and the urban-ecological metaphors provide both a conceptual and metaphorical framework and vocabulary for thinking about cities, urban space, and the remaking. However, ecology, ecological metaphors, and ecological resilience can also provide a well-developed theoretical framework and vocabulary for exploring urban-ecological systems (Gunderson and Holling, 2002; Gunderson, et al., 2010) and how we think about urban change and the remaking of space.

3.20 Ecological Resilience

Cities and urban space as complex adaptive systems also provide an opportunity to utilize ecological resilience (Holling, 1973; Gunderson, et al., 2010) as a means of conceptualizing and exploring urban change and the remaking of urban space. McDonnell explains, historically ecology was defined by the *balance of nature* or *equilibrium paradigm* (McDonnell in Niemela, 2011). The equilibrium paradigm views resilience as the return to equilibrium after a shock or disturbance (Gunderson, et al., 2010). This understanding of resilience is similar to the common usage of resilience, as discussed above. However, Holling changed how ecology defines and understands resilience (1973: 17):

Resilience determines the persistence of relationships within a system and is a measure of the ability of these systems to absorb changes of state variables, driving variables, and parameters, and still persist. In this definition resilience is the property of the system and persistence or probability of extinction is the result. Stability, on the other hand, is the ability of a system to return to an equilibrium state after a temporary disturbance. The more rapidly it returns, and with the least fluctuation, the more stable it is. In this definition stability is the property of the system and the degree of fluctuation around specific states the result.

In this regard, resilience is not the return to equilibrium or prior state, but “the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and still retain its basic function and structure” (Walker and Salt, 2006: xiii). Stability, not resilience, is the equilibrium state. “With these definitions [resilience and stability] in mind a system can be very resilient and still fluctuate greatly, i.e. have low stability” (Holling, 1973: 17).

Holling further “distinguished two types of resilience: engineering and ecological. Engineering resilience is defined as the rate or speed of recovery of a system following a shock. Ecological resilience, on the other hand, assumes multiple states (or ‘regimes’) and is defined as the magnitude of a disturbance that triggers a

shift between alternative states” (Gunderson and Allan in Gunderson, et al., 2010: XV-XVI). Holling and Goldberg explain (1971: 226):

It is this boundary oriented view of stability emerging from ecology that can serve as a conceptual framework for man’s intervention into ecological systems. Such a framework changes the emphasis from maximizing the probability of success to minimizing the chance of disaster. It shifts the concentration from the forces that lead to convergence on equilibrium, to the forces that lead to divergence from a boundary. It shifts our interest from increased efficiency to the need for resilience. Most important, it focuses attention on causes, not symptoms.

Ecological resilience changes how we understand resilience. Rather than focusing on equilibrium—the singular stable state—ecological resilience shifts our focus to multiple equilibria and boundaries, limits, or thresholds of a system’s capacity to withstand disturbance. Gunderson explains (2010: 423-424):

Ecological resilience is a bundle of concepts or ideas developed to explain complex system dynamics... Walker and Salt (2006) use the phrase ‘Resilience Thinking’ to capture a coherent set of notions that together produce a framework for conceptualizing and explaining how systems of humans and nature behave. The resilience framework is based on observations of thresholds, abrupt or nonlinear shifts in key variables, domains or basins of attraction, and multi states that characterize complex system behaviors. Resilience theory is an alternative perspective to the equilibrium-centered theories and models that guide management actions in many resource systems.

Ecological resilience is not only relevant to cities and urban space, but is also relevant in that it provides a theoretical framework for thinking about urban change and the remaking of urban space. For example, urban planning is inherently a top-down structure (Jacobs, 1961), aimed at engineering resilience (Pickett, et al., 2004, 2008) and efficiency (Coyle, 2011), and capable of designing and planning so called optimal or ideal environments for human habitation (Fishman, 1982; Duany, 2000; Hall, 2002). However, these ecologists recognize planning and urban design as rigid top-down structures. As a result, Holling and Goldberg argue for “increased flexibility and more decentralized approaches” (1971, 229) to planning (1971: 229):

The suggestions for change are analogous to ecological control schemes and basically state that the system can cure itself if given a chance. The chance is provided if our interventions give credence to the basic complexity and resilience of our urban systems. Such basic respect for the system eliminates a host of policies.... The idea is to let the system do it, while our interventions are aimed at juggling internal system parameters without simplifying the interactions of parameters and components.

This perspective provides an opportunity to think carefully about urban planning—government intervention into the remaking of space. This is not urban space simply as being ecological (Park and Burgess, 1921, 1925; Hawley, 1944, 1950), but the dynamic interaction between the top-down governance structures of planning and the bottom-up emergent qualities of cities (Jacobs, 1961).

3.30 Urban Ecological Resilience

Conceptualizing cities and urban space as urban-ecological systems allows us to explore and reimagine ecological resilience as a means of thinking about urban change and the remaking of urban space. Therefore, I will explore the *foundations of ecological resilience* (Gunderson, et al., 2010), the functions and structures of ecosystems in terms of scale, panarchy, adaptive cycles, change, and ecosystem management. In doing so, I will think through how the theory and vocabularies of ecological resilience can be fashioned into a theoretical framework for working through urban change and the remaking of urban space.

To start, Holling and Orians explain, “[t]he only possible rationale for ecology, as a discipline, to consider urban systems is if these systems share properties with ecological ones” (1971: 2). They conclude (1971: 2):

Four properties seem to characterize both urban and ecological systems. By responding not just to present events but to past ones as well they show an *historical* quality. By responding to events at more than one point in space they show a *spatial* interlocking property. By encompassing many components with complex feedback interactions between them, they show a *systems* property. And through the common appearance of lags, thresholds, and limits they present *structural* properties.

What is most interesting about Holling and Orians’s argument to determine urban systems as ecological systems is how these ecologists and others speak about ecological systems. Their arguments for an urban ecology (Holling and Orians, 1971; Holling and Goldberg, 1971; Pickett, et al., 2004; Pickett, et al., 2008) sound very similar to arguments by some urban theorists (Amin and Thrift, 2002). For example, ecologists conclude that “urban ecosystems are complex, dynamic, biological-physical-social entities, in which spatial heterogeneity and spatially localized feedbacks play a large role” (Pickett, et. al., 2008: 148). Urban theorists, Amin and Thrift, in part, explain cities as a machine, not a mechanical metaphor, “but rather as a

‘machanosphere’, a set of constantly evolving systems or networks, mechanic assemblages which intermix categories like the biological, technical, social, economic, and so on, with the boundaries of meaning and practice between the categories always shifting” (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 78).

Holling and Orians claim the “city region [or the metropolitan] has not been assembled out of pre-existing parts like a machine: it has evolved in time...” (Holling and Orians, 1971: 2). Latham explains “[c]ities are enormous machines for the generation of connections between the unexpected and the unexceptional. They are also an on-going experiment into how people of vastly different backgrounds, incomes, wealth and values can live together ... [and] generate new forms of connections, hybrids and unexpected mixings” (Latham, 2003: 1719). Holling and Orians further explains (1971: 3):

The city is not a homogeneous structure but a spatial mosaic of social, economic, and ecological variables that are connected by a variety of physical and social dispersal processes. Each individual human has a variety of needs—for shelter, recreation, work, and foraging. These activities are typically spatially separated and any qualitative or quantitative change of a function at one point in space inevitably affects other functions at other points of space.

Amin and Graham claim “[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). Thrift discusses complexity as a metaphor to explain “self-organizing, emergent order, chaotic behavior, and dynamical systems in general” (Thrift in Massey, 1999: 306). Thrift explains further (1999: 306)”

the metaphor arises from what is fast becoming an interdisciplinary methodology, which is intended to explain the emergence of certain macroscopic phenomena as becoming the result of the non-linear interaction of microscopic elements in complex systems. In principle, then, economies, organisms and ecosystems can all be metaphorized as self-organizing assemblages.

From these examples we see not only similarities in how ecologists and urban theorists conceptualize ecosystems and cities, but we see that both rely on complexity (Jacobs, 1961; Johnson, 2001; Latham, 2003; Batty, 2007; Folke, et al. in Gunderson, et al., 2010). More important, within this realm of complexity, with complex adaptive systems, there are the interactions and assemblages of spatial, social, economic, and governance functions, structures, and processes. Ecosystems, urban or other, are not

static, but active and performative assemblages (Holling, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 5):

our purpose is to develop an integrative theory to help us understand the changes occurring globally. We seek to understand the source and role of change in systems—particularly the kinds of changes that are transforming, in systems that are adaptive. Such changes are economic, ecological, social, and evolutionary. They concern rapidly unfolding processes and slowly changing ones—gradual change and episodic change, local and global change.

In this regard, ecological resilience offers more than Jacobs' (1961) and Johnson's (2001) utilization of complexity metaphors. Ecological resilience provides both a vast metaphorical and theoretical framework for conceptualizing and exploring cities as urban-ecological systems. While ecological metaphors have been used extensively in urban theory as a means of thinking about cities and urban change (Christopherson, 2004; Hardt in Burayidi, 2001), *ecological resilience has not been drawn into the discussion regarding the remaking of urban space*. Therefore, ecological resilience provides a new lens for conceptualizing, exploring, and thinking about urban change and the remaking of urban space.

Understanding urban change and the remaking of urban space, therefore, starts with the same definition of ecological resilience. Simply stated, ecological resilience is the “the capacity of a system [the urban-ecological system] to absorb disturbance and still retain its basic function and structure,” (Walker and Salt, 2006: xiii). “At the heart of resilience thinking is a very simple notion—things change—and to ignore or resist change is to increase our vulnerability and forego emerging opportunities” (Walker and Salt, 2006: 9-10). Orori-Amoah explains (2007: 348-349):

Change is an inevitable part of life of a small city just as it is of a large city. Some changes are planned while others are unplanned [...] In small cities, the change that seems to attract the most attention of the general public is downtown revitalization. Most of these revitalization projects have been in response to declining economic activities in the downtown area or physical deterioration of the area.

Ecological resilience recognizes the inevitability of urban change. Urban space is not static and will not remain the same. Therefore, we need to pay attention to change and think carefully about how urban change occurs. For example, “[c]hange is neither continuous and gradual nor consistently chaotic. Rather it is episodic, with periods of slow accumulation of natural capital...punctuated by sudden releases and reorganization...” (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 27).

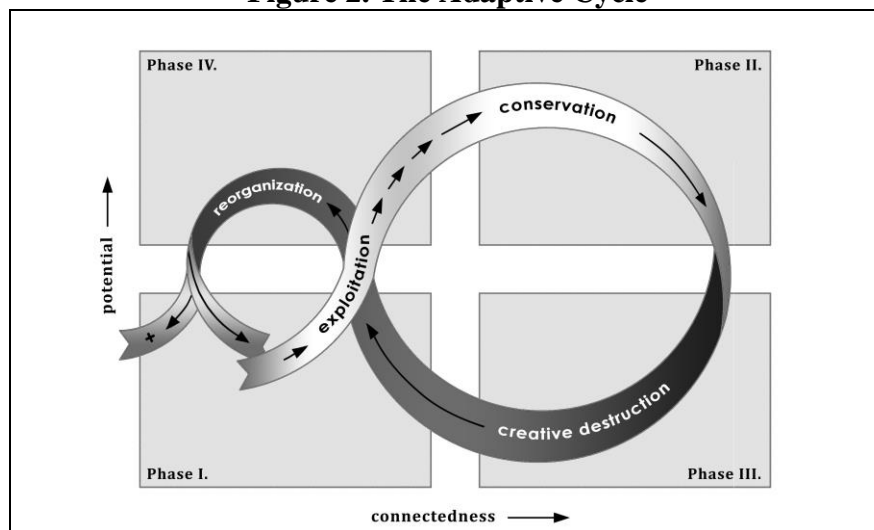
How can change as *neither continuous and gradual nor consistently chaotic*, but as *episodic* help to inform us about urban change and the remaking of urban space?

Episodic change and the remaking of space can be worked through by utilizing what is called the adaptive cycles (Holling in Gunderson, et al., 2010: 95-96):

The full dynamic behavior of ecosystems at an aggregate level can therefore be represented by the sequential interaction of four ecosystem functions: exploitation, conservation, creative destruction, and renewal. The progression of events is such that these functions dominate at different times: from exploitation, 1, slowly to conservation, 2, rapidly to creative destructions, 3, rapidly to renewal, 4, and rapidly back to exploitation. Moreover, this is a process of slowly increasing organization and connectedness (1 and 2) accompanied by gradual accumulation of capital. Stability initially increases, but the system becomes so over-connected that rapid change is triggered (3 and 4). The stored capital is then released and the degree of resilience is determined by the balance between the process of mobilization and of retention. Two properties are being controlled: the degree of organization and the amount of capital accumulation and retention. The speed and amplitude of this cycle as indicated earlier, are determined by whether the fast, intermediate, or slow variable dominates timing.

The measure of ecological resilience within the adaptive cycles (Figure 4), specifically through the phases of *creative destruction* and *renewal*, is whether or not the system has the capacity to retain its function and structure or if the system reorganizes around a new set of functions and structures (Holling, 2001). It is not the return to equilibrium. Regime shifts occur when a system cannot absorb shock and disturbance—low resilience—and as a result, a new set of ecosystem functions and structures take hold.

Figure 2. The Adaptive Cycle



Source: Based on Gunderson and Holling, 2002.

In the context of urban-ecological systems and the remaking of urban space, a regime shift occurs when a specific kind of urban space that was designed or utilized for a specific set of functions and structures reorganizes around a new set of functions and structures. Pickett, et al., assists in conceptualizing how resources and capital accumulation can be understood in the context of urban-ecological systems (2004: 377-378):

Social resources include information, human population, financial capital, and labor. Cultural resources are also part of the human ecosystem and they include organizations, beliefs, and myths. How these resources are allocated depends on the social processes or mechanisms in the system ... how the unequal allocation of critical bio-geophysical, social, and cultural resources is significantly affected by social order as expressed in social identity (ethnicity, age, gender, class, etc.), norms of behavior, and hierarchies of wealth, power, status, knowledge, and territory. These are linked to institutional functions focusing on justice, health, faith, commerce, education, etc., through temporal cycles based on dynamics of individual physiology, environmental change, organizational maturity, and institutional effectiveness. It is the rich potential for feedbacks among these phenomena that make metropolitan ecosystems so complex and unpredictable. However, the connections can be teased apart to explain observed dynamics or to give context to alternative design scenarios.

Ecological resilience also provides a means of thinking about how complex adaptive systems are structured and organized as well as demonstrating the interaction of multiple variables within the system—not as a rigid top-down hierarchy, but what ecological resiliency theory has explained as *panarchy* (Bures and Kanapaux, 2011: 2):

Panarchy describes a nested set of adaptive cycles that occur across spatial and temporal scales. Each adaptive cycle within a panarchy functions at different orders of magnitude and can be characterized as having a fast, medium, or slow speed. The relationship among these temporal and spatial scales in conjunction with the phase of each adaptive cycle gives a system its adaptive complexity... Changes in slow variables combine with large, unique disturbances to create the potential for systems collapse...

Panarchy, the multiple adaptive cycles occurring across spatial and temporal scales, recognizes the importance of scale. Panarchy, the scaling of various forces, is important in the context of the large urban bias. Panarchy recognizes that differences exist between global or external and local forces (Paradis, 2000, 2002). By recognizing the importance of scale (Figure 5), ecological resilience offers a means of thinking more carefully about how the many forces that shape cities and urban space—specifically, smaller urban places and spaces (Bell and Jayne, 2006, 2009;

Jayne, et al, 2010)—and influence the remaking of urban space, organize and function at different scales of the urban hierarchy (Folke, et al. in Gunderson, et al., 2010: 176-177):

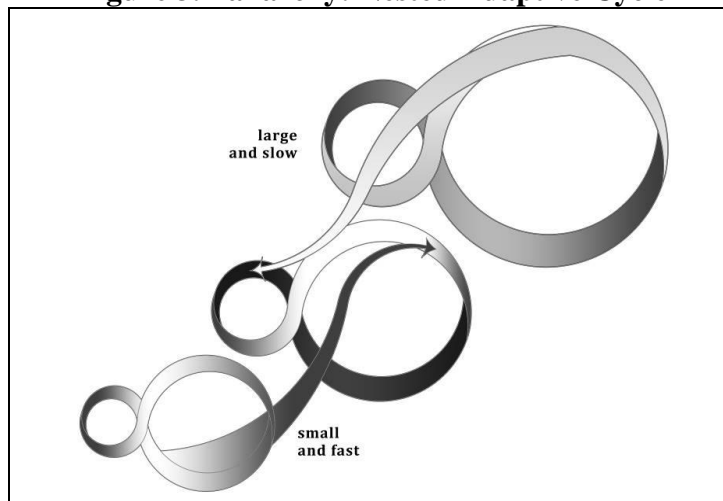
Understanding of stability and ecological function developed at small scales cannot be easily extended to larger scales, since the type and effect of ecological structures and processes vary with scale. At different scales, different sets of mutually reinforcing ecological processes leave their imprint on spatial, temporal and morphological patterns. Change may cause an ecosystem, at a particular scale, to reorganize suddenly around a set of alternative mutually reinforcing processes.

This allows urban theory to consider scalable differences in how external forces (Paradis, 2000, 2002) may function in smaller cities or spaces, rather than assuming a one-size-fits-all (Amin and Graham, 1997) force based on research in large cities (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2005, 2006; Hackworth, 2007). This highlights the need to be aware of scalable difference within specific urban spaces. For example, Folke, et al. in Gunderson, et al., explain (2010: 181-182):

a wetland may be inhabited by both a mouse and a moose, but these species perceive and experience the wetland differently. A mouse may spend its entire life within a patch of land smaller than a hectare, while the moose may move among wetlands over more than a thousand hectares. This scale separation reduces the strength of interactions between mice and moose relative to interactions among animals that operate on similar scales.

Using the mouse and the moose as a metaphor, we can think how Hartford may experience neoliberal urbanism differently than New York. In the context of urban space, how does a locally owned coffeehouse engage and experience the neighborhood differently than a national chain such as Starbucks?

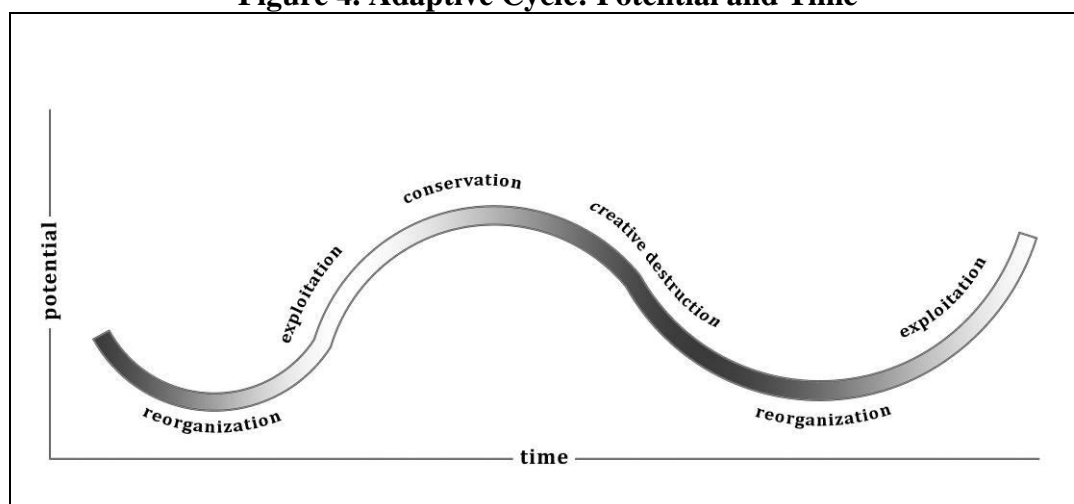
Figure 3. Panarchy: Nested Adaptive Cycle



Source: Based on Walker and Salt, 2006.

Ecological resilience also addresses the importance of both time and space, whereas urban theory is often guilty of privileging space over time (Thrift, 1996; 2005; 2008). “Each adaptive cycle within a panarchy functions at different orders of magnitude and can be characterized as having a fast, medium, or slow speed. The relationship among these temporal and spatial scales in conjunction with the phase of each adaptive cycle gives a system its adaptive complexity... Changes in slow variables combine with large, unique disturbances to create the potential for systems collapse...” (Bures and Kanapaux, 2011: 2). Understanding temporal and spatial scales and variables operating at different speeds, requires a more dexterous approach to our thinking about urban change, not simply as changes in physical and spatial characteristics—urban versus suburban—but to include the temporal dimension (Figure 6) of urban and suburban change (McManus and Ethington, 2007).

Figure 4. Adaptive Cycle: Potential and Time



Source: Donald Poland

However, caution is required when applying ecological resilience to urban-ecological systems (Holling and Orians, 1971; Holling and Goldberg, 1971; Alberti, 2009). We need to be aware that human knowledge and capabilities are different than those of non-human species. “Human systems show at least three features that are unique, features that change the character and location of variability within the panarchy, and that can dramatically enhance the potential of the panarchies themselves. Those three features are foresight, communication, and technology” (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 99). Unlike a non-human species, “it is possible for people to use new ecological knowledge, and the values inferred from that knowledge as a spur to action” (Pickett, et al., 2004: 378). In addition, a “unique property of human systems in response to uncertainty is the

generation of novelty. Novelty is key to dealing with surprise or crises. Humans are unique in that they create novelty that transforms the future over multiple decades to centuries” (Westley, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 118). Novelty is the ecological equivalent to what systems theory (Deming, 1984, 1993; Elzen, et al., 2004; Sawyer, 2006) and urban theory call innovation (Castells and Hall, 1994; Hall, 1998; Fagerberg, et. al., 2005; Johnson; 2010; Thrift, 2006, 2008). While human knowledge and capacities to act create further challenges and possible concerns for some ecologists (Pickett, et al., 2004), our capabilities can also be viewed as opportunity and further dynamism of urban-ecological systems—urban space possibly being more adaptable and manageable than other forms of ecosystems as a result of our knowledge and capacities to act.

It is important to note that our human capacity of “foresight, communication, and technology” (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 99)—our ability to act within and upon human and urban ecological systems, provides the ability to intervene and overcome the potential negative consequences of purely natural ecological systems. In this regard, critiques of urban ecology and ecological resilience (Davoudi, 2012; Slater, 2014) should recognize that a resiliency framework can be more than just another tool or vocabulary of neoliberal urbanism. We humans have the capabilities to intervene and mitigate what may in fact be negative consequences of naturally occurring or emergent self-organizing forces and behaviors. Therefore, the ecological resilience paradigm can be conceptualized as more dynamic than social-Darwinism.

Even though humans have knowledge and the capabilities to act, that does not mean that we are always aware of what is occurring around us. Ecological resilience not only recognizes the importance of slow variables of change, but it also acknowledges our struggles to recognize and manage slow variables (Walker and Salt, 2006, 2012). Carpenter explains, “Slow variables and nonlinear processes are harder to monitor, understand, model, and forecast than fast variables and linear processes” (Carpenter, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 190).

Slow variables can also be conceptualized in regard to Pickering’s (1993) *mangle of practice*—resistance and accommodation. Let me explain. Pickering to explain the mangle discusses, in the context of science and scientific experimentation,

a process of goal setting, modeling, and essentially an unintentional process of trial and error that results in practice (Pickering, 1993: 569):

These failures constituted, to introduce a key term, a sequence of resistance...where by resistance I denote the occurrence of a block on the path to some goal ... responses to such resistances as accommodations: in the face of each resistance he [we] devised some other tentative approach toward his [our] goal...that might...circumvent the obstacles...

The idea of resistance and accommodation, as even the slightest deviation from a given plan, goal, or path, in real time, become slow variables of change. What is key here is the occurrence in real time and challenge to recognize things, changes in real time.

The challenge of recognizing and dealing with slow-variables is similar to Thrift's "[n]on-representation theory [arising] from the simple...observation that we cannot extract a representation of the world from the world because we are slap bang in the middle of it, co-constructing it with numerous human and non-human others for numerous ends, (or, more accurately, beginnings)" (Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999: 296-297). This may also be thought of in regard to how Molotch, et al., (2000) explain the history of place. "History occurs across all the realms, all the time, with no time out. Each element is, in ethnomethodological language, indexical vis-à-vis every other; they form a dynamic and coherent ensemble. Since all elements are part of what people use in taking action, they must all be available to any analytic story of what those actions might 'add up to' as they move through time" (Molotch, et al., 2000: 816). This does not mean that it is impossible to recognize slow variables, but that there are "limits on what can be known and how we can know it because the way human subjects are embodied as beings in time-space" (Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999: 296). What it does mean is that we need to be more attentive to the slow variables and their influence (Walker and Salt, 2006).

3.40 Bridging the Urban Ecological Divide

Ecological resilience reimagined as an urban-ecological framework offers a lens for exploring urban change and the remaking of urban space. To start, Holling explains, "a system can be very resilient and still fluctuate greatly, i.e. have low stability" (1973: 17). When applied to resiliency and urban space, this informs us that

urban space does not need to be static or stable to be resilient—urban space can fluctuate greatly (have low stability) and still be resilient. Holling also explains that the “more homogeneous the environment in space and time, the more likely is the system to have low fluctuations and low resilience” (Holling, 1973: 18). In regard to understanding urban change, a homogeneous space, with low fluctuation and low resilience, would be susceptible to collapse and a regime shift.

Therefore, it is the boundaries of the fluctuation—the thresholds or limits—that are important for understanding urban change and the remaking of urban space. That is, a heterogeneous urban space that fluctuates greatly and has high resilience, can absorb disturbance without crossing a threshold—experiencing a regime shift—and maintain its function and structure. An urban space that has *the capacity to absorb disturbance and still retain its basic function and structure* (Walker and Salt, 2006) would be a resilient urban space. The opposite is also true. Viewing urban change and the remaking of urban space through the lens of ecological resilience, we see that “this boundary oriented view of stability” (Holling and Goldberg, 1971: 226) unfolds another means of viewing urban change and the remaking of urban space. Does change occur within the boundaries of stability and is the space resilient or not?

Thinking carefully about change, regime shifts and adaptive cycles (Holling, 2001), we can explore how urban-ecological resilience informs our understandings of the remaking of urban space. For example, is a space of gentrification resilient or not? Batty’s (2007) *phase transition* from the industrial and postindustrial city may provide insight into how we conceptualize gentrification. In the case of *Loft Living* (Zukin, 1989), once manufacturing areas or neighborhoods, and manufacturing buildings, at a macro-scale resulted from the *many technological and behavioral shifts between the industrial city and the postindustrial city*. However, Zukin documented the changes that occurred at the micro-scale—the manufacturing buildings, after the collapse of the industrial economy and city, first were occupied by small businesses, then as artists’ studios, artists’ studios and homes, and later for residential *loft living* (Zukin, 1989). In this process of transition to *loft living*, Zukin also demonstrated the process of gentrification—changing uses, users, increased wealth, and displacement of marginal businesses and less wealthy residents.

The regime shift from the industrial to postindustrial city can be understood through panarchy (Gunderson and Holling, 2002). At the macro-scale the system of industrial production and the industrial economy experienced transformation through *creative destruction* in regards to new technologies, flexible structures and processes, and emergence of just-in-time manufacturing. At the macro-scale, the system of industrial production was remade and it was resilient—maintaining its overall function and structure. Zukin’s case of *loft living* and gentrification, at the micro-scale, can also be understood through panarchy. The homogeneous industrial spaces of the industrial city were not resilient, and when they were confronted with the *creative destructive* forces that transformed the system of industrial production, they collapsed—not having *the capacity to absorb disturbance and still retain its basic function and structure* (Walker and Salt, 2006). A regime shift within the *creative destruction* phase occurred and through the process of *renewal*, these spaces were remade into new kinds of space with a new set of functions and structures.

The adaptive cycles consist of the sequential interaction of four ecosystem functions. They are: exploitation, conservation, creative destruction (release or collapse), and renewal. Movement from Phase 1 *exploitation* to Phase 2 is a process of slow accumulation of resources (Gunderson and Holling, 2002). “The winners expand, grow, and accumulate potential from resources acquired. We use the term resources in the broadest sense, including, for example...production and managerial skills for the entrepreneur, marketing skills and financial capital for the producer, and physical, architectural structure for all systems” (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 43-44). Slowly moving to *conservation*, the system as it becomes more connected, is becoming more rigid. “Not only do potential and connectivity change in the progression to the conservation...phase, but ecological resilience also changes. It decreases as stability domains contract. The system becomes more vulnerable to surprise ... Organizations can become bureaucratized, rigid, and internally focused, losing sight of the world outside the organization” (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 44). Hall (1998) explains these characteristics of the conservation phase when discussing Detroit and the automotive industry. The automotive industry “has become a textbook lesson of managerial myopia: mammoth corporations, secure in their own position, making fundamental strategic efforts which drove them to produce the wrong kind of cars,

with the wrong production techniques, failing to learn the lessons their competitors were teaching them” (Hall, 1998: 499).

Moving to Phase 3, *creative destructions*, is the period of change and transformation. “In the case of extreme and growing rigidity, all systems become accidents waiting to happen. The trigger might be entirely random and external ... Such events previously would cause scarcely a ripple, but now the structural vulnerability provokes crisis and transformation because ecological resilience is so low” (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 45). However, resilient systems don’t cross the threshold or boundary limits, and therefore don’t experience the regime shifts to a new set of functions and structure. However, the stability and equilibrium state of the system may shift in resilience systems as the result of adaptation—a remaking of the ecosystem within the boundaries of the system’s existing functions and structures—resiliency.

Finally, Phase 4, moving rapidly to *renewal*, is a highly uncertain stage. “This is a time when exotic species of plants and animals can invade and dominate future states, or when two or three entrepreneurs can meet and have the time and opportunity to turn a novel idea into action. It is a time when accidental events can freeze the direction of the future” (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 46). When the system collapses and the regime shift occurs, the future is uncertain and unknowable. “The totally unexpected associations and recombinations that are possible in the [renewal] phase make it impossible to predict which events in this phase will survive to control subsequent renewal. The phase becomes inherently unpredictable” (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 46). *Renewal* results in the transition and return to Stage 1, *exploitation*. However, “resources exist in a verity of forms as legacies of the past cycles ... in the physical, architectural structure that had been earlier created” (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 46). In regard to urban space, the uncertainty of the *renewal* phase is the unknowable outcome of how a given space will be renewed and which species and practices will take hold for the transition to *exploitation*. In addition, the *verity of forms as legacies of the past cycles* are the spaces and infrastructures that remain. These are the manufacturing buildings of lower Manhattan or Wood’s account of centrality organizing “at already established places or the elaboration of the existing settlement system” (Wood, 1997:91)—“[t]he rule is that

the older system previously determined always determines the more recent system developed under other economic laws and conditions...” (Wood, 1997: 91).

The *renewal* stage begins the slow return to Phase 1 *exploitation* and the emergence of and transition to a new ecosystem organized around a new set of functions and structures. Thinking carefully about ecological resilience, the adaptive cycle, and gentrification as the remaking of an urban space that has experienced a regime shift, reveals that the process of gentrification occurs in the front half of the adaptive cycle—the *exploitation* and *conservation* phases—the front half of the adaptive cycle being the stable and predictable (Holling, 2001) half of the cycle (Figure 6 below).

Returning to Park and Burgess (1925) and the Chicago School’s use of invasion and succession to explain socio-economic change in neighborhoods, succession can also help in understanding the leading edge actors in gentrification—the gentrifiers or pioneers (see also Clay, 1979 in Lees, et al., 2010). Holling explains conventional perspectives on (Holling in Gunderson, et al., 2010: 78):

succession—the way complexes of plants develop after disturbance ... Initial colonization is by pioneer species that can grow rapidly and withstand physical extremes. They so ameliorate these conditions as to allow entry of less robust but more competitive species. These species in turn inhibit the pioneers but set the stage for their own replacement by still more effective competitors.

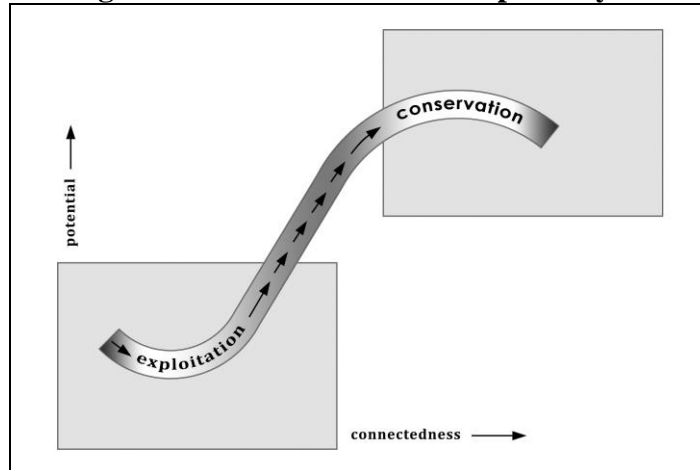
The process of succession, pioneer species colonizing an area, allows the entry of less robust but more competitive species, and setting the stage for their own replacement sounds very similar to common accounts of gentrification (Freeman, 2006; Clay, 1979 in Lees, et. al., 2010; Smith, 1996; Lloyd, 2002, 2006). The robust pioneer species are the early in bohemians and artists or the risk-taking entrepreneur who opens the coffeehouse. These early in pioneers are then followed by the successive waves of middle- and upper-class gentrifiers who, in time, displace and replace the pioneer species (Clay, 1979 in Lees, et. al., 2010).

Ecological resilience can also help to inform us about the spaces of state-led regeneration (Jacobs, 1961; Hannigan, 1998; Zukin, 1991; Peck and Ward, 2002; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; also see Burayidi, 2001, 2013). In this context, the redevelopment of Baltimore’s Inner Harbor and South Street Seaport are accounts of urban space that did not have *the capacity to absorb disturbance and still retain its*

basic function and structure (Walker and Salt, 2006). These spaces became functionally and structurally obsolete, unable to attract resources (capital) and new species (residents and businesses). The collapse of the industrial economy and industrial city left these spaces frozen in the *renewal* phase of the adaptive cycle and unable to transition to the *exploitation* phase of the adaptive cycle, without government intervention.

Gentrification, as an emergent and self-organizing phenomenon (Glass in Lees, et al., 2010), makes the transition from *renewal* to *exploitation* as the result of market and cultural forces, be they production or consumption driven (Lees, et al., 2010), that find new opportunities in these legacy spaces of the prior adaptive cycle. Whereas, the movement from *renewal* to *exploitation*, in the case of state-led regeneration, often requires government intervention. In both scenarios, gentrification and state-led regeneration, older urban space, often developed to service an industrial economy and industrial city are being reorganized into spaces of the service economy—often spaces of consumption (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Zukin, 2010)—with functions and structures aimed at exploiting and servicing the post-industrial economy and city. The once working docks of South Street Seaport are redeveloped around a new set of functions and structures—themed spaces of retail, hospitality, and entertainment—and create a new opportunity for *exploitation* and the start of a new adaptive cycle.

Many of the accounts of gentrification, state-led regeneration, grand redevelopment schemes, and the public-private partnerships embedded in the forces of neo-liberal urbanism (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) highlight urban spaces that in their prior adaptive cycle were not resilient and subsequently were transformed by regime shifts, reorganized around new functions and structures, and designed for exploitation in their next adaptive cycle. In fact, much of urban theory and our urban understandings explore and explain urban spaces (Castells and Hall, 1994; Florida, 2002, 2005; Glaeser, 2013; Hannigan, 1998; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Hackworth, 2007) that are in the front half of the adaptive cycle, *exploitation* and *conservation* (Figure 7). The transformation from the back half of the adaptive cycle, the change resulting from a new regime taking hold and transitioning to a new adaptive cycle, is noticeable and happens quickly. In addition, the front half of the adaptive cycle is stable and predictable (Holling, 2001), relatively easy to understand.

Figure 5. Front Half of the Adaptive Cycle

Source: Based on Gunderson and Holling, 2002.

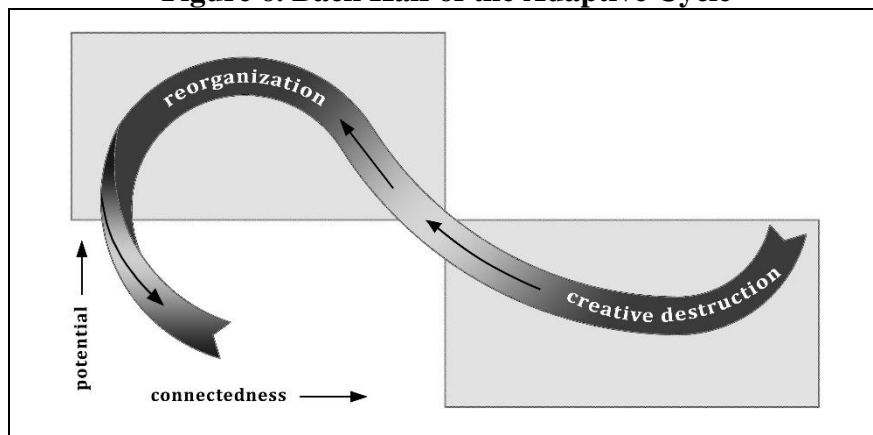
What urban theory and our urban understandings document less is the back half of the adaptive cycle—the rapid process of *creative destruction* and the uncertainty of *renewal*. To understand the back half of the adaptive cycle, we need a different kind of urban theory and urban understandings. We need theories that are more elusive and that deal with uncertainty, the unknown, and even the unknowable (Allen, et al., in Gunderson, et al., 2010). This is why emergence is appealing and important (Jacobs, 1961; Johnson, 2001). However, urban theories of creativity and innovation may be another means of looking at urban understandings that attempt to make sense of the back half of the adaptive cycle—*creative destruction* and *renewal* (Figure 8). Creativity and innovation are elusive—it is not easy to know why and how or when and where creativity and innovation will occur (Hall, 1998). Hall explains “it becomes increasingly hard to find any single satisfactory explanation” (Hall, 1998: 282) for creativity and creative milieus. In regards to innovation, Hall’s conclusions are also tentative, “the generation of successful innovative milieus still present a considerable degree of mystery” (Hall, 1998: 498). He also claims (1998: 495):

That fact is many of the innovative milieu seem to have begun by catering for what could be called internally generated demand. Sometimes such an internal demand came directly from the final consumer ... Sometimes the demand came from related parts of the industrial complex...

However, in regard to innovation, Hall does find that “we can see that there are two different models of innovation here: the freewheeling *laissez-faire* one, which could be described as the American model, and the state-guided centralized one, which was the German and is now the Japanese model” (Hall, 1998: 497). This returns us to both top-down and bottom-up processes (Jacobs, 1961). Rather than an

either (top-down) or (bottom-up) understanding of cities and urban space, the urban-ecological resilience paradigm permits both top-down and bottom-up systems to exist simultaneously and at different and overlapping scales in the panarchy of adaptive cycles (Holling, 2001; Gunderson and Holling, 2002; also see Orori-Amoah, 2007). I will discuss this more below, but first I want to further discuss innovation or *novelty* as it is described in ecological resilience (Westley, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002).

Figure 6. Back Half of the Adaptive Cycle



Source: Based on Gunderson and Holling, 2002.

Innovation has been a topic of much interest in urban studies in recent decades (Castells and Hall, 1994; Hall, 1998; Fagerberg, et. al., 2005; Johnson; 2010; Sawyer, 2006; Thrift, 2006, 2010). Innovation, like creativity (Amin and Roberts, 2008; Hall, 1998, 2000; Florida, 2002, 2005; Landry, 2000, 2008), in the context of our urban understandings, has been approached from many perspectives. Castells and Hall (1994) explored the large and spectacular innovative industrial complexes such as Silicon Valley and the I-28 Corridor outside of Boston. Michael Porter (1998) explored and promoted 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) and Oliver Crevoisier (2004) argued for an innovative milieu approach to economic development.

What all of these approaches to urban innovation have in common is that they mostly 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 interesting and important, such a large scale approach and understanding of innovation does little to help us understand the role

and influence of innovation at the micro-scale of smaller and specific urban spaces. Ecological resilience, panarchy, and the adaptive cycles, by highlighting and emphasizing the importance of variable scale and the importance of speed—time—afford us the opportunity to explore innovation—novelty—at the macro-scale.

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). However, Gordon and McCann provide a helpful definition of 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). They further explain, “[a]lthough the nature, sources, and impacts of innovation are difficult to isolate...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, not simply as inventive, but as *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).

This definition of innovation can be applied to other kinds of industries such as retail, service, and hospitality, and it can also be applied to urban space. In addition, *newness, improvement, and overcoming uncertainty* works well with ecological resilience and innovation as novelty. In the context of urban space and the remaking of space at the micro-scale, the newness of an idea, product, process, or service does not need to be new to the world—inventive—it simply has to be new to the specific space (and time). For example, an activity such as outdoor seating and dining is not new or inventive, but when outdoor seating and dining is introduced into an urban space for the first time it provides *newness, improvement, and* [possibly overcomes] *uncertainty* (Gordon and McCann, 2005) by providing new opportunities.

Johnson (2010) provides a further means of thinking about this repurposing or co-opting of urban space, such as turning a sidewalk into a space for dining. He explains, “[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 sidewalk space designed primarily for mobility into a space of hospitality, domesticity, and sociality is a form of exaptation—as is the domestic activity of dining moving from the home to inside the restaurant, and then outside to the sidewalk. Sawyer explains, “[a]ccording to the famous economist Joseph Schumpeter, creativity is the core of capitalism. New innovations displace the old, often leading to radical transformations, and creative destruction” (Sawyer, 2006: 281). The phases of the adaptive cycle, *creative destruction* and *renewal*, are “the period where novelty in the system is likely to emerge as new combinations of old and new elements... It is also during these phases that other variables, especially slowly changing ones, can come into play” (Gunderson, et al., in Gunderson, et al., 2010: 430-431).

Innovation—novelty—can also be reimagined in the context of how we think about and understand the relationship between production and consumption—producers and consumers. Zukin explains, “[n]eighborhoods that offer opportunities for cultural consumption also play an important role in culture production” (Zukin, 2010: 236). This interplay between production and consumption is a sort of feedback loop—the simultaneous overlapping of adaptive cycles within the panarchy.

Thrift (2006, 2008) discusses this *interplay of production and consumption*, to some extent, when he explains his “difficulty...with keeping production and consumption separate” (Thrift, 2008: 33). Panarchy, the nested hierarchies of adaptive cycles, allows us to conceptualize and recognize production and consumption—producers and consumers—as separate entities or species inhabiting urban-ecological space. As species co-inhabiting the urban-ecosystem at different scales and with different functions, producers and consumers become co-creators of space. In fact, producers and consumers don’t simply co-create space, they can also co-service and co-exploit urban-ecological space.

Co-option and co-creation of urban space has been well documented (Thrift in Massey, et al. 1999). For example, McManus and Ethington (2007) explain the co-creation of space as a form of evolutionary ecology where urban space, as it is built, does not remain static, but evolves. “Levittowners were not just consumers of a finished product but actively reshaped their environment to create a new community

of individualized homes...the homeowner as ‘co-producer’ of the domestic environment” (McManus and Ethington, 2007: 330).

This returns us to Zukin’s 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” (Zukin, 2010: 27). Holling and Orians make a similar claim when they explain, “[a]s man’s activities take on new characteristics, the city will likely again provide the focus. We can already see this happening in the post industrial society where even services are being replaced by more intangible activities related to intellectual and recreational pursuits” (Holling and Orians, 1971: 2-3). Zukin’s account highlights both small innovations—the introduction of new kinds of uses such as farmers markets into urban spaces—and consumption playing an intentional role in the production of the city. These new uses, for example, farmers’ markets, are novelty (Westley, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 118):

Together, the ever changing environment and changing human aspirations create an intricate dynamic that is difficult to foretell. Any credible vision of the future must be highly uncertain. A unique property of human systems in response to uncertainty is the generation of novelty. Novelty is key to dealing with surprise or crises. Humans are unique in that they create novelty that transforms the future over multiple decades to centuries.

In the context of urban-ecological systems and novelty as ecological innovation, Zukin’s consumers’ *tastes for lattes and farmers’ markets* is more nuanced than consumption co-creating specific urban space. It is also about urban species (producers, consumers, and others) simultaneously co-creating and co-exploiting the urban-ecosystem. Every actor and action—be they individuals, businesses, organizations, government, or others—exerts itself upon the urban-ecosystem, attempting to service and satisfy their desires and needs. Each actor and action is its own adaptive cycle, with its own shifting equilibrium, stability, and resiliency, collectively organized as the panarchy that makes up the urban ecosystem. For example, “[e]ach individual human has a variety of needs—for shelter, recreation, work, and foraging. These activities are typically spatially separated and any qualitative or quantitative change of a function at one point in space inevitably affects other functions at other points of space” (Holling and Orians, 1971: 3). Moreover, “[a]s ecosystems are complex self-organizing systems, they are characterized by

multiple locally stable equilibria or persistent states, each of which may correspond to a distinct set of environmental conditions” (Folke, et al. in Gunderson, et al., 2010: 155).

Thrift’s discussion of efficacy, “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 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) becomes interesting in this regard. He continues, “[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’, 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). Efficacy, in the context of ecological resilience and urban-ecological systems, can be conceptualized as our “use [of] new ecological knowledge, and the values inferred from that knowledge as a spur to action” (Pickett, et al., 2004: 378). It demonstrates our capabilities to act upon and engage the urban-ecological system in ways that non-humans cannot. Our ability to *conjure up experiences which can draw consumers to commodities by engaging their own passions* is what Brooks was describing when he explains that the residents of Bistrotville want to (2004: 27):

...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’ use of the phrases ‘they want’ and ‘they don’t want’ emphasizes not only the interplay between production and consumption (Zukin, 2010), but also highlights our co-creation and co-exploitation of urban-ecosystem resources.

The ecological resilience paradigm allows us to conceptualize all actors and actions as active participants in the creation and exploitation of urban-ecological space (Holling and Goldberg, 1971: 225):

Ecological systems exist in a highly variable physical environment so that the equilibrium point itself is continually shifting and changing over time. At any one moment, each dimension of the system is attempting to track the equilibrium point but rarely, if ever, is it achieved. Therefore, each species is drifting and shifting both in its quantity and quality. Because of this variability imposed upon ecological systems, the ones that have survived, the ones that have not exceeded the boundaries of stability, are those that have evolved tactics to keep the domain of stability, or resilience, broad enough to absorb the consequences of change.

The urban-ecological system, a complex and adaptive system, is “the theater of life itself” (Amin and Graham, 1997: 418) that provides generative capacity of urban-ecological space to create “new forms of connections, hybrids and unexpected mixings” (Latham, 2003: 1719). Urban ecology, specifically, ecological resilience, offers more than metaphors for conceptualizing and exploring urban space, urban change, and the remaking of urban space. Ecological resilience also provides a theoretical framework for thinking through and exploring “the geography of what happens” (Thrift, 2008: 2)—the performative nature of the urban platform (Johnson, 2010).

3.50 Urban Governance and Ecosystem Management

The final context of urban-ecological resilience that I wish to explore is planning and urban governance. Holling explains “the goal of producing a maximum sustained yield may result in a more stable system of reduced resilience” (Holling, 1973: 18). Efforts in urban governance and planning are often attempts aimed at maximum sustained yield, to create efficiency, or to create prescribed urban space (Duany et al., 2000; Coyle, 2011). These *maximum sustained yield* attempts of urban governance and planning are the essence of Jacobs’ critique of planners treating cities as “problems of disorganized complexity, understandable purely by statistical analysis, predictable by application of probability mathematics, management by conversion into groups of averages” (Jacobs, 1961: 569).

Thinking carefully about what Jacobs was teaching us reveals that her arguments are not simply about the urban form, density, and diversity that are so often emphasized in urban writings (Kunstler, 1993, 1997; Duany, et al., 2000). Jacobs was not simply arguing that her beloved Hudson Street was the ideal urban form, density, and diversity for human urban habitation. Central and important to her argument were

the emergent and self-organizing qualities of Hudson Street (Jacobs, 1961). Hudson Street was not some planned utopian space of the City Beautiful Movement (Wilson, 1989; Hall, 2002) or modernist movement (Fishman, 1981; Hall, 2002). Nor was Hudson Street the planned space of Rockefeller Center (Jacobs, 1961). Unfortunately, by missing the nuanced texture of Jacobs' argument, planning and urban design have embraced Jacobs' Hudson Street as idealized urban form, density, and diversity (Duany, et al., 2000; Coyle, 2011), while continuing to approach urban design in a very rigid top-down manner. For example, the New Urbanism movement and the highly designed utopian communities of Seaside, Florida and Kentlands, Maryland (Duany, et al., 2000; Hall, 2002) typically embrace the scale of Hudson Street, while imposing their attempts to achieve *maximum sustained yields*. Urban ecologists appear to have understood Jacobs' arguments in their totality. "We do not imply functional determinism...and it is important to remember Jacobs' (1961) criticism of the strict environmental determinism implied by the City Beautiful assumptions. In an 'if you build it, they will come' mindset, it was assumed that the physical structure of the built environment was sufficient to determine a functional social good" (Pickett, et al., 2004: 378).

Urban governance and planning are inherently rigid top-down structures that assume knowledge and understanding of cities to a degree of confidence that allows planners the ability to determine what is the ideal urban space based on their interpretation of the past and predictions of the future and the ideals of the urban elite (Slater, 2014). For example, Fainstein and Campbell explain planning "a practical field of endeavor, however, [it] differs from other activities in its claim to be able to predict the consequences of its actions" (Fainstein and Campbell, 2012: 3). This is not to say that top-down planning is bad or that we must abandon attempts at idealized or preordained urban space. Top-down structures are inherent in urban governance and planning and they are not going away. Therefore, my aim is to explore how the ecological resilience paradigm views urban governance and planning differently and provides an alternative means for thinking about urban governance and planning. This is important in the context of West Hartford Center since "[s]uburban governance however has been largely overlooked by urban studies" (Hamel in Keil, 2013: 29)

Holling and Goldberg argue that the ecological resilience "framework suggests an approach for planning based on the presumption of ignorance rather than

on a presumption of knowledge” (1971: 221). This is a radically different starting point to urban planning and governance. By starting with the presumption of ignorance, ecological resilience theory provides “an alternative perspective to the equilibrium-centered theories” (Gunderson, et al., 2010: 423-424). In regard to *urban ecology* (Holling and Orians, 1971) and *ecology and planning* (Holling and Goldberg, 1971; see also Demerath, 1947; Dewey, 1950; Schwirian, 1983) the ecological resilience paradigm can provide a viable means for reimagining how we approach planning (Holling and Goldberg, 1971: 229):

we would hope that practicing planners and other private and public decision-makers would draw several conclusions for themselves about the nature of their actions in the system. First, and most important, is that their actions be limited in scope and diverse in nature. Actions of this sort do preserve the complexity and resilience of the urban system and will limit the scale and potential harm of the inevitable unexpected consequences. Second, we feel that complexity is a worthwhile goal in its own right and should be preserved and encouraged. Finally, and really encompassing the above, we would hope decision-makers and their advisors will adopt a more boundary oriented view of the world. We should be much more wary of success than failure. Again, rather than asking project directors to substantiate the ultimate success of their projects, they should be asked to ensure that unexpected and disastrous consequences be minimized.

The recommended shift in approach, simply put, is from a planning approach to a management approach. That is, the role of planning and urban governance focuses more on managing urban-ecological space, rather than attempting to plan urban-ecological space (Holling, 1973: 21):

A management approach based on resilience, on the other hand, would emphasize the need to keep options open, the need to view events in a regional rather than a local context, and the need to emphasize heterogeneity. Flowing from this would be not the presumption of sufficient knowledge, but the recognition of our ignorance; not the assumption that future events are expected, but that they will be unexpected. The resilience framework can accommodate this shift of perspective, for it does not require a precise capacity to predict the future, but only a qualitative capacity to devise systems that can absorb and accommodate future events in whatever unexpected form they may take.

While planning and urban governance are inherently rigid top-down systems (Jacobs, 1961) that often assume sufficient knowledge to create ideal or optimal cities and urban space (Fishman, 1981; Duany, et al., 2000; Coyle, 2011), Valverde recognizes that urban governance systems are also dynamic and pliable. “Governance systems are usually described as static structures” when in fact “[g]overnance is an

open-ended process in perpetual motion” (Valverde, 2012: 82). Recognizing urban-ecological space as dynamic, adaptable, and always shifting, combined with urban *governance as a process in perpetual motion*, unfolds the potential for an ecological management approach to urban planning and governance (Holling and Goldberg, 1971: 226):

It is this boundary oriented view of stability emerging from ecology that can serve as a conceptual framework for man’s intervention into ecological systems. Such a framework changes the emphasis from maximizing the probability of success to minimizing the chance of disaster. It shifts the concentration from the forces that lead to convergence on equilibrium, to the forces that lead to divergence from a boundary. It shifts our interest from increased efficiency to the need for resilience. Most important, it focuses attention on causes, not symptoms.

So what would a boundary oriented ecological resiliency approach to planning and urban governance look like? Walker and Salt (2006, 2012) provide nine elements to a resilient world, or what they call *Resilience Thinking*. The nine principles include diversity, ecological variability, modularity, acknowledging slow variables, tight feedbacks, social capital, innovation, overlap and governance, and ecosystem services. Utilizing Holling’s (1973) management approach discussed above, Walker and Salt’s (2006) *Resilience Thinking*, and what we learned throughout this chapter as a foundation, I now want to construct what I believe would be the components of a boundary oriented ecological resiliency approach to urban governance and planning.

Such an approach, first, would start with *embracing change* and the *simple notion that things change*. Second, it would recognize that urban space is *always shifting* around multiple equilibria and that change is *neither continuous and gradual nor consistently chaotic, but episodic*. Third, the approach would not *presume sufficient knowledge, but the recognition of our ignorance*. Fourth, it would *keep options open*, fostering *novelty and experimentation*, while embracing, not trying to resist or constrain *change*. Fifth, a resiliency approach to planning and urban governance would not *assume that future events are expected, but that they will be unexpected*. Sixth, such an approach would *embrace diversity*. Seventh, it would recognize the importance of and pay close attention to *slow moving variables of change*. Eighth, governance structures would embrace and encourage *redundancies, overlapping responsibilities*, and incorporate both *top-down and bottom-up structures*. Ninth, analysis, strategy development, and implementation would recognize the

regional context and be scaled to fit the urban-ecosystem. Finally, a boundary oriented ecological resiliency approach to urban governance and planning would not focus on *capacities to predict or preordain the future*, but on the *capacity to devise systems that can absorb and accommodate future events in whatever unexpected form they may take*.

This boundary oriented ecological resiliency approach to planning and urban governance provides an alternative means of thinking about how planning and urban governance can intervene in urban change and the remaking of urban space. This will become important in Chapter Seven when I explore how the local state intervened in the remaking of West Hartford Center.

3.60 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced and explored ecology, urban ecology, and more specifically, ecological resilience as a metaphorical and theoretical framework for thinking about, working through, and understanding urban change and the remaking of urban space as an alternative to the conventional vocabularies of suburbanization and gentrification. In doing this, I have argued that the ecological resiliency paradigm can help us to scale our urban understanding of place based on panarchy. Moreover, panarchy and the adaptive cycle have highlighted the importance of slow moving variables in understanding change and the episodic nature of change.

While I have put forth ecological resilience as an alternative to the urban vocabularies and understandings discussed in Chapter II, it was not, nor is it still, my intent to completely jettison those the vocabularies of suburbanization and gentrification. Chapter II demonstrated the limitations of our conventional urban vocabularies and understandings, while this chapter showed how ecological resilience can provide an alternative vocabulary for thinking about and understanding urban change—the remaking of urban space. In other words, ecological resilience allows us to think of urban space as complex adaptive (urban-ecological) systems—emergent systems. This is important in the context of West Hartford Center, understanding the kind of space that is the Center and how the Center’s remaking of space occurred.

I now want to apply the metaphors and theories of ecological resilience to the case of West Hartford Center and the Center’s remaking. In doing so, I will continue

to work with our conventional urban vocabularies and understandings of suburbanization and gentrification, but I will also apply ecological resilience as a means of thinking through and understanding the Center's remaking.

Chapter IV.

Methodology and Methods: A Case Study of West Hartford Center

4.00 Introduction

In earlier chapters, I argued that a large urban bias (including the paradigmatic and spectacular) exists within our urban understandings. In addition, I argued that our urban vocabulary, especially our words such as suburbanization and gentrification, have been so generalized that their meanings have become convoluted. Just as important, the meanings of these words are rigid and have struggled to adapt to new kinds or forms of urban space (McManus and Ethington, 2007)—hybrid spaces that challenge conventional vocabularies (Amin and Thrift, 2002). In regard to understanding urban space and processes, our urban vocabularies and understandings create challenges when applied to smaller metropolitan areas, smaller cities, and in the case of West Hartford Center, a smaller suburban space. Therefore, when applying words such as suburbanization or gentrified to West Hartford Center, these understandings fall short of explaining the Center or the process of remaking that the Center has experienced.

The result is a gap in our urban understandings in regards to how we understand and explain the remaking of a smaller suburban space. Therefore, I wanted to study a space in a smaller metropolitan region, in the suburban realm, that is vibrant and prosperous, and that had experienced a remaking. West Hartford Center fits this description well and fits within the lexicon of small city urbanism (Bell and Jayne, 2006, 2009). West Hartford is an older suburban community in metropolitan Hartford, with a town center that went from being a mostly uninteresting town center in the 1980s to becoming a regional center of middle class hospitality and sociality. Understanding how West Hartford Center has changed—been remade—into a new kind of space allows us to draw upon and explore our understandings of smaller cities (Bell and Jayne, 2006, 2009; Burayidi, 2001, 2013), suburbanization (Jackson, 1985; Katz and Bradley, 2013; Keil, 2013) gentrification (Lees, et al, 2008, 2010), and how ecological resilience (Holling, 1973; Gunderson and Holling, 2010) can help us think through the kind of space that is the Center and explore its remaking.

To start, I recognize that West Hartford Center has changed over the past three decades. In the 1980s, West Hartford Center functioned mostly as a town center, serving the wants and needs of the local population, with little to no regional interest or draw. Mostly occupied, with few vacancies, the Center was a vibrant place of business and retail shopping (with some hospitality serving mostly the daytime population). However, by 6:00 PM the Center would all but shut down—only a few businesses, including two or three hospitality establishments would remain open after 6:00 PM. The Center, at night, was a desolate place; there was no nightlife. In some ways, the Center was a banal suburban space (Kunstler, 1993, 1998).

Today, the Center has become the regional center of hospitality and middle-class sociality. Drawing consumers from across the metropolitan region and beyond—a 30 to 40-mile radius—the Center has become a more vibrant daytime place and bustling evening and nighttime space that remains open into the early morning hours. While this change in the Center is nuanced and may seem minimal and uninteresting, it is meaningful and worthy of and requires understanding. While the location, physical structure, and spatial configuration of the Center remains mostly the same, how the space of the Center functions and is used has changed. At the very least, this indicates that this once definable suburban space (Jackson, 1985; Kunstler, 1993) may no longer be easily definable as suburban. At most, this indicates that the Center has been remade; it has become a new kind of metropolitan (Teaford, 2006; Katz and Bradley, 2013) space of the post-suburban era (Fishman, 1987; Keil, 2013).

West Hartford Center is also a space of smaller city urbanism which is hidden in the shadows of the large urban bias. Bell and Jayne say it best when they explain, “[w]hat is lost as a consequence of the bias towards large cities is a full picture of urban form and function: the urban world is not made up of a handful of global metropolises, but characterized by heterogeneity. Studying small cities enables us to see the full extent of this” (Bell and Jayne, 2009: 683). West Hartford Center provides both a site and space-time account of changing (sub)urbanization and an opportunity to study an ordinary city-space through an “approach founded on understanding the heterogeneity of both structural and everyday activities” (Bell and Jayne, 2009: 684).

Understanding the Center’s remaking, how it has evolved from a once definable suburban space to some kind of metropolitan and post-suburban space,

allows us to also engage our urban understandings of gentrification (Lees, et al, 2008, 2010) as a force and process of urban change that results in the socio-economic upgrading of urban space. For example, we can ask how can changes in use, function, and time help us understand the evolution from the suburban to the post-suburban—this remaking of urban space?

The Center’s remaking further provides an opportunity to understand a vibrant and prosperous space that has become even more vibrant and prosperous—not the typical decline and rebirth of gentrification. In this regard, the Center affords us an opportunity to explore and unpack urban resiliency. Specifically, we can look at ecological resilience (Holling, 1973) and a space that has “the capacity...to absorb disturbance and still retain its basic function and structure,” (Walker and Salt, 2006: xiii).

Therefore, the aim of my research was to explore the remaking of West Hartford Center as a kind of urban space (ambiguous and convoluted), to gain a better understanding of this kind of space and its remaking. I wanted to understand how this (sub)urban space went from being a town center—mostly uninteresting and unknown outside of West Hartford—to becoming the premier location in metropolitan Hartford for middle-class hospitality and sociality. In doing so, I utilized the Center as a means of exploring and thinking through our urban vocabularies and urban understandings of how urban space evolves, matures, and is remade.

Through the exploration of the Center, I hope to: one, develop a vocabulary to better understand and describe the Center; two, examine how the entrepreneurs—the restaurateurs—found the Center as their location and how their businesses influenced the Center’s remaking; three, explore how government intervened into the remaking of the Center; and four, understand how the consumers (the users of the Center) explain, use, and experience the Center. As the result of this process, I hope to gain a greater understanding of smaller (sub)urban space, the remaking of (sub)urban space, and the need for more research to better understand these often missed spaces of urban studies.

4.10 Why a Case Study Methodology?

West Hartford is one of fifty-seven communities that make up the Hartford Metropolitan Statistical Area (region) and the Center is one of dozens of commercial locations (centers and strips) within the metropolitan region. However, our existing theories and perspectives on urban and suburban space often fall short of conceptualizing and explaining the Center as a kind of space. Moreover, our understanding of the remaking of space, dominated by the processes and understandings of suburbanization and gentrification (including state-sponsored regeneration), also falls short of conceptualizing and explaining how this vibrant and prosperous space has been remade. Therefore, a need exists to explore our urban vocabularies and understandings and to develop new vocabularies and understandings to better explain this kind of space (the Center) and its remaking.

The case study method, therefore, provides the opportunity to explore and make sense of 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 Center, how it evolved, how it was remade, and the kind of experience that the Center provides opens up the opportunity to conceptualize and understand the Center as an urban space, while reimagining urban space as a complex adaptive system. Therefore, it is logical to employ a case study approach to study this space, its evolution and remaking, and the unique experience that it offers (Gomm, et. al., 2000; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009; McManus and Ethington, 2007). “In 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). Flyvbjerg further explains, the “advantage of the case study is that it can ‘close in’ on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice” (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 82). West Hartford Center, the research questions to be explored, the Center as a specific kind of space, and the real-life situations of the Center are captured in Yin’s three criteria for case studies and Flyvbjerg’s advantage of the case study.

Urban spaces are complex, or as 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). The Center, as a complex adaptive system (Alberti, 2009), is organized and defined not simply by location and the physical buildings and infrastructure, but by the many variables and actors—businesses, property owners, government officials, individual users (consumers), and social, cultural, and economic resources (Pickett, et al., 2004)—that produce, perform, consume, experience, and influence the space while going about their everyday lives (Amin and Thrift, 2002).

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 essence of my research—the search for understanding—as to what this space West Hartford Center is and to explore its remaking through the narratives and happenings of the actors who produce, consume, and experience the Center. As Bell and Jayne explain, “we are very interested in the stories of small cities, and the lessons which can be learned from those stories” (Bell and Jayne, 2009: 691). I seek to find out what we can learn from the story of West Hartford 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, the case study method provides 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 the local histories, relationships, and noise that I wish to capture and understand.

I recognize the risk I take in utilizing the case study approach in regards to my arguments against the dominance of large urban places and spaces, paradigmatic cases, and spectacular sites that inform our urban understandings. It is not my intent to put forth West Hartford Center as one of the “paradigmatic cases, alleged conveniently to encompass all urban trends everywhere” (Amin and Graham, 1997: 411; see also Fryvbjerg, 2001; Bell and Jayne, 2009). Nor is it my intent, along the lines of a paradigmatic case, to argue for the creation of a “Hartford School” of smaller city urbanism in opposition to the Chicago School (Park and Burgess, 1925; Clark, 2008; Greene, 2008) and the Los Angeles School (Scott and Soja, 1996; Soja, 1996; Dear, 2002, 2005). However, in part, it is my intent to utilize the case study of West Hartford Center as a “most likely” case and as a means of “falsification” (Fryvbjerg, 2001) to demonstrate the limits of the large urban, paradigmatic, and spectacular site bias to inform us of smaller urban spaces. In regard to *falsification*, it is also my intent to demonstrate that even when urban understandings from large urban places are borrowed and travel down the urban hierarchy (Lees, et. al., 2008) and when the *towering structures* (Thrift, 1996) of neoliberal urbanism (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2005, 2006) influence a smaller urban space, such as the Center, these theories and structures do not necessarily manifest, organize, and influence space in the same way as they do in the larger and spectacular spaces they came from. Therefore, while I have chosen the case study method over comparative analysis, the case study approach affords the opportunity to compare the experience of West Hartford Center to urban theory—our urban understandings—that are based most on the experiences of larger, paradigmatic, and spectacular cases.

Understanding the dissatisfaction with case study approaches that consider small cities “an urban ‘other’ to the global metropolis” (Bell and Jayne, 2009: 684), it is my aim and hope to explore and present West Hartford Center not simply as other, but as a specific case and space within our greater urban understanding and as part of the small cities lexicon (Bell and Jayne, 2006, 2009; Burayidi, 2001, 2013; Garrett-Petts, 2005; Jayne, et al, 2010; Ori-Amoah, 2007). I hope that the case study approach to West Hartford Center will allow me to further contribute to the study of small city and post-suburban (Keil, 2013; Hamel and Keil, 2015) urbanism and simultaneously broaden our understanding of urban heterogeneity and complexity.

4.20 Research Questions

As discussed above, West Hartford Center has been a resilient space that has matured, evolved, and been remade over time. The Center is a vibrant and prosperous commercial space—to varying degrees—and has been since it first developed in the 1920s and 1930s. However, this does not mean that the Center has remained the same kind of space throughout its existence. Therefore, I believe it is important to explore and understand how and why the Center has evolved and been remade.

To accomplish this, I investigated the remaking of West Hartford Center through the exploration of the following four questions (the first being the primary question and questions two through four being supporting or exploratory 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 (consumers) of this space, how do they view and experience this space, and what role does it play in their everyday lives?

To explore these questions, I studied the remaking of the Center from 1980 through 2012—a longitudinal study (McManus and Ethington, 2007). The following is a more detailed look at each of these questions. In addition, I asked specific questions that relate to each broader question in order to further frame and explore each broad question (Rubin and Rubin, 2005).

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

- How do we understand and define (or best explain) the kind of space that is the Center?
- Is the Center an urban space, suburban space, or some other kind of space?
- Does the Center provide urban experiences, suburban experiences, or some other kind of experience?
- How can the Center help us to understand other prosperous and 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 2012?
- 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 to occur?
- What were the key factors or ingredients involved in this remaking of space?

The Change Makers: Who were (and are) the change makers—the key actors—that influenced or played a role in the Center’s remaking?

- 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: How do the users (the consumers) of the Center help us to better understand this kind of space and the experiences that the Center provides?

- Who are the consumers?
- Where do they come from?
- How do they utilize this space?
- What are their experiences in this space?
- How do they define, explain, and understand this space?

4.30 Research Methods

The research methods utilized were designed to explore the above questions with the intent of providing an understanding of the kind of space that is West Hartford Center and the Center’s remaking in the context of our conventional urban vocabularies and understandings of suburbanization and gentrification. Therefore, I utilized a mixed methods approach of both quantitative and qualitative research (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). To accomplish this, I divided the research into four topical areas that coincide with the research questions. They are: Understanding Change 1980 - 2012, The Entrepreneurs and Restaurateurs, Government Intervention, and The Consumers, Consumption and Production of Space. Each of the four topical areas are

discussed and explained in detail in the sections that follow. In summary, the first topical area, Understanding Change, is the quantitative research, focused on storefront businesses, tenant mix, and turnover. The other three topical areas: The Entrepreneurs and Restaurateurs, Government Intervention, and The Consumers, Consumption and Production of Space are the qualitative research, primarily focused on interviews. A total of 79 interviews were conducted.

4.40 Understanding Change 1980 – 2012

The intent of this portion of my research was to explore the Center’s remaking between 1980 and 2012. To accomplish this, I needed to understand change—what changed in the Center during this time. Therefore, I analyzed the changes in the storefront businesses—the tenant mix and uses—that occupied the Center during this time period. This method and approach—constructing and analyzing the storefront business database—was chosen and utilized because it provided a means for exploring and explaining change. Knowing the physical space of the Center—the roads, sidewalks, parking areas, and buildings—had remained mostly constant throughout the period of study, I need to understand what, if anything, had changed in the Center. In addition, I needed to understand what changed about the Center that could explain how the Center went from being a suburban town center in the 1980s to becoming a regional center of middle class hospitality and sociality.

The storefront businesses, the tenants of this space, provided a means of thinking about the function of this space. I looked at what functions or uses the Center served and provided, knowing that the location, physical characteristics, and spatial organization of the space remained mostly constant. The storefront tenants and tenant mix, therefore, was an obvious (being visible) and accessible data source that could shed light on change and how the Center changed over time (Figure 9).

This method of analysis was accomplished by creating a tenant database of the Center’s first floor storefront tenants from 1980 to 2012. Five primary sources were identified and used to create the tenant database. They were: the West Hartford Center Guide 1998 – 2011; West Hartford: Our Town Directory (1978 - 1979); Richard Mahoney’s Historical Tenant Database; Town of West Hartford Property Records (Building and Zoning Permit files); and the Town of West Hartford Assessor’s

Database (2010). The West Hartford Center Guide is a shopper's guide to the Center that was first produced in 1998 by the Chamber of Commerce and has been produced every year since. The Guide includes a listing of each business in West Hartford Center, and since 2008 the Guide has included a numbered map of each storefront location with a cross reference numbered map key.

Figure 7. Farmington Avenue Across from LaSalle Road 1990 and 2011



Photo: Town of West Hartford (1990) and Donald Poland (2011)

In addition to these primary sources, a number of secondary sources were utilized to verify information or to fill in gaps in the primary sources. These secondary sources included company websites, newspaper articles, government records and documents, and information obtained from my research interviews. The licensing of establishments selling alcohol is administered by the State of Connecticut, Department of Consumer Protection, Liquor Control Commission. Since the State Liquor Control Commission does not maintain historic permit data by location, I used secondary sources to verify historic permits.

Collectively, the primary and secondary sources were used to create the database. Since it would have been nearly impossible to document every tenant for every year back to 1980, the objective was to document storefront tenants every fifth year (1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2012). This provided snapshots at five year intervals of the 33-year period and still allowed the data to be analyzed for changes in tenants and the mix of tenants over time (Appendix IV). The following is a description of the 8-step process I employed to create and populate the databases with the storefront tenant information. Step one was the creation of a digital GIS layer for the storefronts. The GIS layer was digitized in ArcGIS format and based on the 2011 West Hartford Center Guide map. The map key numbering system used in the 2011

Guide was utilized as a unique identifier for each storefront, allowing the database to be linked to the GIS layer.

Step two was to create the storefront tenant database for the most recent occupants based on the detailed information and maps available in the West Hartford Center Guide (1997 to 2012). Since the Guide is created in the latter half of the year prior to the published year, the 1998 Guide documented the storefront tenants for 1997. Therefore, in the database, each year for the Guide is backdated to the previous year. The year 2012 in the database was compiled from visual inspections of storefronts conducted in May 2012. Using the Guide, and working backwards by year, the data for each year was entered into the database.

Step three was to populate the database from 1980 to 1995. To accomplish this, *The West Hartford: Our Town Directory 1978-1979* was used as the primary source and starting point. Using the street addresses for businesses listed in the Directory, it was possible to identify and locate businesses in West Hartford Center and to place them in their respective storefronts for the year 1979. This process accounted for a total of 133 (83.6% of the storefronts) business that were located in the Center for 1978-79, just prior to the 1980 research start date, providing a bookend in 1979 to the most recent year, 1997. This allowed me to work forward and backward from these years to fill in the known tenants and storefronts for 1980, 1985, 1990, and 1995.

For step four I cross referenced the existing data from the 1997 Guidebook and the 1978-1979 Directory with Richard Mahoney's database. This allowed me to verify known tenants existing in the database and to identify and locate unknown tenants. Step five included a comprehensive review of every property file for each property address in the Center in the Town of West Hartford's property records. This included the review of permit applications, permits issued, and certificates of occupancy for each storefront from 1980 to 2012, allowing me to both confirm existing tenants listed in the database and fill in the gaps where no tenants had been identified.

The final database contains 3,822 cells of tenant/storefront information, documenting 21 years (1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, and every year on to 2012) from 1980 to 2012. Based on the assumed accuracy of sources, cross referencing the sources, and

the checking and rechecking of sources, I am confident the database is an accurate and reasonable representation of the past 33 years of tenants and changes in tenants in the Center. In terms of accuracy I estimate the database to be more than 95% accurate. That means of 3,822 cells representing tenants and storefronts for 21 years of the 33 year period, fewer than 191 cells have the potential for error. This does not mean that 191 cells have known errors, only that they have a potential for errors.

Step six was the preparation of the database for analysis. To accomplish this, each tenant was coded as a service, retail, or hospitality use. Service establishments are those businesses providing a personal, business, or financial service and include banks, insurance companies, hairdressers, barbers, dry cleaners, and copy shops. Retail is any store offering merchandise for sale as its primary function. Hospitality is any establishment offering food and/or drink for consumption on or off-site, including bakeries, cafes, and restaurants, but not including supermarkets and liquor stores. Cells for storefronts that had known vacancies were coded as vacant and cells for storefronts where no tenant could be determined were coded as no data. It is probable that the cells listed as no data from 1980 to 1995 were vacant, but vacancy could not be confirmed.

Step seven focused on the hospitality establishments licensed to serve alcohol. Each hospitality establishment was then coded as licensed or not licensed. Step eight, the final step, was to identify the hospitality spaces that provide outdoor dining. To accomplish this, the Town's planning and zoning records, a 2010 Town inventory, and the review of the property records were used to determine the establishments with outdoor dining and the year that outdoor dining was added (a permit issued) to the establishments.

The intent and aim of the database was to quantitatively document what had changed in the Center from 1980 to 2012 in regards to storefront tenant mix. To qualitatively understand the changes that were occurring in the Center, as demonstrated by the database analysis, I utilized newspaper accounts of the Center during this time. For example, "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 changes that were occurring and demonstrates the emergence of a new dining culture in the Center.

4.50 The Entrepreneurs and Restaurateurs

Recognizing from the onset that the presence of hospitality—restaurants—had increased in the Center, I wanted to understand the restaurants and their owners. Therefore, this portion of my research was designed to focus on the restaurateurs (as entrepreneurs) to gain a greater understanding of the restaurants and their influence on the Center’s remaking. This included wanting to understand: Who are they? Why did they choose the Center as a location? 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? In addition, I intentionally targeted some of the restaurants that were early in—opened in the Center during the 1990s—to better understand what was going on in the Center during this period of change that was evidenced in the storefront tenant database.

To best understand these entrepreneurs and restaurateurs, I utilized an interview method (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Hay, 2000). While other research methods could be used to explore and explain the Center, for example, surveys/questionnaires to ask the owners questions, I believed that interviews would provide the best means of understanding the complex changes and individual 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). 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 *who, what, where, when, how many, and how much* through the analysis of government records, permits, the storefront tenant database, and newspaper accounts. Second, the interview method provided a more detailed and personalized account by those involved in the remaking of the Center. In regard to the restaurateurs, the personal accounts and oral and life histories (Hay, 2000) were best accessed through personal interviews.

I secured interviews with 13 restaurant owners accounting for a total of 17 of the 43 hospitality establishments, or 39% of the total. Outreach to secure interviews

included phone calls, e-mails, personal visits to the establishments asking to speak with the owner or manager, and personal introductions to owners provided by government officials. Local owners and franchise owners were more willing to be interviewed than managers of corporate chains, all of whom rejected my requests for interviews. Once again, I recognize that a bias exists within the interview sample based on willing participants and access (especially historically).

For the restaurateur interviews, I employed a semi-structured interview approach (Hay, 2000) with predefined questions (Appendix II) to frame and structure the interviews. As with the consumer interviews discussed below, the restaurateurs were allowed to wander off topic since I wanted the owners to tell their story, their life histories (Hay, 2000). As part of the hospitality portion of my research, interviews were also conducted with real estate professionals and property managers to gain some understanding of the Center as a real estate market and retail shopping center. These interviews were conducted as unstructured interviews (Hay, 2000) in which I asked very general and open-ended questions about the Center, its history, and change. This allowed the subjects to tell the story as they saw it and it allowed me to identify and analyze the overlapping and similar narratives.

4.60 Government Intervention

To best understand, historically and currently, how government intervened in the remaking of the Center, I interviewed a total of eight government officials. These included both professional staff and elected officials. These interviews were designed to explore and probe the history of the Center and to understand government's role. Therefore, the interviews were designed as unstructured interviews (Hay, 2000) in which the government officials were essentially asked to tell me their story of the Center, its history, and why and how it changed. Their accounts were documented and compared against each other and government records and documents to determine what had occurred in the Center and how it happened.

In addition to government officials, but in the context of governance, I also interviewed real estate property managers, the past executive director of the Chamber of Commerce, and the past president of the merchants association. These five interviews were also designed as unstructured interviews (Hay, 2000) and allowed me

to explore their stories of the Center, its history, and why and how the Center changed.

4.70 The Consumers, Consumption, and the Production of Space

I wanted not only to understand who the consumers of the Center are, but how they use, understand, explain, and experience the Center. Therefore, my method for understanding the consumers was to conduct interviews (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). I employed a semi-structured interview approach (Hay, 2000) with predefined questions to frame and structure the interviews. However, I wanted the interviews to breathe, allowing the participants to express themselves and their perspectives on the Center. Therefore, while the interviews were semi-structured around preset questions that were asked mostly in order, I allowed the informants to go off topic, and at times asked additional questions that were not predetermined (Hay, 2000).

The consumer interview questions were organized into two sections (Appendix I). The first set of questions were designed to understand a little bit about the consumers' activity space—what they did and where they went over the past week. These questions were provided to the informants a week before the scheduled interview so they could think about the questions and pay attention to their activities over the course of the week leading up to the interview. The intent of these activity space questions was to utilize an informal user diary approach to understand how the Center fits into the lives of these users and to determine other spaces in metropolitan Hartford that the users visit, in addition to the Center. 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 spatial and temporal context within which particular social practices occur” (Latham, in Clifford, et. al., 2010: 189).

The second section of questions were specific to West Hartford Center and the how, when, and why of their (the consumer/informants) use of the Center. These questions also focused on their experiences in the Center and how they described and explained the Center (see Appendix I). A total of 49 users/consumers of the Center were interviewed. While the process of selecting informants relied on willing participants, I tried to capture a diverse cross section of users by age, race, and

gender. Table 1 below provides the demographic profile of the participant users. Unfortunately, the profile is not as diverse as I would have liked in terms of gender and race. However it does provide a fairly wide cross-section of users.

The criteria for participants was that the consumers were frequent users of the Center, once a week or more, or a minimum of 4-6 times per month. The intent of this frequency requirement was to focus on the perspective of those consumers who enjoy and use the Center regularly, rather than those who may visit the Center once in a while. In essence, I wanted to understand the Center through the experiences of the consumers who like the Center. I recognize that this selection process, including the willingness of participants, creates a bias in the interview sample. However, the bias outweighed the risk since the research aim was to understand the kind of space that is the Center and how the Center is viewed and used by the consumers. The frequent consumers of the Center are revealed as possibly the most knowledgeable about the Center.

To find willing participants, I utilized a variety of outreach techniques, including appearing on the local National Public Radio show “Where We Live” to discuss and raise awareness of my research and my need for participants. Stories regarding my research, including requests for participants, were run in the West Hartford News (a weekly community newspaper) and West Hartford Patch (an online newspaper). I also utilized Facebook, reached out to and posted on community interest pages and encouraged friends to post requests for participants to their social networks. I maintained a degree of separation from my informants by insisting that all potential subjects be at least one degree (a friend of a friend) removed from me. In addition, I utilized word-of-mouth outreach through friends and family. It needs to be noted that all of the consumers who have had their accounts used in this thesis have had their names changed to aliases to protect their identity.

Table 1. Demographic Profile - Users Interviewed

Age	Females	% Female	Males	% Males	Total	% Total
18-29	6	18.7%	2	11.8%	8	16.3%
30-44	11	34.4%	4	23.5%	15	30.6%
45-64	12	37.5%	7	41.2%	19	38.8%
65+	3	9.4%	3	17.6%	6	12.2%
Total	32		17		49	
Education	Females	Female %	Males	Males %	Total	Total %
HS Graduate	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	1	2.0%

2 Year Degree	2	6.3%	1	5.9%	3	6.1%
4 Year Degree	9	28.1%	9	52.9%	18	36.7%
Graduate Degree	15	46.9%	1	5.9%	16	32.7%
JD or PhD Degree	6	18.7%	4	23.5%	10	20.4%
No Answer	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	1	2.0%
Total	32		17		49	
Household Income	Females	Female %	Males	Males %	Total	Total %
Up to \$49,999	7	21.9%	1	5.9%	8	16.3%
\$50,000 to \$100,000	11	34.4%	4	23.5%	15	30.6%
\$100,001 to \$199,999	5	15.6%	7	41.2%	12	24.5%
Over \$200,000	6	18.7%	4	23.5%	10	20.4%
No Answer	3	9.4%	1	5.9%	4	8.2%
Total	32		17		49	
Housing	Females	Female %	Males	Males %	Total	Total %
Rent	9	28.1%	4	23.5%	13	26.5%
Own	9	28.1%	6	35.3%	15	30.6%
Own w/Mortgage	14	43.8%	7	41.2%	21	42.9%
Total	32		17		49	
Marital Status	Females	Female %	Males	Males %	Total	Total %
Married	15	46.9%	8	47.1%	23	46.9%
Civil Union	2	6.3%	5	29.4%	7	14.3%
Single	11	34.4%	3	17.6%	14	28.6%
Divorced	2	6.3%	0	0.0%	2	40.8%
Widowed	1	3.1%	0	0.0%	1	2.0%
Co-Habiting	1	3.1%	1	5.9%	2	4.8%
Total	32		17		49	
Race	Females	Female %	Males	Males %	Total	Total %
White	28	87.5%	16	94.1%	44	89.8%
Black	1	3.1%	0	0.0%	1	2.0%
Hispanic	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	1	2.0%
Asian	1	3.1%	0	0.0%	1	2.0%
Mixed	2	6.3%	0	0.0%	2	4.8%
Total	32		17		49	

4.80 Secondary Methods

To support the primary research methods discussed above, a number of secondary methods were employed to round out my research. The most significant method was coding the interviews. In total, 79 interviews were conducted, digitally recorded, and transcribed. The transcripts were imported into ATLAS.ti version 7.1.7 for coding (Friese, 2012). A total of 49 codes (Appendix III) were utilized to understand how the informants understood, explained, and experienced the Center.

The process of coding aided in identifying themes and what was important in understanding the Center and the Center's remaking.

In addition, formal and informal observations, including participant observations (Hay, 2000; Kitchin and Tate, 2000; Knight and Ruddock; 2008) were utilized to help me to better understand the Center and the consumers. For example, formal and informal observations included spending time in the Center, walking around, taking photographs, attending events, and observing who was there and what they were doing. Participant observations included going out to dinner in various restaurants and going out drinking in various late-night bars to gain an understanding of the dining and drinking scene in the Center.

4.90 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the aim and intent of my research and provided a detailed account of my research methodology and methods. It establishes why the case study approach was chosen and how it was employed. In addition, the chapter provides a detailed account of the research questions, how the research questions influenced the organization of the research, and the specific research methods that were employed. While biases do exist with the research methods, they are recognized and confronted throughout the project. More important, the biases are part of the story of West Hartford Center. Later chapters address the challenge of telling stories, especially history, and how we are always confronted with the challenge of the unknown actors and the untold stories. Most important, this chapter now provides a road map to lead us through the following four chapters that explore my empirical research—the case study of West Hartford Center.

Chapter V.

Exploring Urban Change: The Remaking of Space

5.00 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to understand change—what changed in West Hartford Center between 1980 and 2012—and how those specific changes help to inform us about the Center, the Center’s remaking, and the remaking of urban space. To accomplish this, I will present and explore the West Hartford Center Storefront Database which looks at changes in storefront occupancy—the kinds of businesses and tenant-mix in West Hartford Center—from 1980 to 2012. This analysis will allow us to understand what changed in regard to storefront tenants during this time. This analysis will also highlight the process of change as *neither continuous and gradual nor consistently chaotic*, but *episodic* (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 27)

The intent of this analysis is to establish a foundation to further explore and understand the ‘how’ and ‘why’ (Yin, 2009) of change in the following four chapters. To accomplish this, the chapter will be presented in two sections. The first section, Understanding Change, will explore what changed in the Center between 1980 and 2012. In doing so, I will introduce and explore the ecological concept of *episodic change* (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 27) as a means of thinking about how change occurs. The second section, the conclusion, will then set the stage for the following chapters. Knowing what changed in the Center will inform how the following chapter explores the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of change and the Center’s remaking.

5.10 Understanding Change - West Hartford Center 1980 - 2012

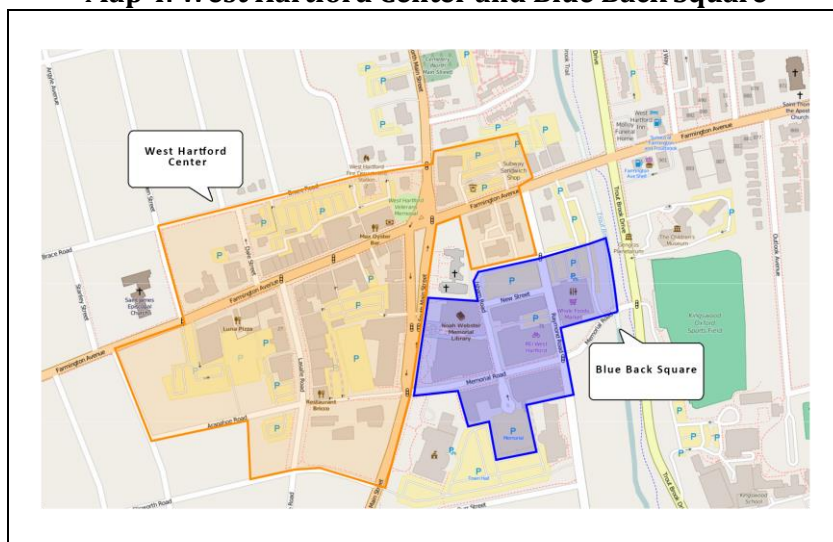
In the 1980s West Hartford Center was a vibrant, yet quiet, suburban town center (Feldman, R. Mahoney Interviews). Today the Center remains vibrant, but has become a regional center of middle class hospitality and sociality. This raises the questions of what changed during this time and how do these changes inform us about the Center and the Center’s remaking as an urban space? The physical structure of the

space has changed very little in the past three decades. The layout of the streets, sidewalks, parking facilities, and most buildings predate 1980. Since 1980 only two locations within the Center have experienced the demolition of buildings and the construction of new buildings.

The fact that the physical structure of this space has remained mostly the same during the same time that the Center has been remade from one kind of space to another is interesting in that it informs us that the Center's remaking has had little to do with physical development, construction, or the physical redevelopment of the Center. Therefore, the remaking of the Center from a suburban town center that was mostly deserted after 6:00PM into a regional center of middle class hospitality and sociality with a bustling nightlife is the result of changes in function, how the Center is used, inhabited, and experienced, not in the physical form or reconstruction of the Center as a space.

To explore and understand what changed in the Center in regard to use and functionality, I created a database of the ground floor storefront tenants to analyze and understand how the tenant mix (Kramer, et al., 2008; Gibbs, 2012), the uses that occupy the Center's storefronts, changed from 1980 to 2012. The intent is to explore how changes in tenant mix can help to inform us about the Center's remaking, providing context to understanding change and the remaking of urban space.

Map 4. West Hartford Center and Blue Back Square



The distinction between the 'historic' Center and Blue Back Square.

To start, in 1980 and 1985 West Hartford Center had 159 storefronts. Between 1985 and 1990, the Finast Supermarket site at 29 South Main Street was demolished

and replaced with an office building that added ground floor storefronts, increasing the total number of storefronts in the Center to 169. The number of storefronts remained at 169 until 2007 when Blue Back Square (Map 4 above) opened and added 39 new storefronts, increasing the total number of storefronts in the Center to 208. The total number of storefronts declined to 205 in 2012 as the result of storefronts being combined to create larger storefront spaces (Appendix IV).

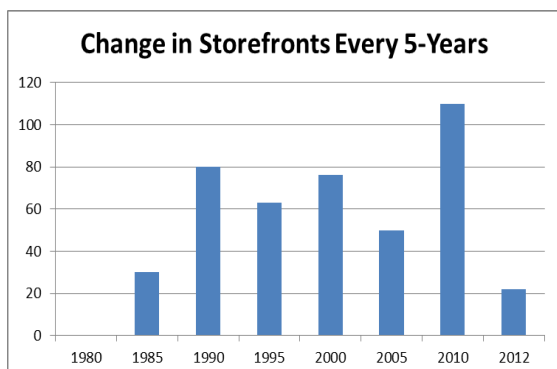
To better understand the storefront data and changes in tenants, Table 2 and Chart 1 below (see Appendix V for maps) show the number of storefronts that turned over during each five year period. For example, between 1980 and 1985, a total of 30 storefronts or 18.9% of the total storefronts experienced turnover in tenants (defined as a change in the name of the business located in the storefront). Between 1985 and 1990 a total of 80 storefronts or 47.3% experienced a change in tenants. The largest change in tenants occurred between 2005 and 2010 when 110 storefronts or 52.8% changed tenants—thirty nine of which were the result of new storefronts associated with the opening of Blue Back Square in 2007.

Table 2. Change in Storefronts (1980 – 2012)

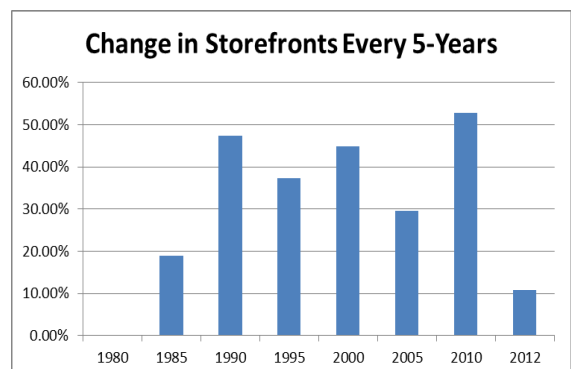
West Hartford Center & Blue Back Square (2010 & 2012) Storefronts								
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2012
Storefronts(SF) #	159	159	169	169	169	169	208	205
Change in SF (#)	---	30	80	63	76	50	110	22
Change in SF (%)	---	18.9%	47.3%	37.3%	44.9%	29.5%	52.8%	10.7%

Chart 1. Storefront Change

Total Number of Storefronts



Percent of Total Storefronts



In regard to the Center’s remaking, the quantitative data does not indicate a specific point in time when the Center changed from a mundane town center into a vibrant regional center. In fact, the data indicate that the Center, to some degree, is in

a constant state of change—that storefronts continually turn over as businesses come and go. The graph on the left in Chart 1 above shows the number of storefront turnovers and the graph on the right shows the same turnover as percent of total storefronts. The percent of total better accounts for change as a result of the increase in the total number of storefronts from the construction of the Town Center Building in 1987 and Blue Back Square in 2007. It would be easy to interpret change, based on these charts, as constant—that storefronts continually turn over. However, thinking carefully about these charts, a more dynamic interpretation is revealed. Although change, or storefront turnover, is to some degree constant, the rate of change or turnover is not constant, but fluctuating.

For example, turnover is low from 1980 to 1985, then higher from 1986 to 1990, then lower from 1991 to 1995 and so on. This begins to reveal that change is *neither continuous and gradual nor consistently chaotic*, but *episodic* (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 27). The bars on the charts create peaks and valleys, indicating that during some periods of time greater turnover occurs more than during other periods of time, creating cycles of high and low turnover. This cycle of turnover becomes more interesting when viewed against known points of economic decline—the 1989 recession, the 2000 dot com bust, and the housing market collapse of 2008 and recession of 2009. The peaks, the periods of high turnover, are occurring during the five years of economic growth—the bubble—leading up to the busts. The five year periods following the market busts are the valleys with lower turnover.

It is important to note at this point that West Hartford’s growth, using population as the measure of growth has been modest at best from 1980 to 2010. For example, West Hartford had 61,310 persons in 1980 and 63,268 persons in 2010. The Hartford MSA grew from 1,053,458 persons in 1980 to 1,212,381 persons in 2010 (Table 3). Therefore, West Hartford is a slow growth community in a slow growth metropolitan region. The 1989 economic recession hit the Hartford region hard with job losses in both manufacturing and financial services, and the housing market did not start to recover until 1995. Therefore, the local economy or market of the Center, in regard to the cycles of peaks and valleys discussed above, is tracking with the national and regional economy. In other words, the macro-scale of economics is influencing the micro-scale of economics in West Hartford Center.

Table 3. Population Change

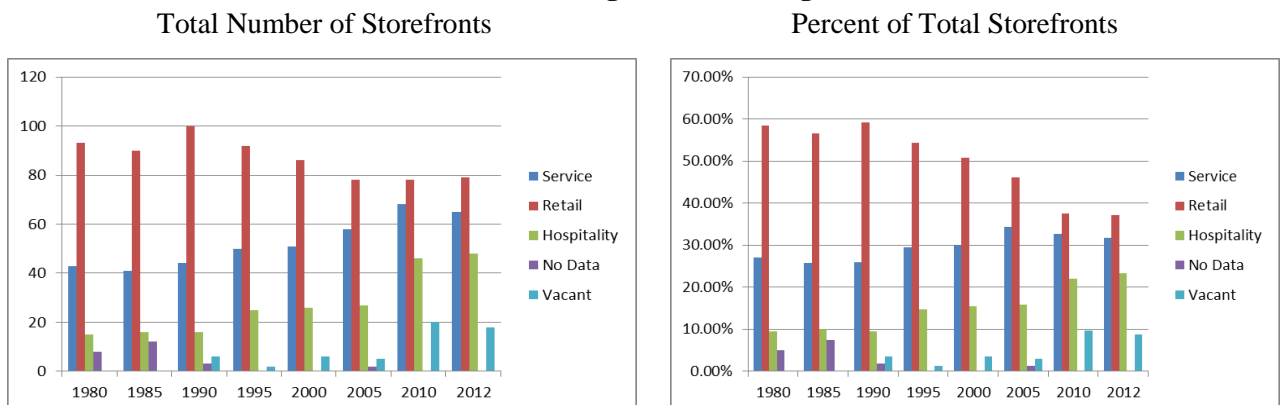
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
West Hartford	68,031	61,310	60,421	63,589	63,268
Hartford MSA	1,021,033	1,053,458	1,157,617	1,183,110	1,212,381
Connecticut	3,038,782	3,113,174	3,291,967	3,411,777	3,579,210

Source: U.S. Census and State DECD

While the *episodic* turnover in storefront tenants is interesting and may inform us about change and the influence of macro-scale economic forces, it does not inform us about the changes in the tenants (species or regimes) that inhabit the Center’s storefronts. To understand what changed in regard to tenants, Chart 2 provides the total number of storefronts and percent of total storefronts engaged in service, retail, and hospitality by each five year period.

The data reveals that the number of storefronts engaged in service, retail, and hospitality were very similar in 1980, 1985, and 1990 with little change in the total number of establishments in each category. However, starting in 1995, a shift in the tenant-mix begins to occur (see Appendix V for maps). The number of storefronts engaged in service increase while the number of storefronts engaged in retail starts to decrease. For example, in 1985 there are 41 storefronts engaged in service activities and 90 storefronts engaged in retail. By 2005, the last data point before the opening of Blue Back Square in 2007, there are 58 storefronts engaged in service and 78 storefronts engaged in retail.

Chart 2. Shifting Storefront Regimes



By 2010 with the addition of Blue Back Square, the total number of storefronts engaged in service increased to 68 and the retail storefronts remained at 78. While the service regime was increasing and the retail regime was decreasing, the hospitality regime was also increasing. In 1985 the hospitality regime accounted for a

total of 16 storefronts and increased to 25 storefronts by 1995. Hospitality remained mostly constant, increasing only to 27 storefronts in 2005. However, by 2010, accounting for the opening of Blue Back Square in 2007, the hospitality regime increased to 46 storefronts and then to 48 storefronts in 2012. From 1980 to 2012 hospitality increased more than threefold from 15 to 48 storefronts.

In terms of percent, from 1980 to 2012 service storefronts increased from 27% to 31.7% of the total storefronts. Retail during the same period decreased from 58.5% to 37.5% of the total storefronts while hospitality increased from 9.4% to 22.1% of the total storefronts. Even though the physical space of the Center remain mostly constant during this 33 year period, the data reveals that the tenant-mix of the Center was changing and the Center was being occupied or inhabited in new ways.

This finding—declining retail and increased service and hospitality—is interesting in comparison to other studies of small cities and downtown (or town center) redevelopment. For example, Walzer and Kline in their study of downtown economic revitalization approaches found that “planners and labour market analysts are...apprehensive about the labour force transformation” (Walzer and Kline, in Burayidi, 2001: 263), including service jobs, and explain that this “finding suggests that cities in this sample do not see growth in the service sector as a strong economic development goal ... service sector growth is not a priority” (Walzer and Kline in Burayidi, 2001: 263). MacKinnon and Nelson explain, “local development officials may prefer to keep downtown as a retail sector ... they may be reluctant to actively pursue service businesses when they are small and do not represent high-paying employment” (MacKinnon and Nelson in Garrett-Petts, 2005: 42). They further explain, “the growth of the service sector may result in a less affluent community, and in turn, create long-term affordability, taxation and servicing issues for the city” (MacKinnon and Nelson in Garrett-Petts, 2005: 42).

The increase in service oriented business in West Hartford Center may suggest differences in the functioning and performance of centers in metropolitan versus non-metropolitan areas and in prosperous communities, such as West Hartford, versus communities that have suffered greater socio-economic decline (MacKinnon and Nelson in Garrett-Petts, 2005; Walzer and Kline in Burayidi, 2001). In regard to the metropolitan space of West Hartford Center and non-metropolitan space of regional

centers and cores, a West Hartford Center is afforded the luxury of providing a service oriented space (and jobs) that service the regions consumers who prosper from other and higher-order economic sectors. Whereas, a less affluent non-metropolitan center or core downtown may be seeking to provide or build upon the primary economic sector to replace economic activity and jobs lost in other economic sectors. In short, West Hartford and metropolitan Hartford are not reliant on hospitality service-oriented jobs for wealth creation. Wealth creation is provided by other economic sectors such as defense industry manufacturing and financial (insurance) services.

While the data for storefront turnover revealed *episodic* change in storefront tenants with cycling peaks and valleys coinciding with macro-scale periods of economic growth and decline, the data for change in storefront uses (tenant-mix by service, retail, and hospitality) revealed a shifting away from retail toward service and hospitality. In ecological terms, the urban-ecosystem of the Center was changing and experiencing shifting regimes (Gunderson and Holling, 2002). The retail-species was in decline and the service-species and hospitality-species were increasing or becoming more abundant. “Ecological systems exist in a highly variable physical environment so that the equilibrium point itself is continually shifting and changing over time. At any one moment, each dimension of the system is attempting to track the equilibrium point but rarely, if ever, is it achieved. Therefore, each species is drifting and shifting both in its quantity and quality” (Holling and Goldberg, 1971: 225). The Center’s urban-ecological habitat was drifting and shifting in quantity of specific species or regimes (service, retail, and hospitality) and as we will learn below, also quality.

Thinking carefully about the Center as an urban-ecosystem—a complex adaptive system—reveals that change, the turnover in storefronts, is mostly emergent and self-organizing (Jacobs, 1961; Johnson, 2001; Latham, 2003). Businesses come and go (open and close) for many reasons (Goman, Interview). Some of the openings and closings may relate to large economic forces that influence localized change (Zukin, 1989, 1991) and others may be related to the personal circumstances or decisions of the businesses owners (Lerner; Lorenz, Interviews). However, at the micro-scale of this specific urban space there is no coordination between business owners as to when a given business opens and closes. That said, there are attempts by real estate property managers to manage tenant-mix (R. Mahoney; M. Mahoney,

Interviews). The art and science of managing tenant mix (Kramer, et al., 2008), in the context of an urban-ecosystem, can be conceptualized as a form of urban governance or ecosystem management (Holling, 1973; Walker and Salt, 2006). However, while property managers may work hard at finding the ‘right’ tenants to create the ‘right mix’ (Kramer, et al., 2008), they have little control over the success and failure of individual tenants, despite their best efforts to retain and attract certain tenants (R. Mahoney; M. Mahoney, Interviews).

Episodic change and shifting regimes point to the emergent qualities of an urban-ecosystem. While external macro-scale forces (see Paradis, 2002) of economic growth and decline may result in *episodic* periods of change, localized or internal agency (Paradis, 2000, 2002), slow changing variables (Walker and Salt, 2006; Carpenter, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002), and uncertainty at the micro-scale may result in shifting regimes (Gunderson and Holling, 2002). While the physical space of the Center remained mostly constant and the kind of uses in the Center—retail, service, and hospitality—also remained constant, the tenant-mix of retail, service, and hospitality drifted, shifted, and changed. What changed in the Center was the distribution or intensity of retail, service, and hospitality. This subtle or nuanced aspect of change is important to understand because the Center was not transformed from one kind of space (commercial) to another kind of space (residential or industrial). The space of the Center remained mostly constant as to its form and its function. It is the distribution or intensity of functions or uses that changed in the Center.

The most dramatic or meaningful change in the use of the Center has been hospitality—increasing from 15 to 48 storefronts or from 9.4% to 22.1% of the total storefronts. Therefore, I further explore the hospitality regime to see what changed in regard to the hospitality regime. Chart 3 below shows the total number of hospitality establishments, not the total number of hospitality storefronts, occupied by hospitality uses—since some hospitality establishments now occupy more than one storefront through expansion and the consolidation of storefronts (see Appendix V for maps). As a result, the total number of hospitality establishments (businesses) is less than the number of storefronts they occupy.

Chart 3. Changes in the Hospitality Regime

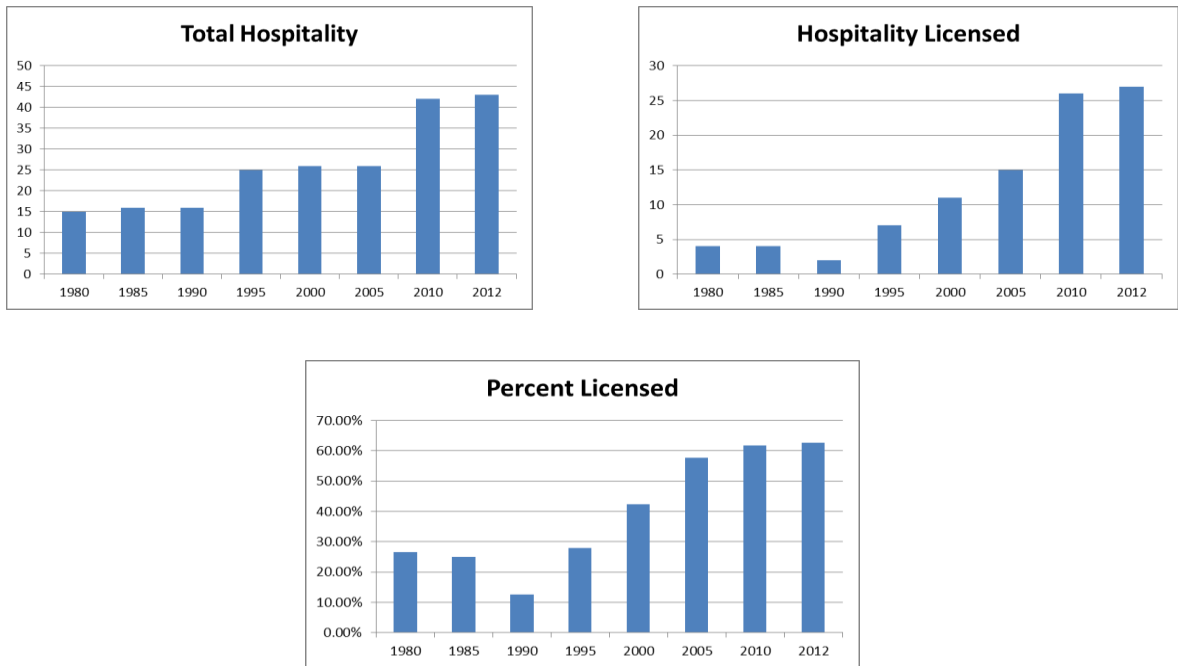


Chart 3 also shows the total number of hospitality establishments licensed to sell alcohol and the percent of total hospitality establishments licensed to sell alcohol. When examining hospitality more closely, specifically licensed hospitality, the data reveals not only that the total number of hospitality spaces increased, but that hospitality establishments serving alcohol also increased between 1980 and 2012.

The 'Total Hospitality' chart demonstrates, once again, *episodic* change with the three steps or plateaus in the data. The total number of hospitality establishments is similar in the 1980s and then increases substantially between 1990 and 1995. Once the increase occurs, the total number of hospitality establishments remains similar or stable from 1995 through 2005. Then the total number of hospitality establishments increases in 2010. Even though 2012 does not mark a full five year interval, the total number is similar to that of 2010, potentially indicating another plateau and period of stability.

In 1980 there were 15 hospitality establishments in the Center, and four, or 26.6% of the total hospitality establishments, were licensed to serve alcohol. By 2005, two years before Blue Back Square opened, there were 26 hospitality establishments, with 15 or 57.7% licensed to serve alcohol. By 2012 the total number of hospitality establishments increased to 43, 27 of which or 62.8% were licensed to serve alcohol.

Storefront turnover, increases in hospitality establishments, and increases in licensed hospitality all demonstrate the characteristics of *episodic* change.

Looking more closely at the hospitality regime, not only was hospitality becoming more abundant in the Center with establishments serving alcohol becoming more abundant within the hospitality regime, but the kind of hospitality being offered in the Center and within the hospitality regime also changed. For example, in 1980 the Center's hospitality businesses included Lorain's Pastry Shop, Krohner's Bakery, Good Time Ice Cream, Bess Eaton Donuts, Steak and Eggs, and the Farm Shop along with only a few licensed restaurants such as Edelweiss, Maple Hill, and South Seas that were full-service dining establishments including alcohol. In 1980, hospitality in the Center was mostly unsophisticated and oriented toward serving the daytime workforce and shopper.

Skipping ahead ten years to 1990 we see that hospitality in the Center was beginning to change. For example, three new hospitality establishments opened in the Center in 1990: Green Mountain Coffee, Malibue Majic Frozen Yogurt, and Top Nosh Deli. In 1991, five restaurants opened: Butterfield's, Lemongrass Thai, Harry's Pizza, Osaka Sushi, and the chain restaurant Pizza Hut. This is the first wave of more formal, full-service dining in the Center. The following year, three more hospitality establishments opened: Peter B's Coffee, Manhattan Bagel, and Bruegger's Bagel. In 1993, Alforno's Brick Oven Pizza and a small eatery called Nature's opened. In these first four years of the 1990s, the Center experienced 13 hospitality openings, five more than the eight hospitality openings in the prior ten years between 1980 and 1989.

In 1995 Flora Roberts Chocolates, Michael's Coffee, Subway Sandwiches, and Starbucks Coffee opened. In 1996 the Center Grill, Marharaja Indian, Luna Pizza, Sasha Vee's Deli, and Restaurant Bricco opened. The following year, 1997, the Elbow Room, Arugula Bistro, Serving Spoon, Back Porch Bistro, and Truffles entered the Center. Mad About Soup opened in 1998 and the decade was capped off in 1999 with Puerto Vallarta, Xando's Coffee Bar, and the arrival of Max Oyster Bar.

The hospitality activity during the 1990s is interesting because it highlights not only change and increase in hospitality, but also experimentation and a sorting of hospitality uses—those that became established and those that did not. The

experimentation is noticeable with the many different kinds, forms, and sizes of hospitality establishments—coffee shops, delis, soup, frozen yogurt, take-away, dine-in, casual, and full-service fine dining. The Center’s hospitality regime was evolving. In addition, this evolution and experimentation also highlights both early in hospitality pioneers and hospitality uses that were taking hold. For example, coffee shops can be seen as early in pioneers, but also as a hospitality use that took hold and still exists today even though some of the coffee shop businesses have turned over and changed. In addition, while more formal, full-service, and fine dining started in 1991, it continued to grow throughout the 1990s (Table 4), indicating a more formal hospitality sector that was not simply supporting the daytime workforce and shoppers, but also catering to evening diners. This shift toward evening and nighttime hospitality trade indicates a temporal shift in the Center’s functionality and extended hours of activity—the remaking of space not simply as spatial, but also temporal.

The more formal and improved quality in hospitality establishments between 1990 and 1999 is not only evident in the emergence of formal and fine dining, it is also evident in the arrival of artisan pizza (Luna’s and Harry’s) and whole bean espresso coffee (Peter B’s, Starbucks, and Xando’s). Hospitality in the Center was becoming more sophisticated.

Table 4. Fine Dining Establishments by Year

1991	Butterfield’s - Lemongrass Thai - Osaka Sushi
1993	Alforno’s Brick Oven Pizza
1996	Marharaja Indian - Restaurant Bricco
1997	Elbow Room - Arugula Bistro - Back Porch Bistro
1999	Puerto Vallarta - Max Oyster Bar

The hospitality uses in the Center continued to evolve in the 2000s. In 2001, Grants Restaurant opened. Azul and Murasaki Sushi opened in 2002, and Barcelona opened in 2004. By 2005, formal fine dining had become well established and an abundant hospitality use in the Center. In fact, fine dining has become the popular image of West Hartford Center. The Center has become Brooks’ (2004) Bistrotville. This is an image of the Center that still lingers today in the collective consciousness of the metropolitan region. However, the evolution of the Center’s hospitality continued with the opening of Blue Back Square in 2007.

Blue Back Square (which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter VII, section 7.40) was intentionally designed with the large format storefront space and

national brands in mind. Therefore, 2007 marked the arrival of national chains and franchises in the Center—both in the older Center west of Main Street and in Blue Back Square itself, on the east side of Main Street. In 2007 Ben & Jerry’s opened on the west-side of Main Street at the same time It’s a Grind Coffee, Fleming’s Steak House, Counter Burger, Cheesecake Factory, Chow, and Au Bon Pain opened in Blue Back Square. In 2008, Moe’s Southwest Grill, a fast-casual restaurant, opened in Blue Back Square and Robeks Juice opened on Farmington Avenue. Chipotle opened on Farmington Avenue in 2010, followed by BGR Burger in 2011, also on Farmington Avenue, and Pinkberry in Blue Back Square.

Formal fine dining and independent hospitality establishments also continued to grow during this period. In 2007 Shish Kebab House of Afghanistan and Inchiro Sushi opened. In 2008 Besito’s and Rizzuto’s opened in Blue Back Square. Max Burger opened on LaSalle Road, and Uncorked and Cuvee opened in Blue Back in 2009. Treva opened on Farmington Avenue in 2010 and Bar Taco, also opened on Farmington Avenue in 2012. With other hospitality establishments opening during this time, by 2012 the Center had 43 hospitality establishments, 16 (37%) of which were formal fine dining establishments.

The changes in the kind and style of hospitality establishments in the Center over this 33 year period don’t simply highlight change in the Center. Just as the cyclical peaks and valleys of episodic change discussed above mirrored macro-scale economic trends, the changes in hospitality establishments mirror macro-changes in hospitality and consumption (Bell and Valentine, 1997; Counihan and Van Estrick, 1997). For example, Ley explains, “the study of the local cannot avoid a dialogue with the global” (Ley, 1996: 12). For Ley, the local—the spatial location of his research—was the central city and gentrification and through this lens he highlighted the implication of the new middle class on urban gentrification and their alternative urbanism to suburbanization (Ley, 1996). However, if we agree with Ley’s theory of a new middle class (see also Florida, 2002), then changes in hospitality in West Hartford Center may indicate that this new middle class is creating an alternative urbanism to the urban in the suburban—or an alternative suburbanism in the suburban—a post-suburbanism (Keil, 2013). This is evidenced by Brooks’ (2004) claim of the older suburban community having become *bistroville*. Therefore, local—micro-scale—changes in the Center’s hospitality reflect change in middle class

hospitality and consumption (Latham, 2003; Bell, 2007), or as Ley explains, “any reading in current urban landscapes cannot escape the nexus of the culture of consumption” (Ley, 1996: 13). In other words, macro-scale societal and cultural changes are interacting with the micro-scale episodic changes in the Center.

The interaction between macro- and micro-scale societal and cultural changes is important in the context of the new forms of public culture (Latham, 2003; Calhoun, et al., 2013) reorganized around existing settlement patterns (Wood, 1997) that give rise to new locations of centrality and the creation or emergence of new hybrid space. When the city, urban, and suburban space—metropolitan space—is viewed as a “spatial mosaic of social, economic, and ecological variables that are connected by a variety of physical and social dispersal processes” (Holling and Orians, 1971: 3), then changes in lifestyle and spatial organization of social processes result in the remaking of urban space. That is, “any qualitative or quantitative change of a function at one point in space inevitably affects other functions at other points of space” (Holling and Orians, 1971: 3). Specifically, changes in lifestyle—the social-spatial organization of home, work, and recreation are remaking urban space and remaking the space of West Hartford Center.

The change in the Center’s tenant-mix and in the mix of hospitality at the micro-scale of storefronts and storefront-by-storefront turnover is similar to what Harris explains as the process of urbanization and suburbanization (Harris in Keil, 2013: 33):

Suburban land does not just lie between the country and city, but in the long view each parcel and tract itself undergoes that transition, begging us to view it historically. Not *the* market, because land markets vary greatly in character, never corresponding to an ideal. But a market, nonetheless, with private land tenure, negotiated prices, and government regulation. In these terms, suburban land is converted from rural to urban, allocated to users, and in time redeveloped. The operations are rarely visible...but it is restless markets that make and remake the suburbs.

In the *long view* of the Center, each storefront (similar to parcel tract) *itself undergoes transition in the restless market or markets that makes and remakes the Center.*

“Many suburbs, of course, were not produced all-at-once, and that is still true.

Individual land parcels [or storefronts] are developed [and occupied] piecemeal over a period of years, perhaps decades” (Harris in Keil, 2013: 37). This is similar to the highly variable physical environments of ecological systems that are continually

shifting and changing over time, as claimed and explained by Holling and Goldberg (1971).

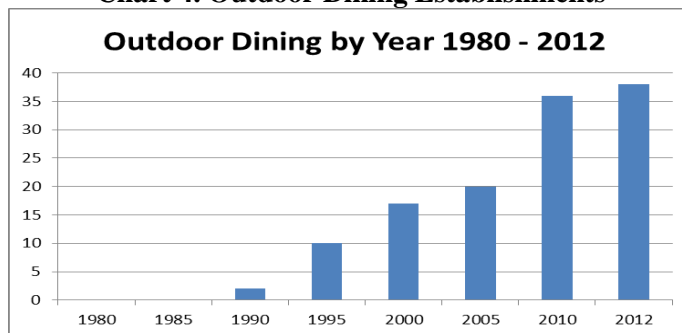
In addition to these changes in hospitality uses in the Center, there is one more meaningful hospitality change that needs to be discussed. That is the emergence of outdoor dining in West Hartford Center. Table 5 and Chart 4 below, provide the number of hospitality establishments offering outdoor dining (tables and chairs outside where patrons can consume food and drink) in West Hartford Center. In the 1980s there was no outdoor dining in the Center. However, in 1990 two hospitality establishments innovated and introduced outdoor dining to the Center by placing tables and chairs on the sidewalk in front of storefronts. Five years later, in 1995, there were 10 hospitality establishments offering outdoor dining. The number increased to 17 in 2000, and by 2012 there were 38 hospitality establishments offering outdoor dining (see Appendix V for maps). Collectively, the 38 hospitality establishments provide more than 700 seats outdoors between April and October.

Outdoor dining, as novelty or innovation, is interesting for two reasons. First, the introduction of outdoor dining was emergent. Second, the emergence of outdoor dining was also *episodic*. The introduction of outdoor dining was emergent because it was illegally introduced by café owners who violated local ordinances that did not allow outdoor dining in the Center. Therefore, it did not initially emerge as the result of a plan, regulation, or some other top-down form of governance. Its introduction was bottom-up.

Table 5. Change in Outdoor Dining (1980 – 2012)

West Hartford Center & Blue Back Square (2010 & 2012) Storefronts								
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2012
Outdoor Dining	0	0	2	10	17	20	36	38

Chart 4. Outdoor Dining Establishments



Once again, as with increases in hospitality, the increases in licensed hospitality, and the kinds of hospitality entering and persisting in the Center, the emergence and increase of outdoor dining in the Center was also *episodic*. Outdoor dining started off slowly, illegally introduced in 1990. From 1990 to 1995 we see the first episode or *episodic* period of outdoor dining—the emergence of informal outdoor dining. Once legalized and formalized (which will be discussed in Chapter VII, section 7.30), a second *episodic* period in outdoor dining is realized in the 2000 and 2005 data, with the spread of outdoor dining in the Center. The third *episodic* period of outdoor dining occurred after 2005, essentially starting in 2007 with the Blue Back Square development and outdoor dining being designed into the spaces of most of the new hospitality establishments.

5.20 Conclusion

The Center has experienced meaningful changes over the past 33 years, especially in the 23 years between 1990 and 2012. However, most of what has changed in the Center is related to how the Center is inhabited and used, not the physical space of the Center. In addition, this change occurred in episodes that result from slow moving variables, build-up in ecosystem services, and release through the process of creative destruction—panarchy and the adaptive cycle. This highlights not only the importance of paying attention to slow moving variables of change (Walker and Salt, 2006), but also the need to understand the dynamics of these slow moving variables—the how and why.

In addition, the *episodic* nature of the Center's change, along with the mostly constant physical space, allows use to conceptualize the Center as an urban-ecological system. It is a specific, or even unique, physical space—a platform (Johnson, 2010) or preexisting environment—that provides a foundation, structure, or habitat for certain kinds of activities and species. As we change—economics, society, culture, and lifestyle—physical space, the platform of the Center, is inhabited and used in new ways. The result is change, the remaking of urban space, regardless of whether or not the physical space (platform) is changed or remade. In this regard, the platform can be reimagined as a stage, a place of performance.

Conceptualizing the space of the Center as platform (and stage), knowing that the physical space (platform and stage) of the Center has remained mostly constant, allows us to think about how the activities on and within the Center's stage have changed. Ley's (1996) new middle-class is another way of saying our lifestyles have changed and are creating new forms of public culture (Latham, 2003; Calhoun, et al., 2013) that are remaking urban space. This unfolds the need and opportunity to explore and understand how the actors—businesses and business owners, property owners and property managers, government and government officials, consumption and consumers—of the Center engage, inhabit, experience, and perform in the space of the Center.

Therefore, I further explore the Center's remaking by understanding what the actors—the restaurateurs, government officials, and consumers—of the Center were and are doing throughout this period and process of remaking. I seek to understand how each of these groups of actors has engaged, inhabited, performed, and experienced the Center during the period of change and how their actions influenced the Center's remaking. Specifically, how do the actors and actions inform us about the how and why of the slow variables of change, the accumulation of ecosystem services, and then release through the process of creative destruction.

To accomplish this, the following three chapters will focus on each group of actors. Chapter VI will further explore changes in hospitality and what the restaurateurs were doing during this period of the Center's remaking. Chapter VII will explore urban governance, what government was doing, and how the local-state intervened in the Center's remaking. Chapter VIII will explore the consumers of West Hartford Center and how the consumers understand, use, and experience the Center. The concluding chapter, Chapter IX, will then attempt to pull together the findings into a cohesive understanding of the Center's remaking and the kind of space that is West Hartford Center.

Chapter VI.

The Entrepreneurs and Restaurateurs: Micro-Processes, Emergence, and Innovation

6.00 Introduction

This chapter will explore the qualitative changes in hospitality through the narratives of the actors, the restaurateurs. In doing so, this will help us to explore and further understand who were (and are) the change makers, their roles, and the how and why of the Center's remaking. By utilizing the quantitative understandings from the previous chapter and the qualitative narratives of the restaurateurs and others, I continue to explore change and the Center's remaking—specifically, the slow moving variables and episodic nature of change. To accomplish this, I will conceptualize the Center's remaking—the slow moving variables and episodic nature of change—through the lens of gentrification and suburbanization. The aim will be to show how metaphorical and theoretical framework of ecological resilience can help us think through, conceptualize, and understand urban change and the remaking of space.

This chapter will be presented in five sections. The first section will explore the changes in the Center's hospitality regime during the 1990s. Section two will then introduce restaurateurs from the first period, 1990 to 1999, looking at who these restaurateurs were, their backgrounds, and why they chose the Center as the location for their businesses. The third section will explore further changes in hospitality from 2000 to 2012 and how hospitality and the restaurateurs evolved and matured as the Center became a more formal space and real estate market. The fourth section will then explore and conceptualize the Center's remaking through the lens of gentrification and suburbanization. The final section will be a short conclusion and transition to the following chapter.

6.10 Hospitality and the Remaking of Space

It was October 1998 when “Richard Rosenthal, founder of the Max Restaurant Group, confirmed plans to open a fourth restaurant, this time in West Hartford Center” (Hartford Courant, October 24, 1998: p. D-1). “We're elated,” said Bob

LaPerla, president of the West Hartford Center Business Association. ‘Richie has a magic touch, and he's coming in with a concept the center and the area needs tremendously. The fact that he's coming to the center is going to bode tremendously well in bringing in more people into the area’” (Hartford Courant, October 24, 1998: p. D-1). The period between Rosenthal’s announcement in 1998 and the opening of Max Oyster Bar 1999 I believe is the point in time when West Hartford Center transitioned from being a mundane suburban town center to a regional center of middle class hospitality and sociality (Hartford Courant, October 22, 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.

This article highlights that the Center was changing and had been experiencing a remaking, that new excitement and energy around the Center’s hospitality regime was occurring. It also highlights that a *growth machine* (Molotch, 1976; see Paradis, 2000, 2002) had emerged in the Center and that media was a willful participant in the Center’s growth machine (Hartford Courant, October 22, 1999: D-1):

From morning to night, the center percolates with its own comfortable rhythm of life. From the a.m. bagel brigades to afternoon shopping to evening restaurant hopping to late-night coffee swilling, the center segues easily and confidently. At night, when Hartford has all but rolled up its doormat, West Hartford Center is rife with dining, drinking and socializing possibilities: sushi or pizza, cosmopolitans or cappuccinos, solo action or full frottage. With new hotspots like Xando and Max's Oyster Bar, opening next week, WHC is suddenly ground zero for those who crave conversation, warm bodies, eye candy and merlot.

Benny Delbon, then co-owner of the Elbow Room remarked, “‘Over the last year, the center has come alive’ ... ‘It's like West Hartford Center has finally become a ‘true’ center’” (Hartford Courant, October 22, 1999: D-1). Only ten years prior, in 1989 there were no more than 16 hospitality establishments, only two of which served

alcohol, in the Center. There were no bagel shops, no sushi restaurants, no cappuccinos, and no cosmopolitans, as noted above. So what happened? How did this once mundane suburban town center now have a reporter claiming it as “the center of the universe” (Hartford Courant, October 22, 1999: D-1)?

The Max Restaurant Group website explains, “In the early 1980’s...Rosenthal had a vision to create a new kind of dining experience in his native city of Hartford. After working assorted jobs and moving up the ranks of noted restaurants in New York City and Newport, RI, he finally realized his dream in 1986, when Max on Main, an innovative bistro-style restaurant...” (www.maxrestaurantgroup.com)” opened in Downtown Hartford. Today, the Max Restaurant Group has nine restaurants in three states and a catering business. Max is recognized by many as the premier restaurant brand in metropolitan Hartford. I interviewed the owner, Richard Rosenthal to explore and understand his experience opening Max Oyster Bar, and later Max Burger, in West Hartford Center.

In 1998, it is explained in the newspaper, Rosenthal ““long wanted to open a restaurant in the town where he was born and raised’ ... ‘But I never had the right location, or it was the wrong time’ ... ‘This is the right location, and the timing is great because the center is going through a great renaissance”” (Hartford Courant, October 22, 1998: D-1). Rosenthal explained in the interview, “I was very close to signing a lease” [in the Center] in 1985 when he was seeking a location for his first restaurant. “At the time there was not a restaurant in town [Center] that people drink at. The only...restaurant really, was probably the Edelweiss ... But there was no scene at all, the [restaurant] scene was [in] Downtown Hartford, and I concluded that people won't sit at a bar [in] West Hartford [Center] ... I walked away” (Interview). Rosenthal passed on the Center, followed the restaurant scene and opened Max on Main (now Max Downtown) in Downtown Hartford.

When asked about the location for Max Oyster Bar (Figure 8) in 1999, Rosenthal explained the Center caught his attention with Alforno’s Restaurant—a short lived and failed experiment that opened in 1993 and closed a little more than a year later. Alforno’s owner explained their departure. ““We served some inconsistent food the first few months ... we never recovered”” (Hartford Courant, April 15, 1995: B-2). In 1996, Billy Grant, then a chef in one of Rosenthal’s restaurants, with the

financial backing of his brothers who owned the Manhattan Bagels franchise in the Center and a nightclub and a bar in Downtown Hartford, opened Restaurant Bricco in the vacated Alforno's space. "Bricco...made us feel like the Center had possibilities" (Interview) explained Rosenthal.

Figure 8. Max Oyster Bar



Photo: Donald Poland (2012).

Restaurant Bricco was one of the first successful hospitality establishments that drew attention to the Center as a place for *trendy fine dining*. However, by 1996 when Bricco opened, the Center was already changing. Between 1990 and 1995, the Center experienced 17 hospitality openings, and five more, including Restaurant Bricco, opened in 1996—even though many would close, just as Alforno's had closed. The informal dining and small deli and diner style restaurants of the 1980s gave way to bagel and coffee shops in the early 1990s. The traditional German meat and potatoes of Edelweisse, a restaurant for a past generation, gave way to the nouvelle-cuisine and stylish flair of Restaurant Bricco. The storefronts of the Center were going through storefront-by-storefront transition, the "restless markets that make and remake the suburbs" (Harris in Keil, 2013: 33), while the Center's hospitality regime was going through a process of upgrading and maturation—slow moving variables of change—that in some ways resemble Clay's gentrification stage-model that begins with early pioneers and becomes more formalized over time (Clay, 1979 in Lees, et al., 2010).

The Center during the 1990s, in regard to the adaptive cycles (Holling, 1973; Gunderson and Holling, 2002), was experiencing the front half of the adaptive cycle—phase one *exploitation* and moving towards phase two *conservation*. Resiliency was high, stability was low, and pioneers saw unlimited opportunities (Gunderson and Holling, 2002). This was a “period of contest competition among entrepreneurial pioneers ... The ones fastest off the mark and most aggressive are the ones likely to persist” (Holling and Gunderson, in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 43). However, many of the early pioneers also failed. Of the 31 hospitality establishment openings from 1990 through 1999, only 20 persisted and remained open in 2000. By 2005, only 13 remained, and only eight of these 31 hospitality openings remained in 2012.

Even though the gentrification literature at times is critical of urban ecology (Zukin, 1991) there are similarities between phase one of the adaptive cycle—*exploitation*—and Clay’s stage one gentrification. “In stage one of gentrification a small group of risk-oblivious people move in...” (Clay, 1979 in Lees, et al., 2010: 38). This similarity between stage model gentrification and theories of ecological resilience (Gunderson, et al., 2010) allows us to think through gentrification as an ecological process. That is not to simply claim gentrification as solely a natural occurring phenomena or process, but to recognize the similarities between the stage model theories of gentrification and the adaptive cycle of ecological resilience. In the 1990s the Center was being invaded by pioneers, early-in risk takers who were experimenting with new ideas and concepts, and some would persist, while others would not.

6.20 Entrepreneurial Emergence – Hospitality 1990 – 1999

Who were these risk-takers, the early-in restaurateurs who entered the Center in the 1990s? What were they doing and why did they choose the Center as the location for their hospitality businesses? Unable to interview all of the actors—the early pioneers—the restaurateurs who entered the Center in the 1990s, I was able to interview five, four of whom opened in the 1990s and are still in business today. They include Billy Grant of Restaurant Bricco and Grants Restaurant and Bar; Benny Delbon of The Elbow Room and Sidebar, Christiane Gehami of Arugula; and Richard

Rosenthal of Max Oyster Bar and Max Burger. The fifth is Peter Brainard of Peter B's coffee shop, which he sold in 1997 to his brother and which closed in 2002.

Brainard, today is forty-something, but in 1987 Brainard was a senior at Trinity College in Hartford. He came from a family with a long history in retail. His grandfather owned a clothing shop in Downtown Hartford from 1946 to 1980 (Interview). Unsure of what to do after graduation, Brainard received advice from his uncle, the owner of a bookstore, who lived in Seattle. His uncle informed him of “the growing espresso coffee business” (Interview) in Seattle. Brainard recalled his uncle “said look, these coffee shops...a whole bunch of different little cafés...could be a business you could do” (Interview). Knowing nothing about coffee and the coffee shop business, Brainard visited his uncle in December of 1987 to learn more about this emerging business. With the help of his uncle and introductions to “some people who were in the outdoor mobile espresso cart business” (Interview), Brainard returned to Hartford and opened Peter B's coffee cart in July 1988 in Downtown Hartford.

After four years of working his coffee cart in Downtown, catering jobs, and setting up the cart in the lobbies of Downtown theaters, Brainard was ready to find a storefront location. Having explored locations in Downtown Hartford office buildings and WestFarms Mall, a large indoor mall a few miles southwest of West Hartford Center, Brainard settled on a storefront in West Hartford Center. In October 1992, Peter B's opened in the Center. Brainard explains his decision to locate in West Hartford Center (Interview):

At the time, in terms of coffee, there was not a lot ... Maybe you could get a coffee up at Central Deli... But none of those bagel shops were there yet. There was certainly no Starbucks and no other little cafés around ...

I spent a lot of time finding that exact spot in West Hartford Center. I figured, just like the old saying goes, location, location, location. I mean, that is the center of the Center ... One of the things I liked about it was if you're at the stoplight coming up LaSalle Road, you're looking right into the window and if you're at the stoplight going west on Farmington Avenue, you're looking right there. I was hoping I could get tables and chairs out front.

Brainard did not start his search seeking out a location in West Hartford Center. However, once he considered the Center and what would become his specific storefront location, he recognized that the Center provided a good location or habitat for his business. There was a void in the coffee trade—especially whole bean espresso. Most important, there was a density of daytime businesses, office workers,

and professionals—potential customers, and the intersection of Farmington Avenue and LaSalle Road provided good visibility.

Brainard was an innovator and pioneer in the Center. In 1988, the year he started his coffee cart business, Starbucks had only 33 stores (Starbucks, 2011). In 1992, the year Peter B's opened in the Center, Starbucks had only 165 stores (Starbucks, 2011), and Starbucks would not arrive in metropolitan Hartford and the Center until 1995 (Hartford Courant: Mar 2, 1995. pg. F.1). Bernard entered the Center early in the *exploitation* phase of the adaptive cycle (Gunderson and Holling, 2002). Peter B's coffee shop was part of the experimentation and intense competition in the early 1990s when the hospitality regime started to expand. Peter B's survived and persisted for 10 years. Today, Café Sophia occupies Peter B's storefront, the third coffee shop since Brainard's brother closed Peter B's in 2002.

Billy Grant, the owner of both Restaurant Bricco and Grants Restaurant and Bar, grew up in a family who had made their living in the hospitality business. He explained, his “father had a family restaurant, so my brothers and I worked alongside my father in the fast food industry growing up [and] all through college” (Interview). Grant's brothers, Mike and Tony, opened a Manhattan Bagel franchise in the Center in 1993 (Hartford Courant: Oct 3, 1995). Billy Grant's introduction, as a chef, to fine dining was at The Eatery, owned by his uncle, in East Windsor, 12 miles north of Hartford. Grant explained his career as a chef and how he and his brothers came to open Restaurant Bricco (Interview):

I had left my uncle ... So I went and worked for the Max [Restaurant] Group. I was at the original Max on Main in Hartford and then Max Amore opened up, and I was the opening chef with another guy in Glastonbury.

Well, right about that time, that's when there was a vacancy on LaSalle Road which is now Bricco. It used to be Alforno. It was a pizza restaurant. I actually had never been in there ... But it was vacant and a friend of my brother's kind of mentioned it to him, and we were interested right away ...

So we went and met the landlord and we walked through there and thought it was a great space for what I wanted to do. I really wanted to be an all-natural, scratch cooking Italian-American restaurant. And after being at Max and how well they do, 'they do a great job,' I thought that I could do something similar or something that well. So that was it. We did it. We signed a lease and we put a small makeover, freshened it up...

And when we came here to negotiate...the lease...I remember it was like a ghost town around here. You could throw a grenade...and not kill anybody. And we opened up and humbly, knock on wood, we were kind of instantly

successful.

In the case of Grant opening Restaurant Bricco we see that he (and his brothers) had a theme, an idea of what he wanted to do, but he was not actively looking for a location. Even though Alforno's had failed and closed and the Center 'was like a ghost town,' Grant was not discouraged. He liked the location and opened in 1996. Grant, with Restaurant Bricco, was also a pioneer (Clay, [1979] in Lees, et al., 2010) and part of the *exploitation* phase of experimentation and competition. Grant and Restaurant Bricco (Figure 9) survived and persisted. Bricco was the first of the nouvelle-fine dining establishments that would evolve into the Center's keystone species (Folke, et al. in Gunderson, et al., 2010).

Figure 9. Restaurant Bricco



Photo: Donald Poland (2012).

Christiane Gehami grew up with a mother who appreciated food and was a good cook. She explained, "I grew up three meals coming out of my house, my mom's. I never realized restaurants even existed. A restaurant to me was McDonald's on a Sunday, you know, after the museum or like a snack ... But that was it. So all the desserts, all cakes, everything came from her kitchen" (Interview). Gehami's first career was in the insurance industry. Gehami explained, when she married, she realized she did not know how to cook, even though she loved food. She also explained, "I never meant to open a restaurant" (Interview). Feeling the need to know how to cook, Gehami spent time with her mother learning (Interview):

And for three months I watched [my mother]. We'd sit every Sunday at the beach and we'd talk about marrying flavors. You know, if you can marry herbs and spices to the food, you can cook. And that's what I did ... I started throwing little dinner parties and all of a sudden I said "This is what I want to do the rest of my life is cook...this is where I belong, I fucking loved it." And so...I enrolled in MCC [a culinary program at a local community college] and I said "Maybe I should get a job" because you know, what if it's not what I think it is?

Gehami worked in a number of small restaurants and a corporate cafeteria. She was then presented with an opportunity to run a small kitchen and café business out of the back of an art gallery in West Hartford Center (Interview):

...the lady called me and said "Do you want to run the back?" I go, "I'll run it" ... and two weeks later, I incorporated. I came up with a menu. I borrowed [money] from my parents and I opened Arugula...with six seats. And the rest is history. She was in the front, we were in the back ... And at the end of that year, the gallery went out of business.

Now the landlord doesn't even know I exist because I'm subletting, right? So I'm introduced to this man...he decided to let me stay ... We just kept adding more tables and then we decided to look for a space. Mike [her restaurant manager] always wanted to stay here. My clients wanted me here. I'm from Glastonbury...the birds sound better across the river. I don't care what anyone says and I wanted to go back there ... finally I said, "You know what? It doesn't matter." This is really where I belong.

Gehami, also a pioneer, in 1997 took over the gallery space, closed for two months to renovate, and reopened the space as Arugula (Figure 10). She "never meant to open a restaurant" (Interview), but she did. Gehami and Arugula fell into the Center, having never sought out the location.

Figure 10. Arugula



Photo: Donald Poland (2012).

Unlike Grant and Gehami, Benny Delbon was not a chef and did not enter the restaurant business as the result of a passion for food. He worked in restaurants to make a living. “I was the dishwasher and busboy and bartender. So I've just never got out of the business” (Interview). Around 1996, his close friend Jeff Hayes [who is since deceased], an experienced restaurant manager, convinced Delbon to be his business partner and open a restaurant. Delbon explained the experience and the Center as the location for their restaurant, ‘The Elbow Room’ (Interview):

I live in Simsbury so we looked out there. It was pretty much the other space. I really didn't even want to open a restaurant because I just seen what people go through when they open it. You know? I've seen like...we had a restaurateur...he owned eight restaurants and then he went bankrupt. I'm like, "I don't want to go through that."

We were looking around and we just liked the space...there was nothing really here though. We were here and Bricco's was here. That was pretty much it. Edelweiss was here...it definitely wasn't what it was now. But we just came in here and we liked it. The walls were crooked and it was just a real cool space. That's perfect for us.

Delbon and Hayes were seeking a location, but as noted by Delbon, the search was not very extensive, including only Simsbury and West Hartford. However, their decision focused more on the appeal of interior characteristics of the property rather than on the location. The crooked walls outweighed Delbon's recognition that ‘there was nothing really’ going on in the Center other than ‘Bricco's and Edelweiss’. The Elbow Room (Figure 11) opened near Peter B's coffeehouse, on Farmington Avenue. Like Brainard, Delbon came to believe this to be the best location in the Center (Interview). Two years after the Elbow Room opened in 1997, a Hartford Courant reporter would claim, while seated outside on the sidewalk at the Elbow Room, “one can gaze at the crossroads of the universe -- LaSalle and Farmington -- and drink in the best show around” (Hartford Courant: July 17, 1999. pg. 8).

Figure 11. The Elbow Room



Photo: Donald Poland (2012).

As discussed above, Rosenthal looked at the Center as a potential location for his first restaurant back in 1985, but he could not convince himself that anyone would drink at the bar in a restaurant in the Center. Therefore, he passed on the Center and opted for the restaurant scene in Downtown Hartford. By 1998, the new activity in the Center, the recent openings of Bricco, Arugula, and the Elbow Room that were attracting media attention (Molotch, 1976) and a clientele seeking high quality food and dining, the Center—specifically Bricco and the Elbow Room—caught Rosenthal’s attention. They “made us feel like the Center had possibilities” (Interview). Rosenthal explains his decision in selecting the specific location in the Center for Max Oyster Bar (Interview):

The reason we took that location is because it became available ... I don't recall what was available at that time ... 13 years ago [1999] the Center was not thriving ... we actually looked at the spot that is where Treva is [and] we were going to buy it and knock it down ... the architect kind of said, do you really want to develop this property, which might have been the dumbest thing in that I didn't do it ... I don't think we looked at any other spots.

Even though it is common for people to view Rosenthal and Max Oyster as early in and the start of the Center’s restaurant scene (Rowlson, Interview), Rosenthal was not a pioneer in the Center’s remaking. Rosenthal is an entrepreneur, but his risk appetite is low—that is why he passed on the Center in 1985. What he is good at is identifying a scene and exploiting an opportunity. “You know Bricco was doing great. Those two [Arugula and the Elbow Room] were doing okay. And we came in and it kind of exploded. It exploded for us and that's when all of a sudden everyone's going to want to start being in West Hartford Center” (Interview) explained Rosenthal.

Delbon also explains the *explosion* Rosenthal noted. The Elbow Room opened in December 1997 and Delbon explains, it was 18 months later or mid-1999, when “business just took off. Just like...one day, it just like turned around. And sales just kept getting bigger and bigger...I don't know what happened” (Interview). It was in late October of 1998, nearly a year after The Elbow Room opened, when Rosenthal announced the Max Restaurant Group would be opening a restaurant in the Center (Hartford, Courant: Oct 24, 1998). A year later, 22 months after the Elbow Room opened, Max Oyster Bar opened in October, 1999 (Hartford, Courant: Oct 22, 1999).

The period between Rosenthal’s announcement and the opening of Max Oyster Bar is when the Center crossed a threshold (Holling and Orians, 1971; Walker

and Salt, 2006, 2012; Gunderson, et al., 2010). It is when the Center transitioned from being a suburban town center to metropolitan Hartford's center of middle class hospitality and sociality. The buzz generated by the growth machine (Molotch, 1976), more specifically the buzz generated around Rosenthal's announcement that the Max Restaurant Group, with their regional cachet, was coming to the Center, along with the attention, success, and critical mass created by Bricco, Arugula, The Elbow Room, and others, pushed the Center across a threshold to becoming a regional center.

The arrival of Rosenthal and Max Oyster Bar and the Center's transition to a regional center of middle class hospitality and sociality also mark the period when the Center transitioned from Phase One *exploitation* to Phase Two *conservation* in the adaptive cycle. In the *conservation* phase, exploitation—growth, risk, and innovation—slow as (Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 44):

the winners expand, grow, and accumulate potential from the resources acquired ... Connectedness between interrelated entities begins to increase because facilitation and contest competition between species inexorably increases as expansion continues. A subset of species begins to develop close interrelations that are mutually supportive—i.e., they form self-organized clusters of relationships. The future starts to be more predictable and less driven by uncertain forces outside the control of the system.

The fine dining establishments were a mutually supportive self-organizing cluster. In addition, the adaptive cycle transition from phase one to phase two once again resembles aspects of stage model gentrification. Phase two *conservation* is similar to stage three and stage four in Clay's model of gentrification (Clay 1979 in Lees, et al., 2010), as the process of gentrification matures and becomes more formalized. However, as stated in Chapter III, gentrification focuses mostly on the front half of the adaptive cycle, which explains the first two stages of the adaptive cycle and covering all four stages of Clay's model of gentrification.

Another similarity between the ecological adaptive cycle and gentrification are “the winners expand...” in phase one *exploitation* and phase two *conservation*. The winners are the flip side of the gentrification displacement coin. Many concerns have been raised about the “need to tread carefully when translating resilience thinking from the natural to the social world” (Davoudi, et al., 2012: 305) and the “challenge...relates to power and politics and the conflict over questions such as, what is a desired outcome, and resilience for whom” (Davoudi, et al., 2012: 306; see also Levine, et al., 2012; Bene, et al., 2012). While caution is needed, the capacity of

humans to intervene in urban-ecosystems and the adaptive cycle results in greater dynamism in urban-ecological systems. Therefore, while concerns for winners and the displaced are real, our human capacity to recognize potential negative consequences, such as displacement, means that we also have the capacity to employ interventions to mitigate the negative consequence of displacement. Through governance, human and urban ecological systems have the capabilities to intervene, unlike a natural ecosystem that is invaded by an invasive species and cannot fend off the invasion. In this regard, the negative consequences of gentrification may be more about failed government policy and intervention than about the process of gentrification itself.

What is most interesting about this period of the Center's remaking is that it was mostly emergent and self-organizing (Jacobs, 1961; Johnson, 2001; Batty, 2007). For example, in regard to the restaurateurs, there is no singular reason, no one person, no one action, and no singular explanation as to why this remaking occurred. As demonstrated by the individual accounts of these five restaurateurs who opened their restaurants in the Center during the 1990s, only one of them, Rosenthal, the last restaurateur to enter the Center in the 1990s, specifically sought out the Center as the place for his restaurant. Brainard settled on the Center after many other locations did not materialize. Grant was not actively looking for a location and his brothers were introduced to the vacant space of Alforno's by a friend. Gehami fell into her location and her restaurant and she even considered, at one point, leaving the Center for other locations. Delbon and Hayes were drawn more to the crooked walls of their specific storefront space, than they were to the Center. The last one in, Rosenthal, who passed on the Center fourteen years earlier, now believed the Center had potential. Just as he did fourteen years prior with Downtown Hartford, Rosenthal saw that a scene had emerged in the Center, and he was drawn to it like a moth to a flame.

The period from 1990 to 1999 was a time of experimentation, a sorting out of what works and what doesn't work in the Center. It was a time of great uncertainty, but also unbridled opportunity—phase one—*exploitation*—of the adaptive cycle (Holling, 2001; Gunderson and Holling, 2002). While many of the restaurant experiments of these pioneering entrepreneurs failed, many also survived and persisted. Thrift explains (Thrift, 2005: 3):

capitalism is performative: it is always engaged in experiment, as the project is perpetually unfinished. Capitalism is therefore a highly adaptive and

constantly mutating formation, it is a set of poised systems... The whole point of capitalism, then, is precisely its ability to change its practices constantly, and those who run corporations must be able to surf the right side of the constant change that results, or risk being washed up on the reefs of irrelevance—and thrown into bankruptcy. (It is always worth remembering just how few capitalist firms survive over the long term; surely Schumpeter was right to argue that capitalism is a flawed leviathan arising out of creative destructions)” (Thrift, 2005: 3)

These five restaurateurs, for whatever reasons, were *surfing the right side of the wave*, and they persisted. For every one of them, some other entrepreneur and restaurateur *washed up on reefs of irrelevance*. Recognizing such an outcome does not have to be interpreted as “the tendency to obliterate the ‘negative’ side of resilience” (Bene, et al., 2012: 13) and urban ecology. Displaced or not, those *washed up on reefs of irrelevance* are not irrelevant. They are as much a part of the Center’s remaking as are those who persisted. They were part of the experiment, the competition, and the sorting out—the storefront-by-storefront transition and remaking of suburbanization (Harris in Keil, 2013). They contributed to the Center’s intangible qualities and to the Center’s remaking. The metaphorical woodpecker (Johnson, 2001) Alforno’s pecked a hole in the physical infrastructure of the Center, and once abandoned, that hole provided a space for Grant to create a home for Restaurant Bricco.

For these five restaurateurs, their performance is not simply a dance of capitalism and exploitation (Thrift, 2004), but a dance with hospitality and their livelihood. For some of them, hospitality is their passion and their love. For all of them, hospitality is what they do for a living. “Capitalism is not just hard graft. It is also fun. People get stuff from it – and not just more commodities” (Thrift, 2004: 1). West Hartford Center just so happened to be the stage for the improvisational (Amin and Thrift, 2002) performance of these restaurateurs—an experiment that is not preordained, but uncertain and perpetually unfinished (Thrift, 2004). The Center’s remaking did not have to turn out this way. There was no coherence or sequence to the performance of these actors, their actions, or their experiences. There is no seamless story of historical inevitability moving “towards a predefined goal or fate” (Thrift, 1996: 4).

There were no guarantees in the Center’s remaking in the 1990s. Brainard and Peter B’s could have negotiated a deal with Westfarms Mall (Interview) and never

even looked at the Center. Gehami and Arugula could have been denied the lease by the landlord or could have willingly moved to Glastonbury (Interview). Delbon and Hayes could have closed Elbow Room in 1999, which according to Delbon nearly happened (Interview). Restaurant Bricco could have been mismanaged, provided inconsistent food, and closed a year later, just as Alforno's did two years before. In fact, Restaurant Bricco may have never opened in the space of Alforno's in 1996 if Congress Rotisserie had not backed out on its lease negotiation for the Alforno's space in 1995 (Hartford Courant, May, 10, 1995). In the case of West Hartford Center's remaking, the unexpected and uninteresting are as abundant as the expected and the fascinating. This is the very reason why we, as urban researchers, need to "look for the routine, even boring" (Thrift, 2004: 3) and need to study these smaller urban spaces that are missed by the bias of large city urbanism (Bell and Jayne, 2009). Contingency existed in every moment and every action. "Purely, structure-based arguments that explain downtown redevelopment as logical responses to larger processes, however, do not take into account contingencies of locality, history, and agency rooted in specific places. These contingencies demand a greater appreciation in geographical analysis while, at the same time, recognizing the significance of extra-local processes and trends" (Paradis, 2002: 38; also see Thrift in Massey, 1999; Molotch, et al., 2000).

6.30 Evolution and Hospitality 2000 - 2012

Rosenthal opened Max on Main in Hartford in 1986. In 1991 his second restaurant, Max a Mia opened in the affluent western suburb of Avon, followed in 1995 by Max Amore in the affluent southeastern suburb of Glastonbury. In 1996, the same year Restaurant Bricco opened in the Center, Max on Main was rebranded as Max Downtown and moved six blocks from its original location to the ground floor of City Place, Hartford's tallest office tower and premier corporate address. All three Max restaurants were well received in greater Hartford. "In the early days of the Max Group when they had just Max a Mia and Max on Main, this is before they moved to Max Downtown, they were real pinnacles" (Grant, Interview). "I give Rich a lot of credit and even to my success...because he was really on the forefront of doing some cutting edge things and bringing some kind of exciting, trendy fine dining, but still

casual kind of a city atmosphere to greater Hartford” (Grant, Interview). Rosenthal was an innovator, he introduced a new style of dining—novelty—to metropolitan Hartford. So even though Rosenthal followed the hospitality scene to Downtown Hartford in the 1980s, he was also instrumental in reinventing the scene.

Rosenthal’s first three locations, Downtown Hartford, Avon, and Glastonbury had tapped into the region’s wealth, the corporate, professional, and middle class of Downtown Hartford’s insurance industry and their wealthy suburban enclaves, Avon and Glastonbury. The opening of Max Oyster Bar in the Center, did not simply add to the interesting mix of restaurants that had already emerged and begun to cluster in the Center, Max Oyster Bar also legitimized the Center as a space for middle class hospitality and sociality. In addition, the Max brand helped to draw the Max clientele out of Downtown Hartford and in from Avon, Glastonbury, and other communities to West Hartford Center. This provided the Center with a new found regional centrality. The spatial location of middle class hospitality and sociality was reorganizing at the metropolitan scale around existing settlement patterns (Wood, 1997) and West Hartford Center with its proximity to the interstate highway system and location along one of the main arterials leading out of Downtown Hartford and in from the wealthy suburbs of the Farmington Valley was easily accessible to the greater metropolitan region.

The region’s middle class, drawn to the Center by the *trendy fine dining* being provided by Bricco, Arugula, Elbow Room, Max Oyster Bar, and others, and being promoted in the food and lifestyle writing (Molotch, 1976; Zukin, 1991, 2010) of the Hartford Courant, Hartford Magazine, and others, discovered a habitat suitable for them to perform their middle class hospitality and sociality. The Center was not characterized by the peeling paint, cracked sidewalks, and the traffic congestion of an old downtown; nor did the Center provide department stores, free and spacious parking, a highway interchange location, and flexible store hours of shopping malls so often claimed as the push and pull factors that consumers away from downtowns to suburban shopping malls (Burayidi, 2001, 2013; Otto in Orori-Amoah, 2007; Ramsey, et al., in Orori-Amoah, 2007; Walzer and Kline in Burayidi, 2001).

Instead, the Center greeted the region’s middle class with wide tree-lined streets, broad leafy sidewalks, ornamental light posts, brick pavers, abundant flowers,

and outdoor seating. Gibbs explains that trees, greenery, and other plant life can “effectively humanize urban spaces by providing shade and a sense of scale, and with other streetscape enhancements, they can positively affect shopper’s mood and thus increase retail sales” (Gibbs, 2012: 88). Unbeknownst to these restaurateurs, the location they had settled on, fallen into, and chosen for their performance of hospitality, was a suitable habitat and platform—ecosystem—for the performance of middle class sociality.

However, this remaking of the Center from a suburban town center to the regional center of middle class hospitality and sociality was not complete. That is to say, the Center’s remaking was not simply a transition from one kind of space (a town center) to another kind of space (a regional center). The remaking was an evolutionary process (Levine, et al., 2012; Batty and Marshall; 2009) of shifting regimes and slow moving variables of change (Walker and Salt, 2006). The urban-ecosystem of the Center was evolving, shifting and *edging in new directions* (Amin and Thrift, 2002), organizing and reorganizing around new and ever changing social, cultural, and economic practices. The experimentation, novelty, and sorting out of hospitality continued through the 2000s (and still continues today).

As discussed in Chapter V, from 2000 to 2009 an additional 41 hospitality establishments opened in the Center, and 11 more opened from 2010 to 2012. By 2005 West Hartford Center had become Brooks’ Bistrotville (Brooks, 2004), and *trendy fine dining* continued to self-organize and cluster in the Center. During the period from 1999 with the opening of Max Oyster Bar to 2007 the Center’s hospitality regime was clearly in phase two of the adaptive cycle, *conservation*—the hospitality regime was becoming more formalized. Hospitality had evolved as the Center’s trendy fine dining emerged as the ecosystem’s *keystone species*. Folke explains, “a limited number of organisms and groups of organisms seem to drive or control the critical processes necessary for ecosystem functioning, while the remaining organisms exist in the niches formed by these keystone process species. Such organisms modify, maintain, and create habitats” (Folke, et al. in Gunderson, et al., 2010: 155). The keystone species, Johnson’s (2010) ecosystem engineers, build a habitat for themselves that also creates a habitat for other species. In the Center’s ecosystem, coffee shops, deli’s, and other hospitality establishments inhabited and persisted in the *niches formed by the trendy fine dining keystone species*.

As early as 2004, however signs of transition to Phase Three, *release* or *creative destruction* of the adaptive cycle were evident as *trendy fine dining* started to change in 2004 with the arrival of Andy Pforzheimer and his restaurant, Barcelona. A chef and Harvard graduate, Pforzheimer founded Barcelona with his business partners in 1995 in South Norwalk, Connecticut. Today, Barcelona has grown to nine locations in three states and the District of Columbia. In addition, Pforzheimer and his partner launched a second restaurant concept, BarTaco, which has four locations, including West Hartford Center. By 2004, when Barcelona opened in the Center, Barcelona already had three locations, South Norwalk, Greenwich, and Fairfield—all in the New York Metro-region area of Connecticut. When asked why West Hartford Center, an hour away from the previous locations, Pforzheimer explained (Interview):

Well, you know, it's not that interesting a state. There's not that many restaurant centers in it. Most of them are clustered right down here and you can't open in the Norwalk area and then Westport because they all cannibalize so once you've done Norwalk and Greenwich, your choice starts being, do I take my own customers or do I go further away. So New Haven was a possibility. West Hartford was pretty well known as sort of a dining center at that time.

It was West Hartford Center's reputation, the fact that it had become known for its restaurants that drew Pforzheimer to the Center. Barcelona opened on the backside of a building located on Farmington Avenue, facing a parking lot. While pleased with the decision to locate in the Center, Pforzheimer shared some regrets over the location. "We didn't pick a good location. I mean we picked a good location but a bad site" (Interview).

Barcelona, upscale and trendy with a Spanish theme, introduced a new twist—novelty—to the fine dining of West Hartford Center. With a menu dominated by tapas, Barcelona offered the consumer greater options—and possibly lower costs—than the more conventional appetizers, entrees, and deserts offered at other restaurants. Designed with a large bar, an enclosed outdoor patio, and a large selection of wines and flashy cocktails, Barcelona provided the high quality food and dining experience that was being offered and expected in the Center, but the restaurant presented it in a more casual format and atmosphere.

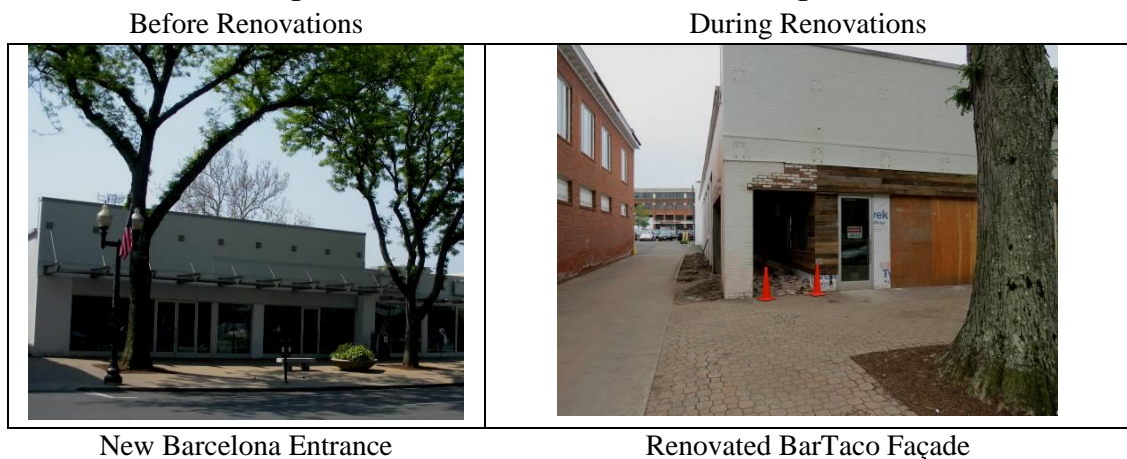
The collapse of the economy in 2008 affected the Center's retail sector, more than it did the hospitality sector, resulting in an opportunity for Pforzheimer. The Center, since the 1960s, never experienced high vacancy rates, but with the hard

economic times starting in 2008, vacancies had risen to a high of around 10 percent (R. Mahoney, Interview). By 2008 West Hartford Center and the hospitality regime had entered the back the half of the adaptive cycle, entering Phase Three, *release* or *creative destruction*. The storefront, fronting on Farmington Avenue, that Barcelona was behind went vacant and came available. Pforzheimer saw the opportunity, not only to redesign the building layout to provide Barcelona with an entrance on Farmington Avenue, but also the opportunity to expand his new restaurant brand, BarTaco. He explains (Interview):

Because the location is familiar to us and it's a better location because it's on Farmington [Avenue]. It gives us access to the back of the building on Farmington [Avenue]. We're actually planning on blowing out the wall on the left side and putting a passage way down to Barcelona so that the entrance is moved from the parking lot to Farmington. That's worth something to us and then you know it's a high exposure street. We're leveraging management...I don't need new vendors ... There's a lot of good reasons.

BarTaco opened in 2012. It is designed with a casual beach-bar theme, a large bar area, and a mostly glass façade that opens with oversized French doors to a very large sidewalk dining area. Pforzheimer was not only novel in his introduction of a more casual menu and atmosphere, he was also adaptable, keeping his options open (Holling, 1973; Walker and Salt, 2006). The renovations included knocking out a wall, creating a passage, and providing Barcelona an entrance on Farmington Avenue, thus highlighting the adaptability of the Center and its buildings (Figure 12). These renovations and the adaptability also highlight the slow moving variables of change as each building in the Center, storefront-by-storefront as tenants change, have experienced renovations, reconfigurations, updating, and upgrading.

Figure 12. Barcelona and BarTaco Building Renovations





Photos: Donald Poland

In 2008, former hotel executive, Bill Rizzuto, opened his second Rizzuto's restaurant in Blue Back Square (Figure 13). His first Rizzuto's opened in 2004 in Bethel, Connecticut, nearly an hour away in Fairfield County. Since 2008, Rizzuto has opened two more locations in Westport and Greenwich. Having worked in the corporate hospitality industry and having always wanted to be in business for himself, Rizzuto explained, the time felt right to make a move and make the change in 2004. Rizzuto explained his decision to open his second location in West Hartford Center, when asked (Interview):

Well...back in 2007...we started looking for a second location. We really wanted to be in Fairfield County. And the economy was red hot. There were no desirable locations available in Fairfield County. You know, our intention was eventually to expand out this way but not necessarily as a second stop along the way. A true story is a friend of my son, his mom grew up with Rich Rosenthal, the guy that owns Max's. And she said you really should check out West Hartford Center, call Rich, he'd talk to you.

So I came out here and checked it out, fell in love with it and said okay, it's fifty miles from the first one that's not necessarily the rate at which I want it to grow from where we started but West Hartford Center has the right demographics. But at the time, you know, there was nothing really available on that side of West Hartford Center.

Rizzuto became aware of the Center based on its reputation. Similar to Pforzheimer, Rizzuto was also adapting to unforeseen circumstances. While it was not his specific or immediate plan to locate in West Hartford Center, he kept his options open (Holling, 1973) and adapted. Rizzuto is pleased with his decision to locate in West Hartford Center. However he expressed reservations over his decision to locate in Blue Back Square (Interview):

Initially...I didn't know if I wanted to be a risk taker and be one of the first people in. I think time has proven, I think, I was right, that it was probably an

error coming to Blue Back Square, but a good thing coming to West Hartford Center.

And I'll explain what I mean by that. We're paying rents that are exorbitant to be in Blue Back Square on the promise of...major trade radius of the twenty-five mile ring draw to Blue Back Square. So, you expect the kind of foot traffic that you would experience in shopping centers which unfortunately never materialized. So, our lifeblood is really West Hartford, Farmington, Canton, people who would go to restaurants on the other side of South Main Street as well. So, in that respect I'm very happy to be in West Hartford. Regrettably, it's cost us way more than it should have to be here...but I love West Hartford.

Blue Back Square opened in 2007, at the height of the market before the economic crash in 2008. With well-known national brands, such as Crate and Barrel, Cheesecake Factory, REI, and others moving in, rents were at premium, over \$50 per square foot when it first opened. Pforzheimer's and Rizzuto's experiences reveal the complexity and challenges of the restaurant and real estate business. They show that even when locating in a vibrant place such as West Hartford Center, persistence is not easy, contingency is built into every decision, and there are no guarantees of success. In Rizzuto's case, this is interesting in regard to his claim of 'exorbitant rent'. High rents and increasing rents, in our understanding of gentrification are often noted as the driver of displacement (Lees, et al., 2010), which I will discuss further below.

Figure 13. Rizzuto's Restaurant



Photos: Donald Poland (2014)

Brian Hirsch, a restaurateur with an MBA, owned and operated four “restaurant-related businesses [in] New Haven and Philadelphia” (Interview) before opening Reuben's, a Jewish deli in West Hartford Center. Hirsch explained, “it's a difficult industry” and that the restaurateurs in the Center are “the top 1/10th of a percent for the restaurant business” (Interview). When asked why a deli and why West Hartford Center, Hirsch explained (Interview):

Because there was a need for it. A demand for it and a niche here to fill. I think we've proved that. I mean, I'd look through a lot of competitive intelligence. I did have a good feel for the market. I've lived here for a while. I'm Jewish. You know, I knew the demographic. So I did a little bit of demographic work. Not a lot. A little bit. And competitive intelligence.

West Hartford, like I said, because this type of cuisine was missing and the demographic was here to support it. This was in a location...you know, I looked at a few different locations...I looked at the Center and a couple of other spots...

Reuben's (Figure 14) opened in 2009 and from all observations and outside appearances, the deli appeared to be busy and doing well. However, in 2013, Reuben's closed for two months and Hirsch remodeled, reopening as Bar 35, which has since closed. Even in the Center, a vibrant space that attracts a wealthy demographic, with an experienced restaurateur, survival is not guaranteed.

Figure 14. Reuben's Deli



Photo: Donald Poland (2012).

Pforzheimer, Rizzuto, and Hirsch demonstrate how the Center's hospitality business and real estate market have evolved, matured, and become more formal—the conservation phase of the adaptive cycle. The cost of entry into the Center has not simply increased in terms of rising rents, but also in terms of the upfront capital investment required. One of the Center's restaurateurs explained that design and build-out of a restaurant space can cost as much as \$400 per square foot, while another explained that remodeling a restaurant kitchen today costs more than designing and building out an entire restaurant 20 years ago (Interviews). The result is far greater risk that demands a more experienced and well-capitalized restaurateur. While this helps us to understand why, since 1999 when Max Oyster Bar opened, most of the formal fine dining restaurants have been by restaurant groups with multiple locations,

the personal accounts and experiences of these restaurateurs further demonstrate the importance of the “contingencies of locality, history, and agency rooted in specific places” (Paradis, 2002: 38; see also Latham 2003; Thrift in Massey, 1999; Molotch, et al, 2000).

An interesting feature and local contingency of the Center is the small size of the storefronts. Two factors, being built mostly in the 1930s and 1940s for community scale retail, and a history of unwillingness on the part of property owners and managers to allow any significant combining of storefronts, kept most national chains and franchises out of the Center (R. Mahoney, Interview). However, in 2007, with the arrival of the Blue Back Square development that was intentionally designed with the large format space sought by the national brands, the chains and franchises began to arrive, both in Blue Back Square and in the older Center west of South Main Street.

Property manager Richard Mahoney explained that through their process of managing tenant mix, they were also cautious of allowing too many restaurants into the Center—paying attention to thresholds (Walker and Salt, 2012). Therefore, in the properties his firm managed (80% of the storefronts west of South Main Street), they had a policy of “one restaurant per property” (Interview). However, uncertainty, a weak economy, and increases in vacancy required them to re-think that policy. For example, Mahoney further explains, “we got mouse trapped into one building where we had a non-restaurant food use that went under, and we had to basically, in order to use what was there, had to go to a restaurant on the Gyro Palace” (Interview). Mahoney’s son and business partner Mike, explained the challenge of sticking to the one restaurant per building policy when vacancies increased. They discovered that when they said no to a prospective tenant to open in a building that already had a restaurant, the prospective tenant signed a lease on a storefront they did not manage (Interview). While Blue Back Square provided new opportunities and a new habitat that was hospitable for chains and franchises, economic uncertainty created a change in leasing policies, which resulted in meaningful changes in the Center’s ecosystem.

Uncertainty was resulting in adaptation (Gunderson, et al., 2010). The property owners and managers were becoming more flexible in their practices. They were embracing change (Walker and Salt, 2006) and keeping their options open (Holling, 1973). However, it was not only the property managers that were adapting,

so were the tenants, including national chains who are often viewed as rigid and inflexible regarding their store formats and sizes (Kramer, et al., 2008; Gibbs, 2012). Mike Mahoney explained that ‘lululemon athletica’ “really want about 2500 square feet” but “it will be 1050 [square feet] and they might take it” (Interview). They did take it, the undersized space, and opened a few months later. Yorque explains, “[b]oth ecological and social systems share characteristics of complexity such as...ongoing creation of novelty, selection, and adaptation” (Yorque, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 422). The Center’s ecosystem, faced with the shock and disturbance of economic decline, adapted, and in doing so, the ecosystem has persisted.

The adaptive cycle explains that as an ecosystem matures in phase two, *conservation*, it initially increases in connectedness and stability, but the system can become “so over-connected that rapid change is triggered [*collapse* and *renewal* in phases three and four]” (Holling in Gunderson, et al., 2010: 95-96). In some cases collapse results in the loss of function and structure, as was discussed in Chapter III with the conversion of once industrial buildings into residential lofts (Zuking, 1989). However, the Center, being a resilient urban-ecological space, transitioned through the *creative destruction* and *renewal* phases within its boundaries of resiliency. The Center’s hospitality regime experienced a shift toward chains and franchises, yet the Center retained its basic function and structure. The Center’s ecosystem did not reorganize around a new set of functions and structures, resulting in a new kind of space or ecosystem. The Center’s ecosystem persisted while new hospitality species found niches and organized around the formal fine dining *keystone species*. The hospitality regime, as a whole, continued to grow and the *keystone species* also grew and persisted.

The Center’s ecosystem, in the process of adapting, evolved. Along with the national chains and franchises came the new format and the emerging restaurant trend of fast-casual dining (Rusconi, Interview). Fast casual chains and franchises, such as Moe’s, Chipotle, and BGR Burger (Figure 15) introduced more affordable dining options in the Center, creating greater diversity in dining options and cost of entry to dine in the Center. The Center was no longer simply “Bistroville” (Brooks, 2004); the Center was appealing to a wider socio-economic and demographic range of consumers. The metropolitan or post-suburban space of the Center—the urban-

ecological system—was becoming less homogeneous (Frey in Champion and Hugo, 2004; Keil, 2013).

Figure 15. Chains, Franchises, and Fast Casual Dining

Chipotle

BGR – The Burger Joint



Photos: Donald Poland (2012)

Storefront rents in the Center in the late 1980s were around \$8-10 per square foot. By the late 1990s, rents had risen to around \$20-22 per square foot, and by 2012 rents were over \$40 per square foot and in some cases, they had been over \$50 per square foot before the economic downturn in 2008 (Van Winkle, Lorenz, R. Mahoney, Interviews). In addition to rent, tenants also pay a common area fee that is typically around 30% of the gross rent (R. Mahoney, Interview), pushing the total costs of storefront space even higher. In addition to the rising rents, low vacancy rates, and high demand for space, there were often waiting lists (R. Mahoney, Interview) for prospective tenants interested in leasing space in the Center. The result, in regard to property management, is that property managers can be more discerning in the caliber of the prospective storefront tenants they select. In short, the real estate market in the Center, between 2000 and 2008, became more formal, demanding a different kind of business and business model to gain entry. For example, by 2002, Peter Brainard could not have simply rolled into the Center with his coffee-cart business, secured a lease, built a counter, painted the walls, and added some tables and chairs as he did in 1992 (Interview). A new standard for the Center had been established. The higher quality interior designs and façade improvements by property owners and restaurants such as Bricco, Arugula, Elbow Room, Max Oyster Bar, and others created new expectations, and the new consumers coming to the Center and hospitality establishments did not only enjoy and expect higher quality aesthetics, but were willing and able to pay for the high quality aesthetics.

The higher standards, raised expectations, substantial rents, formal property management, and the elevated status and reputation of the Center resulted in the attraction of a more formal entrepreneur and restaurateur to the Center. The new arrivals, after 1999, were generally more business oriented than hospitality oriented, and in many cases, had more formal business experience than the owners who opened in the 1990s. In addition, while the owners in the 1990s were more likely to be locals, from within metropolitan Hartford, the more recent restaurateurs have been more likely to come from outside of metropolitan Hartford.

The growth of the Center's restaurants, rising rents, and positive reputation are what opened the door—the accumulation of ecosystem resources (Walker and Salt, 2006)—to the large \$110 million Blue Back Square development in 2007 (which I will discuss in further in Chapter VII). In addition, the high risk nature of the retail and restaurant industry is one of the reasons why Blue Back Square was designed mostly with national chains and franchises in mind—tested concepts and well capitalized companies that reduce risk for the property owners and property managers. Unfortunately, none of the national chains were willing to be interviewed. However, four franchise owners granted interviews. Franchises are interesting because they are a form of hybrid-business model, somewhere between a corporate chain and a local entrepreneur or mom and pop shop. “Franchise businesses can offer the advantages of a chain with the personal touch of a local independent owner” (Gibbs, 2012: 25). The most striking difference between the franchise owners and most of the other restaurateurs discussed so far, is that none of the four franchise owners interviewed have formal backgrounds in hospitality.

James Grieder, who opened BGR Burger on Farmington Avenue in 2011 previously “owned a small chain of health clubs” (Interview) in the New Haven region. He was looking for another business opportunity and decided on a fast-casual restaurant. Similar to Grieder, Rick Myers and his business partner opened Robecks Juice on Farmington Avenue in 2008. Myers, also from the New Haven area, explained “we were in the retail business until 2007...we had a chain of fitness stores, we sold fitness equipment” (Interview). Myers further explained, after extensive research on a variety of franchise businesses, they settled on Robecks because they liked the company and felt there was good potential in the retail juice industry (Interview).

Brett Long opened The Counter Burger in Blue Back Square in 2007. He has an MBA and worked in corporate finance for large transnational banks. Based in New York City and traveling regularly to Tokyo, Long was tired of travel and the corporate lifestyle. “I was looking for something else to do and I decided, ‘Hey, you know what? Maybe I’ll buy into a franchise and open a number of franchise locations’” (Interview). Long made it clear, “although I spent a lot of time working in restaurants as a kid--I’m certainly not a restaurateur” (Interview). Matt Rusconi, who had lived in Manhattan and worked in pharmaceutical sales, had recently returned to Hartford to work for The Hartford Insurance Company. His business partner Dave, also from Manhattan worked in finance. Rusconi was looking for a new opportunity and he and Dave settled on Moe’s Southwest Grill (Figure 16), a fast-causal Mexican restaurant. They opened in Blue Back Square in 2008 having “no experience as restaurant operators” (Interview). All four of these franchise owners came from careers other than hospitality, although two of the four had prior experience in retail.

Figure 16. Moe’s Southwest Grill



Photos: Donald Poland (2014)

Long found the Center and Blue Back Square through a real estate broker who was helping him search the franchise territory area that stretched from NYC through Hartford. “I liked Blue Back, I thought that this concept of a stronger dinner than lunch business would go well in Blue Back, an upscale, affluent place where people would be willing to spend a little more for a burger and fries” and “it’s in a corner, it’s in Blue Back which is high visibility, across the street from Whole Foods and REI, et cetera, and it was a relatively good deal” (Interview). Grieder, when asked, why West Hartford Center, explained “it’s got a great vibe. It’s just busy. I mean there’s really not many places in Connecticut like this. It’s a destination” (Interview). Myers

explained his locational decision as being the availability of the franchise territory and that West Hartford Center reminded him of Fairfield County (Interview).

Rusconi and his business partner found West Hartford Center and Blue Back Square a bit differently than the others. Rusconi explained, “when we moved back from Manhattan, my wife and I... ended up buying our first house in West Hartford in 2005 ... and this new Blue Back Square was coming—this new thing” (Interview). Rusconi continued, “I saw [Blue Back] and I was like (Interview):

“Hey Dave, there is this new Blue Back Square in West Hartford, it’s a great town; it could be really cool.” I got involved with a real estate person ... We went through kind of a little bit of negotiations—too expensive—we said, “Yeah, you know what, we’re leaving.” We went out and looked in Meriden, we looked in Glastonbury; we looked all over the place. [...]

I don’t know it was just the fact of what West Hartford was already. It was probably one of the few towns in Connecticut that had the downtown center and already had a handful of good restaurants and West Hartford itself was a great town. The whole buzz of this Blue Back and what it was bringing to the town and the whole thing was like, “Hey man this is the first burrito joint in West Hartford in this shiny new Blue Back; it may be onto something here.” So that was the reason...

For the four franchise owners, it was the reputation and buzz around West Hartford Center and Blue Back Square that attracted them (Molotach, 1976; Zukin, 1989, 2010). In addition, these owners reveal more context and texture to the changes in the hospitality business in the Center. These are business persons, seeking business opportunities, and essentially seeking a shortcut into the hospitality business. The franchise model provides a formula, an operator’s manual, brand recognition, and marketing, allowing the franchisee to focus on developing the business. This reduces risk, not simply for the franchisee, but also for the property managers and the consumers. The property managers are provided some assurance that the product and brand are tried and tested, and the consumers are provided a product that comes with prescribed consistency.

The evolution, and maturation, of a more formal real estate market in the Center is important to understanding the Center as a space and the Center’s remaking. The more formal real estate market is an emergent and self-organizing phenomena (Johnson, 2001). However, with more formal markets or standardization, it is often claimed that there is a loss of authenticity (Zukin, 2010; Kunstler, 1993, 1997), or it is interpreted as the suburbanization of urban space (Hammett and Hammett, 2007).

While this may be true, being dismissive of standardization as inauthentic or as suburbanization may be missing how a strong, mature, and formal real estate market acts differently than a weak, sometimes youthful, and informal market acts. This in fact may be what is most interesting about the “blurring between city and suburb [... and] the gentrification of once derelict neighborhoods” (Nijman in Keil, 2013: 168) and the urbanization of the suburbs (Lang, et al., 2008). Muller’s claim that “suburban downtowns are evolving into more complex and sophisticated activity centers” (Muller, 1997: 46-47) may highlight the evolutionary nature of some (sub)urban spaces and how these spaces and their markets become more formalized.

Such claims also miss the more formal governance structures—be they corporate, private, or public (Valverde, 2012)—that organize around highly competitive real estate markets, such as West Hartford Center. The more formal governance structures included the highly connected and stable characteristics of phase two, *conservation*, in the adaptive cycle (Holling, 2001; Gunderson and Holling, 2002). Claims of inauthenticity also overlook the influence that consumers have on these more competitive spaces and their remaking. Middle-class consumers have the freedom to choose (Boehlke, 2004) and “retail shoppers are mobile and willing to take their dollars to other markets” (McClure in Burayidi, 2001: 232). They have options as to where they will eat, shop, and spend money that are afforded through their wealth and mobility (Urry, 2007). It is through their individual and collective choices (Bruegmann, 2005; Miller, 2012) that consumers project their expectations on to both businesses and urban space. Therefore, not only the businesses, but also the Center, must provide what the consumers want—what I like to think of as clean, safe, and aesthetically pleasing in terms of urban space—and a high quality and consistency of product for them to invest their money and time to perform their sociality in these restaurants and in the Center.

Claiming a wealthy, mature, and more formal space as inauthentic or suburbanized not only misses the local contingencies, but also misses the informalities that still occur. For example, returning to Rosenthal, ten years after the opening of Max Oyster Bar, he opened Max Burger (Figure 17) on LaSalle Road in 2009. During these 10 years the Center, as a real estate market, had become more formal and the restaurateurs entering the Center became more intentional in their search for a location and their decisions to locate in the Center. Therefore, it could be easy or

reasonable to assume that Rosenthal’s second restaurant in the Center was the result of a restaurateur seeking to exploit the Center’s success and maximize profits.

However, that was not exactly the case with the opening of Max Burger (Rosenthal, Interview):

What happened there was the landlord of that space was a friend of mine ... He calls up. There was two restaurants in there, there was Azul, and then there was Simmer ... And the landlord...calls me one day in a panic because Simmer had closed and they were going to sell all the stuff [kitchen equipment and furniture] was being loaded onto a truck [and] about to be pulled out. Someone bought it all...from Simmer. I said to [the landlord], don't let it go. He said, do you want to open here? I go no. But you need to keep that stuff because your next tenant, you can get someone in there in two weeks, with what's in there. So he went and writes a check...and tells the guy to keep it in there, I'm buying it. So one thing led to another. We started talking, and I said, yeah maybe why not.

And we...came up with a concept based on what we thought would work, what the Center didn't have. We weren't really planning on doing a burger place...it wasn't really on our drawing board to do one. It just kind of happened.

Rosenthal’s account further highlights the emergent and spontaneous occurrences that happen in even more formal and *inauthentic* spaces and how these small and possibly insignificant events, individually and collectively, matter. Rosenthal was not developing a new Max brand, nor was he seeking another location in West Hartford Center. However, he keeps his options open and he has the *capacity to absorb and accommodate events in whatever unexpected form that may take* (Holling, 1973). In addition, Rosenthal was also paying attention to what was going on in the Center in regards to hospitality, and he was looking for a gap in food offerings. Rosenthal, similar to when he introduced the Raw Bar at Max Oyster Bar, had a “[s]pecial sensitivity to marginal, neighboring, or occluded practices” (Spinosa et al., 1997: 30) as entrepreneurs tend to do (Spinosa, et al., 1997).

Figure 17. Max Burger



Photos: Donald Poland (2012)

6.40 Gentrification and the Remaking of Resilient Space

The Center's upgrading and upscaling display many similarities to gentrification. For example, the upgrading of hospitality uses and the intensity and influence of formal fine dining are indicative of Zukin's (1991) *gentrification and cuisine*. The Center's gentrification or remaking also resembles Clay's stage-model approach to gentrification that begins with early pioneers and becomes more formalized over time (Clay, 1979 in Lees, et al., 2010). In regard to real estate values, the rents in West Hartford Center also increased from \$8-10 per square foot in the late 1980s to \$42 per square foot in 2012—and even higher in 2007 when Blue Back Square opened (VanWinkle, Lorenz, Interviews). Each of these examples highlights a process of gentrification that occurred in the Center. However, I am not convinced that gentrification adequately explains the upgrading of the Center's hospitality regime or the Center's remaking.

What I mean by this is that the Center's remaking is not only about a shift toward more formal fine dining, catering to the wealthy, and raising rents—gentrification. The Center's remaking is also about the less obvious, more subtle, and nuanced changes that were occurring. In this regard, it is the performance of hospitality, the changes in how hospitality was being performed in the Center, that may best help us understand how the Center was being remade. For example, the shift toward hospitality and the nuanced changes in the performance of hospitality changed the Center's temporal functionality. The emergence of formal fine dining within the broader hospitality regime did not simply result in attracting greater wealth and upscaling of the Center, it also resulted in expanding the Center's functional hours.

In the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, the majority of the Center's economic activity occurred between 9:00AM and 6:00PM (R. Mahoney, Grant, Interviews). However, with the emergence of more formal fine dining in the 1990s, the Center's functional hours expanded to 10:00PM or 11:00PM in the 1990s and more recently to 1:00AM and 2:00AM in the mid to late 2000s with the emergence of a bar scene that I will discuss in Chapter VIII. This subtle change in temporal functionality of the Center creates a more nuanced means of viewing the Center's upgrading and remaking. For example, the increased rents are not simply resultant

from an upscaling of restaurants, but also are resultant from the Center's temporal capabilities of the space to produce more income. By extending the Center's hours to 10:00PM and later 2:00AM, the functional income producing time of the Center increased by 50% to 100%.

This change in temporal functionality is neither simply a production-side explanation (Lees, et al., 2010; Smith, 1979) nor a consumption-side explanation (Lees, et al., 2010; Ley, 1996) of gentrification. While this change in the temporal functionality of the Center may have characteristics of both production- and consumption-side gentrification (Zukin, [1989]; Hamnett, [1991], both in Lees, et al., 2010), there are still fundamental aspects of the Center's remaking that challenge our ability to conceptualize this remaking as strictly gentrification.

For example, as discussed in Chapter II, both the Center's suburban location and historical wealth challenge the traditional definition of gentrification. Theories of gentrification focus mostly on central city locations (not suburban locations) and the negative consequences to working-class communities and displacement of the poor (Glass in Lees, et al., 2010; Lees, et al., 2010). West Hartford and West Hartford Center have always—historically—been suburban, middle-class, and even wealthy. Therefore, claims that “gentrification is accomplishing a suburbanization of the city” (Smith, 1996: 115; see also Hammett and Hammett, 2007) in the case of West Hartford Center would be claiming *gentrification is accomplishing the suburbanization of the suburban*. If we use the emergence of formal fine dining and rising rents as the measure of the Center's remaking—gentrification—then what we learn is that the Center went from being a prosperous space to being a more prosperous space, which does not fit well with conventional definitions of gentrification or even Lees' super-gentrification (Lees, et al., 2008, 2010).

Another area where gentrification falls short of explaining the Center's remaking is in regards to turnover and displacement. For example, between 1990 and 2000, a total of 31 hospitality establishments opened, but only 20 persisted and remained open in 2000. By 2005, only 13 remained, and only eight of these 31 hospitality openings remained in 2012. From 2000 to 2009, there were an additional 41 hospitality openings, and 11 more opened between 2010 and 2012. The total number of hospitality establishments increased from 16 in 1990 to 43 in 2012, even

though a total of 83 hospitality establishments opened during the 23 years from 1990 to 2012—more hospitality establishments closed than those that persisted.

Inherent in the concept of gentrification is the idea that gentrification is the inevitability of the outcome of gentrification. “Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a direction, it goes on rapidly until ... the whole social character of the district is changed” (Glass, 1964 in Lees, et al., 2010). Based on the historic wealth of the Center and persistence of upscale retail boutique shops in the Center, it would be challenging to claim *the whole social character of the district is changed*. The gentrification stage models (Clay, 1979 and Berry, 1985 both in Lees, et al., 2010) also assume a similar trajectory of gentrification. However, even though we know that upgrading occurred during this period in the Center, gentrification literature is limited in its ability to explain how this sorting out of 83 hospitality establishment openings occurred. Displacement, as the result of rising rents, may not be the sole explanation for many or most of the establishments that did not persist.

For example, the owner of Edelwiesse retired, owners of Central Deli and Marharaja Indian were bought out by the incoming businesses (R. Mahoney), the owner of Alforno’s Brick Oven Pizza admitted he mismanaged the business (Hartford Courant, April 15, 1995: B-2), and the owners of Manhattan Bagels moved on to other opportunities (Grant, Interview). The fact is I did not find any evidence of conventional displacement resulting from rising rents or taxes. More interesting, I discovered a rich narrative around the comings and goings of businesses.

Barbara Lerner, project marketing director for Blue Back Square, former jewelry store owner, and former president of the Center’s merchant association explained, “I didn’t close [my shop] because of rent or anything like that ... It was just time. You know sometimes you know and it’s run its course” (Interview). She continued, “we find that a lot of businesses that go out are mismanaged or not managed” (Interview). Her boss, William Lorenz, the property manager, shared Lerner’s perspective and added “personal life issues” are also common reasons for businesses closing (Lerner, Interview). Lorenz provided an example of a business in Blue Back Square that almost closed (Interview):

I had one tenant [in 2008] ... They just opened the store...they had big high rent... They were like, “Yeah, I can’t do this. I’m getting ill from this.” I said, “Listen, if you want to close your store and you really want to close your store

I'm sure my bosses would make arrangements for you to close your store ... there's no sense for you to be sick or ill, or kill yourself over this business." I said, "You know, the economy is horrible...it's what it is." [...]

"Hey look, if you really want to close the business it's okay." I said, "It's the tenants who run up a debt that run away from you that landlords go after you and try to get and shake everything out of your pockets and get your house and whatever." "But if you come with your hands open and your books open and most of the time landlords will let you go...or find another operator. If it's a franchise...get another person in here...give it some time." We gave them time...and it turned out to be good.

It turned out business picked up and the tenant was still in business in 2012.

Lorenz further explained the cost—especially the brokers' commission on rents—of losing a tenant and having to re-lease the storefront. While he did not say it explicitly, Lorenz implied that he was financially motivated to be working with a tenant to save the business and avoid the turnover and additional brokers' fees for a new lease (Interview).

Also interesting in this narrative of businesses closing were the perspectives of the consumers I interviewed. In many instances when the consumers mentioned a business that closed they assumed that it closed because of rising rents. For example, Ben explained "what I don't like about [the Center] is...the fact that all these businesses got pushed out by landlords that jacked up the rents on them" (Interview). A long time business in the Center closed during my research and while having breakfast in Sally and Bob's the morning after the news of its closing had spread, I overheard two customers sitting next to me at the counter blaming rising rents for the business closing (Participant Observation, Feb. 12, 2010). It turns out the owner was 81 years old, suffering from health issues, and decided to retire (R. Mahoney, Interview; see also Hartford Courant, Feb. 11, 2010). Around the same time, another long standing business, a book store, in the Center closed. The newspaper explained the closing was "not for business reasons, she says, but just because she needs a rest. Six days a week for 37 years of lugging books, staying on your feet, takes its toll" (Hartford Courant, Feb. 17, 2010; see also Hartford Courant, Feb 11, 2010). However, Kate explained "the saddest thing about the Center is that they used to have a little book store called Bookworms. That was so cute, charming, and amazing, and then Barnes & Noble came. I don't like when chain businesses push out small business" (Interview).

A restaurateur explained that when estimating the cost of opening a new restaurant, rent is estimated at 6% of gross revenue (Interview), which is similar to industry standards of 6% or less for rent and 8% to 10% or less for occupancy, including rent, common area fees, taxes, insurance, and utilities (Baker Tilly, 2012). Food and beverage costs run 40% to 50% of gross sales and payroll 30% to 35% of gross sales (Baker Tilly, 2012). Rent being the lowest cost would appear to indicate that vulnerability as a result of increasing rent is low compared to changes in other costs of operating a restaurant. It is not my intent to claim that displacement does not occur as a result of rising property values, rents, and taxes or that no business has ever been displaced from West Hartford Center as the result of such increases. However, in regard to my research, higher and rising rents do not appear to be a main driver of business closures.

A reason why rising rents do not appear to be a driver of business closures in the Center is that rents in the Center are not one-size-fits all (R. Mahoney, Interview). A variable rent structure to the Center is an important part of the property management governance structure and the attention given to managing tenant mix. Richard Mahoney explained that banks and jewelers pay a premium, the highest rents in the Center and the restaurants typically pay the second highest rents. However, Mahoney further explained that rents vary “depending on where it is on the street, the size of the store ... [and that] there are some who are \$20 [per square foot] ... tenants that we want to keep here because the use is so valuable to the Center all by itself that the landlord’s willing to take a hit” (Interview). The variable rent structure was confirmed through interviews with restaurant owners, in that rents ranged from as low as \$25 to over \$40 per square foot by owner accounts (Ron and Ronnie, Myers, Delbon, Interviews).

Mahoney explained how this variable rent structure came into existence. He explained that property owners previously competed with each other over tenants. “I was able to get all of them [the property owners]...to come to the conclusion that, ‘Hey, you guys are not each other’s enemies. You’ve got to work together, or the tenants who are your enemies are going to eat you alive’” (Interview). Burayidi emphasizes the importance of involving property owners in the downtown redevelopment. For example, “involving both tenants of downtown property and property owners is crucial to downtown renewal” (Burayidi, 2001: 294). However, he

also notes how formal downtown redevelopment programs, such as the National Main Street program, “no template for organizing landlords ... [and] without the cooperation of property owners, preservation strategies for downtown structures will be futile” (Burayidi, 2013: 4). Building trust, the property owners allowed Mahoney to make leasing decisions and provided Mahoney the ability to manage 80% of the Center as if it were a shopping mall. He could manage the mix and location of tenants (Kramer, et. al., 2008). Gibbs explains that typically “downtowns are not centrally managed business districts” (Gibbs, 2012: 47) which creates inconsistencies, conflicts, and competition between property owners for tenants. Formalizing the management structure and managing tenant mix was important to the remaking of the Center. “The tenant mix must constantly be watched and fine-tuned” (Kramer, et al, 2008: 220). Mahoney, and today, his son Michael, painstakingly monitor, adjust, and strive to manage the tenant mix of the Center (R. Mahoney, M. Mahoney, Interviews).

This approach to property management, a governance structure, draws the suburban back into focus with the discussion of gentrification. For example, Hamel explains, “Suburban governance in the study of contemporary cities deserves our attention because with the production of global suburban spaces new theoretical and empirical challenges are arising. Who are the main agents responsible for the shape and expansion of suburbs” (Hamel in Keil, 2013: 26)? In the case of West Hartford Center local agency (Paradis, 2000, 2002) in form of property management is influencing how this space is being occupied and organized. More important, the nuanced differences in property management and rent structure are creating meaningful differences in how we understand the process of gentrification—a process that has been most studied and conceptualized in the context of definably urban—not suburban, metropolitan, or post-suburban—space (Lees, et al., 2008, 2010).

The landlords, through the efforts and possibly the wisdom of Richard Mahoney, recognized the importance of the *art and science of tenant mix* (Kramer, et al, 2008). That is, they realized that diversity (Walker and Salt, 2006, 2012) is important to the overall wellbeing of the Center, and that by focusing on the greater needs of the Center as a space and real estate market, not simply on their personal and individual needs as property owners, they can return greater yields. Now it would be easy to claim that in doing so, in the landlords’ realization of the benefit of working

towards the greater good of the Center, they have simply found a way to extract greater profits.

However, by realizing that the diversity of the Center is important and by focusing on the overall wellbeing of the Center, the landlords shifted the focus of their attempts to achieve maximum sustained yield (Walker and Salt, 2006) to foster and maintain the economic wellbeing—prosperity—of the Center through diversity (Walker and Salt, 2006). In doing so, they have realized a greater sustained yield—profits. However, in their efforts to foster and maintain the wellbeing of the Center, which is also their effort to increase profits, they have done so in a way that does less harm to their tenants—minimizes, or possibly eliminates, displacement through a variable rent structure that is resultant from diversity being privileged over maximizing sustained yields (Walker and Salt, 2006). Unwittingly, the landlords have developed a property management governance structure that is a resource management and ecosystem services (Walker and Salt, 2006) approach to urban-ecological resilience (Holling, 1973). In addition, they have done so in a suburban or post-suburban space, supporting claims and concerns regarding the fact that urban studies have largely overlooked suburban governance (Hamel in Keil, 2013) and need to better understand suburban governance (Hamel and Keil, 2015).

6.50 Conclusion

The accounts of the entrepreneurs, the Center’s restaurateurs, provide a textured and nuanced picture of the Center’s remaking. Their stories, to some degree, explain the Center’s remaking as both suburbanization and gentrification. For example, the outward movement of Brainard’s coffee business from Downtown Hartford to West Hartford Center clearly fits with our understandings of suburbanization. Furthermore, the socio-economic upgrading of businesses, increases in rents, and high quality and cost of investment fit with our understandings of gentrification. Therefore, the Center’s remaking, to some degree, can be explained in terms of suburbanization and gentrification. We can say that the process of suburbanization, the storefront-by-storefront turnover, is the “restless markets that make and remake the suburbs” (Harris in Keil, 2013: 33). In addition, gentrification, the socio-economic upgrading of the Center also explains the Center’s remaking.

However, I am hesitant to claim the Center's remaking is solely the result of suburbanization and gentrification.

Thinking carefully about the restaurateurs, their actions, and the evolution and formalization of the Center that explain the Center's remaking—the transition from a suburban town center to a regional center of middle class hospitality and sociality—reveals something more than can be explained by simply claiming the Center's remaking is the result of suburbanization and gentrification. The vocabularies of suburbanization and gentrification still feel hollow and incomplete. That is, the vocabularies of suburbanization and gentrification provide only a partial explanation of what occurred in the case of the Center's remaking. They miss the nuances, local history, specific actors, and the contingencies that exist in every action and moment.

By missing the nuances, the local history, actors, and the contingencies, the vocabularies of suburbanization and gentrification fall short of explaining the why and how of the Center's remaking. They generalize the accounts and homogenize the textures of change. They miss the *episodic* (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002) nature of urban change, and they reduce the evolution and formalization of the Center as a space and market to being inauthentic and banal (Kunstler, 1993; Duany, et al., 2000; Zukin, 2010), while missing the emergent qualities of urban change (Jacobs, 1961; Johnson, 2001; Latham, 2003). Suburbanization and gentrification, as towering structures (Thrift, 1996), obscure what is most interesting about smaller cities (Bell and Jayne, 2006, 2009), the suburbs (Lang, et al., 2008; McManus and Ethington, 2007), and the forces that create and recreate (sub)urban space (Hamel and Keil, 2015; Keil, 2013).

The vocabulary of urban change and the remaking of urban space, along with vocabularies of ecological resilience (Holling, 1973; Gunderson, et al., 2010), free of the generalizing and homogenizing qualities of suburbanization and gentrification allow us to unfold new understandings of urban change. Ecological metaphors and theories allow us to focus on what changed and why and how change occurred—the remaking of urban space. In doing so, urban-ecological resilience, urban space as a complex adaptive system, allowed us to think carefully about how the different actors, their actions, slow moving variables, and various forces coalesce spatially and

temporally within the physical space of the Center. In this regard, it doesn't matter if the space of the Center is large or small, suburban or gentrified. What matters is 'how' and 'why' change occurred—the remaking of urban space.

The remaking of the hospitality regime in the Center was both emergent, bottom-up (self-organizing), as well as top-down (property management governance structures). The actions of multiple actors, in both space and time, coalesced to create “a highly variable physical environment...continually shifting and changing over time” (Holling and Goldberg, 1971: 225). Each restaurateur and restaurant, whether they persisted or not, contributed to the Center's environment, image, and experience, at every moment in time. The future was always uncertain, as it is still uncertain today. Next, I seek to explore the formal (sub)urban governance of the Center, government intervention, and specifically, what government was doing during this period of the Center's remaking, in our search to understand the why and how of the Center's remaking and the kind of space that is West Hartford Center.

Chapter VII.

Government Intervention: ‘The West Hartford Way’

7.00 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore urban governance, more specifically, suburban governance (Hamel and Keil, 2015), in the context of West Hartford Center’s remaking and government’s intervention in that remaking. In doing so, I will relate what government was doing at specific moments in time to specific periods of change that were documented in the previous chapters. This will include conceptualizing the urban growth machine (Molotch, 1976; Paradis, 2002) as an emergent and self-organizing (Jacobs, 1961; Johnson, 2001) governance structure. In addition, I will also explore how West Hartford—the local state—employed an ecological-resiliency approach to planning and urban governance in its continued efforts to manage change and the Center’s remaking. In regard to my research questions, this chapter will further help us explore and understand who were (and are) the change makers, their roles, and the how and why of the Center’s remaking.

To accomplish this, I will present this chapter in five sections. The first section will introduce and explore the governance structures of West Hartford Center’s remaking in regard to ecological resilience (Holling, 1973; Gunderson and Holling, 2002), existing urban understandings of the forces that influence urban governance, (Brenner and Theodore, 2002), and the urban growth machine (Molotch, 1976; Paradis, 2002). Section two will explore changes to parking regulations that removed barriers and allowed for the growth in the hospitality regime in the early 1990s. Section three will explore the emergence of outdoor dining, also during the early 1990s, and how the local-state managed this process of experimentation.

Section four will present and explore a case study on the Blue Back Square development, the 600,000 square foot mixed use redevelopment project that was proposed and developed between 2003 and 2007. This case study will explore both West Hartford’s non-traditional approach to planning and public-private partnership and how ecological resilience can help us to understand this development and government intervention. Section five will provide a conclusion.

7.10 Managing Change – the Urban Growth Machine and Ecological Resilience

What is most interesting about West Hartford’s interventions in the Center’s remaking is that the local-state did not engage in what I view as conventional planning approaches (Burayidi, 2001, 2013; Cullingworth and Caves, 2009; Fishman, 2000; Hall, 2002; Robertson in Burayidi, 2001) and urban redevelopment (Hannigan, 1998; Hoch, et al., 2000; Peck and Ward, 2002; Fitzgerald and Leigh, 2002; Leinberger; 2005; Hackworth, 2007). Even in the instances when West Hartford engaged in conventional comprehensive planning (West Hartford, 1987, 1997, 2009; Hoch, et al., 2000; Cullingworth and Caves, 2009) its efforts were hesitant and ambiguous.

This not to say West Hartford was not proactive or intentional in its actions and interventions in the remaking of the Center. Nor is it to say that West Hartford’s approach was not conventional in how academic accounts conceptualize and understand urban governance (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). The unconventional-ness of West Hartford’s interventions, I argue, are nuanced differences in how West Hartford engaged in and treated the Center as a space and as a problem to solve. Therefore, I argue that West Hartford managed, rather than planned, the remaking of the Center. By managed, I mean, West Hartford proactively engaged in the Center as a real estate market (McClure in Burayidi, 2001), as a public space, and as a source of tax revenue (Feldman, Rowson, Van Winkle, Foster, and Limson, Interviews).

In addition, West Hartford—the local state—was unaware of ecological resilience, yet managed to approach the Center as if it were an ecosystem and unknowingly employed what could be called a resiliency approach (Walker and Salt, 2006; 2012) to (sub)urban government intervention. This is interesting in regard to the many concerns of “translating resilience thinking from the natural to the social world” (Davoudi, et al., 2012: 305; see also Wilkinson, 2012; Porter and Davoudi, 2012). For example, Porter and Davoudi claim that panarchy “[a]ppplied to human settlements in a depoliticized fashion will easily and unproblematically support continued neoliberalisation of urban and planning policy” (Porter and Davoudi, 2012: 332). They further claim “the tendencies of resilience thinking to assume that ‘socio-ecological’ categories exist naturally, strip away human agency, normalise

phenomena as if they are inevitable, hide the mechanisms by which ‘systems’ are socially constructed, and depoliticise the value choices underpinning courses of human intervention should strike a highly cautionary note” (Porter and Davoudi, 2012: 333). Seeing that West Hartford unknowingly implemented a resiliency approach to urban governance and the Center’s remaking, allows us to think through these concerns and to see if they were realized in the case of the Center.

Essentially, the Center was approached by government as a complex adaptive system—an ecological system—that was fluid, not static, and constantly shifting. Therefore, the space of the Center, (the system) needed, not to be planned, coerced, or molded to conform to some predicted future vision (Burayidi, 2013; Hardt in Burayidi, 2001; Robertson in Burayidi, 2001) or outcome, but rather it needed to be nurtured, encouraged, tested, and continually and meticulously managed. West Hartford unknowingly engaged in what Gunderson and Allan explain as *adaptive governance* (Gunderson and Allan in Gunderson, et al., 2010: XX-XXI):

operating in situations where the science is contextual, knowledge is incomplete, multiple ways of knowing and understanding are present, policy is implemented in modest steps, and unintended consequences and decision making are both top-down (although fragmented) and bottom-up. As such, adaptive governance is meant to integrate science, policy, and decision making systems that assume and manage for change rather than against change.

Engaging Stakeholders

The Center’s remaking began in the early 1990s and continues today. However, the period from 1985 to 1999 is when government intervention unleashed new potential for the Center. In regard to government intervention, the remaking of the Center begins shortly after the arrival of Barry Feldman, PhD, the now retired town manager who was hired in 1985. Feldman explained that West Hartford recognized the Center had unrealized potential and when asked what government did to facilitate change, Feldman explained (Interview):

...we made a real concerted effort to form a partnership with the merchants, with the building owners, with the Chamber of Commerce, with an understanding that the Center, having essentially the best opportunity to produce tax revenue to the town, was in part necessary to keep its appearance and its vitality foremost in everybody’s mind. So, with that, it’s kind of like a guiding principle. The efforts included constant communications, constant contact. I, personally, participated in a number of the downtown business

associations. Not just the annual meetings, but the every week kind of meetings, I was there.

Linda French, the executive director of the Chamber of Commerce from 1991 to 2002, explained “Barry [Feldman] was the leader.... He and I would go for walks two or three times a year through the Center so he could ask me the questions, ‘Who’s this? What are they doing? Why is that like that?’ And that from a town manager is fantastic” (Interview). She continued, “Barry didn’t just give lip service. He really listened and came up with great ideas” (Interview).

Feldman’s influence was not simply that he listened and had good ideas, but that he was building relationships, creating trust, and creating a culture of leadership and cooperation. Feldman’s leadership and the culture of cooperation he instituted took the form of a local growth coalition (Molotch, 1976; Paradis, 2002). Feldman, was nurturing the local growth coalition, an informal public-private partnership between local government and the various stakeholders that governed the Center’s activity. However, this public-private partnership is not the conventional and formal structures of a business improvement district, redevelopment agency or even a Main Street program (Burayidi, 2001, 2013; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; National Main Street Center, 2015; Smith in Orori-Amoah, 2007).

The governance structure of the Center was and is organized around informal relationships and the mutual interests among the Chamber of Commerce, the Merchants Association, the Property Owners Association, the property managers, and government officials. Otto explains, “the activities of downtown associations, local governments and other semi-public and public institutions have had indirect and to a lesser extent direct influence on the shaping of downtown retail” (Otto in Orori-Amoah, 2007: 263). Molotch explains, “each landowner...has in mind a certain future for that parcel which is linked somehow with his or her own well-being ... More subtle still is the emergence of concern for an aggregate of parcels: one sees that one’s future is bound to the future of a larger area, that the future enjoyment of financial benefit flowing from a given parcel will derive from the general future of the proximate aggregate of parcels” (Molotch, 1976: 310-311). Most, if not all, of the stakeholders, individually and collectively, recognized their vested interests in the larger area of the Center.

The Center's growth coalition is interesting in the context of ecological resilience. Logan explains that "urban sociology in the 1970s was still in the sway of ecological theory" and that "[h]uman ecology was already under assault from Marxists...who understood urban economics in terms of the requirements of capitalism or of capitalists as a class rather than in terms of an efficient free market or natural processes" (Logan, et al., in Jonas and Wilson, 1999: 74). Logan argues that "Molotch's (1976) theory attacked ecology even more directly. He targeted the same key dependent variables as had ecological studies—the growth, changing composition, and land-use pattern of the city—and he argued that urban growth has to be understood not as a function of economic necessity but as the target of political action" (Logan, et al., in Jonas and Wilson, 1999: 74). While I agree with Logan there is some irony with Molotch's attack on ecology in that there is an ecological and self-organizing quality to Molotch's growth coalition. In addition, ecological resilience (Holling and Orians, 1971; Holling and Goldberg, 1971; Holling, 1973; Walker and Salt, 2010, 2012) as a means of thinking through urban change, the remaking of space, and government intervention is not exactly the same as the human and urban ecology of Park and Burgess (1925) and Hawley (1944, 1950). In fact, Molotch's informal organization of growth coalitions and "[m]ore subtle...emergence of concern for an aggregate of parcels: one sees that one's future is bound to the future of a larger area" (Molotch, 1976: 310-311), resembles emergence (Jacobs, 1961; Johnson, 2001) and complex adaptive systems—ecological systems (Gunderson and Holling, 2002). For example (Molotch, 1976: 311):

when these coalitions are of sufficiently enduring quality, they constitute identifiable, ongoing communities. Each member of a community is simultaneously the member of a number of others; hence communities exist in a nested fashion (e.g. neighborhood within city within region), with salience of community level varying both over time and circumstance. Because of this nested nature of communities, subunits which are competitive with one another at one level...will be in coalition at a higher level...

Molotch's multiple communities and nested scales of coalitions resembles the nested scales of adaptive cycles that form the panarchy within complex adaptive ecological systems (Gunderson and Holling, 2002). In regard to *resilience thinking*, Walker and Salt explain, "[r]esilient social-ecological systems have many overlapping ways of responding to a changing world. Redundancy in institutions increases the response diversity and flexibility of a system ... More 'messy' structures perform

better during such times of change” (Walker and Salt, 2006: 148). Molotch’s growth coalitions create a self-organizing governance structure that has redundancy naturally built into its structure. For Feldman, the relationships and communication were important because they were the glue that held the informal coalition or coalitions together.

French describes, the “events that [government] enabled us to have. I mean, closing streets and doing other things to bring people who had the perception that the Center was too expensive for them” (Interview). “[T]he idea of retailers having streets closed for events (Figure 18), some towns won’t even think about it. And not only did West Hartford allow us to do it, they supported us with police, fire, public works, you know, the whole bit” (Interview; see also Hartford Courant, August 30, 2002). Asked to clarify her phrase, “they supported us,” French explained that West Hartford provided police, fire, public works, and other government services without any fees or additional charges. It is important to note, this is not a typical or common practice of local government—not to charge fees for special event related government service—in Connecticut and highlights that while West Hartford’s interventions appear conventional in an academic context—public-private partnerships of neoliberal urbanism—their interventions were not conventional in the context of application and practice.

Figure 18. Public Space and Community

Yoga on LaSalle Street

West Hartford Days



Photos: Linda Poland (2013) and Donald Poland (2012)

Feldman and West Hartford, unwittingly, were employing a management approach, or what could be called a resiliency approach to managing the Center. Government was open to new ideas, nurturing capacity of stakeholders, building

relationships and trust, and providing leadership, support, and resources (Holling, 1973; Walker and Salt, 2006, 2012). The local-state was nurturing the local growth coalition (Molotch, 1976). In addition, local government was innovating, finding its own way, not seeking out twelve-step recipes to employ (Leinberger, 2005) or copying examples from other places (Hannigan, 1998; Deming, 1993). By engaging and supporting the stakeholders, West Hartford was investing—not simply money and resources—but also time and effort (Boehlke, 2004) in the community and the Center.

This approach, Feldman’s nurturing of the growth coalition, can also be understood through the work of Molotch, et al., (2000) on city character and urban tradition. Feldman’s management approach was creating a culture of local government that highlights the importance of local context (Paradis, 2002; Thrift in Massey, 1999; Young in Hamel and Keil, 2015). “By reformulating character of place as the mode of connection among unlike elements, and tradition as the mode of perpetuating these links, we gain a way to explain how differences develop and persist ... surface similarities can mask underlying ‘more stable’ differences in local unfoldings...because what is distinctive is not a list of attributes but the *way* these attributes lash-up and how the structuration process moves the resulting conjunctures forward through time” (Molotch, et al., 2000: 816). *The West Hartford way*, the local context and culture, of intervention was evident throughout my research and understandings of local governance.

Creating Investment

By engaging the stakeholders, building trust, and providing leadership and support, government had positioned itself in a dialogue on investment with the stakeholders with the aim of creating greater investment in the Center (Boyle in Jonas and Wilson, 1999: 59):

Since the local state draws revenue from a territorially defined tax base, it is characterized by a fiscal local dependence. A strong economy is essential to secure the sustained reproduction of state-financed welfare programs. As a consequence, the local state becomes a player in the growth machine and utilizes its powers to enhance the chosen development path.

West Hartford’s 1987 Plan of Development—the comprehensive plan (Cullingworth and Caves, 2009)—in regard to the Center, focused on investment, the economics of

property values, and the relationship between property values, investment, and tax revenues. Feldman explained West Hartford's perspective on creating investment and the planning (Interview):

...it was financially motivating.... We were looking for tax revenue. Because we knew as a town that the [tax] burden was very much on the residential property owner and we knew over time something called tax capitalization would set in, where taxes became so high that in order for people to sell homes, they would actually have to reduce their price and capitalize the increased taxes in their sales price to be competitive. So, we were very concerned about that occurring and so, anyways, the motivation was how do you do things to encourage private investment, generate more property taxes, reducing the actual burden on the residential property owner.

Feldman's concerns of tax capitalization and taxes as the motivation for creating investment in the Center are important for understanding local government's intervention in the Center. Molotch argued that "the political and economic essence of virtually any given locality, in the present American context, is *growth* ... the desire for growth provides the key operative motivation toward consensus for members of politically mobilized local elites..." (Molotch, 1976: 309-310). Although Molotch utilized population growth as the measure, he explained that "it is the entire syndrome of associated events that is meant by the general term 'growth'" (Molotch, 1976: 310). In the case of West Hartford Center, the measure of 'growth' was increased tax revenue, not population. Understanding the fiscal—property value and tax revenue—motivation is also important. Feldman's guiding principles of 'appearance and vitality' mentioned above, were about investment and growing the tax base. That is, government and private interests needed to invest in the Center—time, effort, and money—to maintain and improve the appearance and to create vitality resulting in increased property value and returning greater tax revenue to local government. Feldman further explains "there was that constant, if you will, kind of like atmospherics of encouraging people to consider building, develop, you know, we'll help. We'll figure out a way for town government to help facilitate zoning-wise, parking-wise. We'll keep the place safe. We'll make it look attractive. We'll do well by [you]...paving the streets periodically and prettying the place up" (Interview).

Ron VanWinkle, Feldman's predecessor as town manager, came to work for West Hartford, as an economic consultant and was hired in 1987 as the Director of Community Services, the agency responsible for planning and economic

development. He explained, the “goal was [we] really wanted the owners to invest more money in their buildings. By investing more money in their buildings, draw a higher quality client, get more rent, and be able to strengthen the center to get more rent because your new store will draw more customers. More customers mean they make more revenue, and it means that the landlord makes money. More customers mean the streets become alive” (Interview). What VanWinkle stopped short of saying was that by the landlords making more money—realizing greater value in their property—government would extract greater tax revenues from those properties. In this regard, the local government was involved in conventional practices of neoliberal urbanism (Brenner and Theodore; 2002). However, focusing on investment is important and can’t be reduced simply to neoliberal urbanism, especial if there is the need to engage property owners in downtown reinvestment strategies (Burayidi, 2013). Burayidi, in his exploration and discussion of *resilient downtowns*, explains: “if the owner of the building is unable to recoup the cost from her investment on the building, she is not likely to pursue it. Businesses must be able to justify the cost of design and investment. Design [and planning] without an understanding of cash flow is flawed” (Burayidi, 2013: 5).

Feldman further explains the local state’s neoliberal quest for greater tax revenue. “[T]he relationship building, the planning studies, all of which created a framework for [which] we could do more. We should look to figure out how can we, and the collective ‘we’ is the private-public partnership, how does both do something to facilitate more development, more money to private interests, but more money to the public treasury and that was kind of like the tie that binds both public and private...for both parties to get something financially out of it. We were looking for tax revenue” (Interview).

Planning and the Center

VanWinkle, trained as an economist and coming from private industry, is not a fan of conventional public sector planning. He explained “plans are too restrictive” and government requires greater flexibility to intervene than that which is provided by conventional plans (Meeting, October 2011). West Hartford had not created conventional town center plans or planning studies (Hardt in Burayidi, 2001; Hoch, et

al., 2000; Paradis, 2000) for the Center, but the planning vision was to create investment. West Hartford Center “had good bones”, explained VanWinkle, and it was the Town’s intent to “create investment” in the Center (Meeting, October 2011). VanWinkle’s reference to the Center’s *good bones* can be conceptualized in the context of Johnson’s (2010) platform, the physical space and infrastructure of the Center being conducive to the performance of commercial activity. Therefore, West Hartford did not need to plan for the creation or recreation of the Center’s platform, they simply needed to find ways to utilize, nurture, and manage the platform that already existed.

Mila Lamson was hired as senior planner in 1988. When asked if West Hartford created any specific plans, studies, or redevelopment strategies for West Hartford Center, she replied, “you know [as she started laughing] I don’t think you’ll ever come across anything like that” (Interview). Lamson explained there were always plans in the sense that the Center’s potential was not fully realized, but not in the conventional planning sense of creating a planner’s vision or drafting plan for what the Center will become (Interview). West Hartford’s approach was different than say Brandon, Canada where Ramsey explains, “[b]etween the late 1960s and the early 1980s five main reports were issued, all of them identifying what was wrong with downtown Brandon and what needed to be done” (Ramsey, et al., in Orori-Amoah, 2007: 229). This difference in approach is important to recognize and understand in regard to furthering the understanding of small or smaller cities (Bell and Jayne, 2006, 2009), metropolitan and non-metropolitan cities (Champion and Hugo, 2004; Frey in Champion and Hugo, 2004; Paradis, 2002), urban and suburban governance (Hamel and Keil, 2015; Keil, 2013), and the remaking of space.

Both Feldman and VanWinkle (Interviews) noted the Town’s 1987 Plan of Development (the comprehensive plan) as being important to the changes that followed in the Center. However, upon review of the 1987 Plan, very few goals or specific outcomes were found related to the Center or the community as whole. In fact, the 1987 Plan had little more than general statements about economic development and the Center.

For example, the 1987 Plan’s town-wide economic development goal was to “[s]trengthen and diversify the community’s tax base by promoting new development

in under-utilized commercial districts” and the general planning and land use objectives were to “[e]ncourage higher economic utilization of commercial/industrial properties where the physical and land characteristics, traffic conditions, and infrastructure are conducive to increased intensity” (West Hartford, Plan of Development, 1987: 2 & 4). These statements do not provide any specifics about preordained outcomes. For example, government never said the Center should or would become a regional center for middle class hospitality and sociality. The land use objective specific to the Center was to “[e]ncourage the higher economic utilization of Town Center properties to expand the area’s contribution to the tax base and to enhance the visual appeal of the business district” (West Hartford, Plan of Development, 1987: 7). The Plan never explains how this would be accomplished. The objective is without predetermination as to what government would do to achieve this or what the outcome should be (Burayidi, 2013). West Hartford was not only leaving its options open (Walker and Salt, 2006), but government did not presume it had the sufficient knowledge and know how to do this, therefore recognizing its ignorance (Holling and Goldberg, 1971; Holling, 1973).

While the 1987 Plan was conservative in its objectives, it does reveal insightful understandings. The Plan recognized differences between the Center west of South Main Street and east of South Main Street. The west side of the Center is the historic core, the central business district dating back mostly to the 1920s. The Plan’s policies related to the west side focused on maintaining its ‘atmosphere’ and storefront retail uses. The Center east of South Main Street along Raymond Road was “characterized by physically and economically under-utilized properties” and the Plan made specific recommendations for the creation of a “Design Development Designation” to provide opportunities for redevelopment with the goal “[t]o obtain an acceptable level of control over the architectural amenities and landscape design for new development” and “[t]o provide sufficient guidelines and controls over development with respect to its impact on the town’s infrastructure, traffic circulation and parking, residential neighborhoods and community facilities” (West Hartford, Plan of Development, 1987: 8).

The 1987 Plan provided little more than a belief that the Center had potential and government needed to put systems in place to maintain an ‘acceptable level of control’ over the aesthetics of possible future investment. West Hartford’s 1987 Plan

cannot be interpreted as Jacobs' (1961) complexity and emergence (Johnson, 2001), nor can it be viewed as the top-down planning of Mosses (Jacobs, 1961; Hall, 2002). West Hartford's government intervention—planning activities—in the late 1980s falls somewhere in between emergence and top-down planning. *Adaptive governance* and “decision making are both top-down (although fragmented) and bottom-up” (Gunderson and Allan in Gunderson, et al., 2010: XX-XXI). The same is true of the 1997 and 2009 Plans for West Hartford.

West Hartford, by focusing on the financial motivations to increase investment, property values, and tax revenue, refrained from predetermining the future of the Center. VanWinkle, explains, government “talked about an idea of creating a more active Center, but were never able to implement that simply because the town doesn't do it; it has to be the private sector” (Interview). West Hartford recognized the limitations of government's role (Holling and Goldberg, 1971). However, West Hartford did recognize that it could play a meaningful role in encouraging investment, by nurturing the growth coalition (Molotch, 1976).

When asked about the role of government, VanWinkle replied, “Get out of the way. Get out of the way. Obviously, government has a regulatory role here, but when I first came here, you couldn't do anything without an enormous, ‘No.’ ... That changed dramatically in West Hartford” (Interview). VanWinkle's perspective is interesting because it does not dismiss the regulatory role of government—the police powers of government (Hoch, et al., 2000; Cullingworth and Caves, 2009; Valverde, 2012), but at the same time he expresses concerns of overregulating to the point of shutting down investment and development—new ideas, experimentation, change, and opportunities. This self-limiting and conservative perspective of government's role—regulate for public health and safety, not for control—likely contributed to the resiliency of the Center and its remaking. “Rigid institutions reinforce the fragility introduced to ecological systems by command-and-control management with the result that both the ecological and institutional systems become even more vulnerable to the inevitable surprise” (Allan, et al., in Gunderson, et al., 2010: 10).

Working with West Hartford in 1994 as an economic development consultant, Rob Rowson, then a real estate appraiser, was soon after hired as the Town's economic development coordinator and later became the Director of Community

Services. I also asked Rowlson, ‘what is the role of government?’ and he explained (Interview):

I’m a free market entrepreneur. I believe in the market. I just believe that if the right things are done, the market will take care of itself and it either will support what you’re doing or not support what you’re doing ... The role of our government has been and I think what we have crafted here is...[an] atmosphere where we became team partners with people, whether it’s the restaurants or the condos or the new retailers or the new stores, where the people coming in to invest in my community felt that the staff and the town hall, the local government had a stake in what you were going to do. And we weren’t going to let you do it anyway you wanted to do it. You were going to have to follow the rules and what not, but we were going to help you follow those rules.

West Hartford, through the narratives of VanWinkle and Rowlson reveals itself as hesitant and possibly averse to the rigid processes (Hotch, et al., 2000) and conventional top-down planning (Cullingworth and Caves, 2009). “You can write all the plans you want, if the economics aren’t there, you’re never going to have success” explained VanWinkle (Interview; see Burayidi, 2013). This perspective is not a simple statement of ‘the market rules all’ or as Rowlson said, “the market will take care of itself” (Interview). For West Hartford, the Center was a complex adaptive system with many forces and processes at work. Some of these forces and processes were recognized by government as knowable and within their capacity to understand and manage. Others were recognized to be unknown and even unknowable, or beyond government’s control and capabilities. By not *presuming sufficient knowledge, but recognizing its ignorance*, West Hartford focused not on *capacities to predict the future*, but on the *capacity to devise systems that can absorb and accommodate future events in whatever unexpected form they may take* (Holling, 1973). By recognizing its limitations and narrowly defining its role, West Hartford intervened in the Center through an ecological-resiliency approach aimed at managing change, not resisting or attempting to drive specific changes (Walker and Salt, 2006, 2012).

This is interesting if we return to the concerns of “translating resilience thinking from the natural to the social world” (Davoudi, et al., 2012: 305). For example, the notion that “[d]efinitions of resilience don’t mention ‘the terms ‘power’ or ‘agency’ (Bene, et al., 2012: 13) raises concerns that resilience and the aim of resilience are power-blind and therefore risky in that such approaches may create harm. However, West Hartford did not abdicate its ‘power’ or ‘agency,’ nor did it

“strip away human agency, normalise phenomena as if they are inevitable, hide the mechanisms by which ‘systems’ are socially constructed, and depoliticise the value choices underpinning courses of human intervention” (Porter and Davoudi, 2012: 333). West Hartford conservatively defined its role, while maintaining its obligation to protect the public health, safety, and welfare (Mandelker, 1997; Fuller, 1999). Bene, et al., claim there “is the tendency to obliterate the ‘negative’ side of resilience. Resilience is still too often presented as an objective (an outcome) that be aimed at, with no recognition that resilience is in fact a neutral characteristic which, in itself, is neither good or bad” (Bene, et al., 2012: 13). West Hartford, unaware of its own potential for resilience, did not create resilience as an *objective or outcome to be aimed at*. Nor was West Hartford attempting to *obliterate the ‘negative’ side of resilience*. West Hartford was simply trying to manage change and in doing so, was attempting to manage the negative and positive consequences of change.

It is tempting to claim that West Hartford’s—the local-state’s—quest for tax revenue through increased investment and rising property values was a gentrification strategy and pure neoliberal urbanism (Fraser, 2004; Brenner and Theodore, 2002). However, if we think carefully about Feldman’s concern of tax capitalization and the negative consequence of it driving down residential property values, then the investment strategy becomes more nuanced. Feldman and the local-state were attempting to extract value from commercial properties—the capitalists—to protect the property value of residents. “A strong economy is essential to secure the sustained reproduction of state-financed welfare programs” (Boyle in Jonas and Wilson, 1999: 59). In this regard, the public-private partnership or neoliberal urbanism was not government working solely to make private enterprise money, as VanWinkle appeared to claim—especially not at the cost or harm to the public. The public-private partnership and neoliberal urbanism of the local-state was aimed at taking revenue from private enterprise to fund government services that benefit the residents—the mostly middle class residents and homeowners of West Hartford. Keil explains, “[w]hile governance helped to produce the suburbs, we now need forms of governance that assist us in figuring out how to live in them with their diversity, their aging built environments and exploding mobility, cultural, and social needs” (Keil, 2013: 201). West Hartford provides a glimpse at suburban government trying to

figure out how to live in a changing suburban landscape (Sieverts in Hamel and Keil, 2015).

The Little Things: Aesthetics, Flowers, and Streetscape

When Feldman explained that the Center's '*appearance and vitality*' were guiding principles to West Hartford's interventions, he may have under-conceptualized and underemphasized their importance. Throughout the research interviews with government officials, other stakeholders, and consumers, appearance and vitality were continually referenced as important to the Center's remaking, prosperity, vibrancy, and appeal. Essentially, appearance and vitality evolved into a recurring theme of *clean, safe, and aesthetically pleasing*. For government, the way to achieve clean, safe, and aesthetically pleasing and to create investment was to focus on what I call the *little things*. The way for government to manage the Center was to do its best to make sure the public realm was maintained as clean, safe, and aesthetically pleasing.

To accomplish this, local government believed it had an obligation to lead by example and to invest time, effort, and money (Boehlke, 2004) into the Center's public realm. Therefore, West Hartford implemented a capital improvement program that included resurfacing streets, installing brick pavers for sidewalks, installing new lighting, and ornamenting the space of the Center with flowers (Rowlson, Feldman, VanWinkle, Interviews). However, West Hartford did not implement these investments as a grand streetscape program, but as small incremental and continual improvements over many years. It was a program of ongoing maintenance and improvement. It should be noted here that this is a good example of the nuanced difference between conventional government intervention and how West Hartford intervened. Streetscape improvements are typically approached as large redevelopment projects—doing the entire street or area as one large project. Whereas West Hartford approached streetscape improvements incrementally.

Rowlson explained that when government was investing in the Center, they would engage the property owners and business community, with the aim of creating partnerships and leveraging government's investment to create private investment (Interview):

We can't spend public dollars on his [private] property. Our policy is not to do that. But if I can give it to him for \$2 a square yard versus the \$5 he'd have to pay because I'm doing such volume is why I'm getting that price, doesn't that make sense? So we took it upon ourselves to invest in the public streetscape every year for 15 years...started sometime in the '90s and we do chunks at a time, a little chunk at a time. So we bring our guy in and we do this block this year and we'd spend \$25 or \$50,000 and we'd do that block and we'd do the lights and we'd do everything else with it and that's how we did it. And we sort of coerced the property owner by saying look doesn't this look nice? Wouldn't you like to look this nice and some resisted us.

Rowlson's coercion, government shaming private property owners into investing in their properties, was really about raising the standards and expectations of the quality of West Hartford Center that was on display—the space of the Center was to be maintained to a higher standard.

In regard to improving the aesthetics of the Center, nothing was as influential as flowers (Figure 19). Feldman explains, the “[f]lowers were a big thing” (Interview). West Hartford contracted with a local flower shop to install flower pots throughout the Center, and the public works department increased landscaping and flower planting in existing green space. The impact of the flowers was both instant and dramatic. Feldman continued, “I will never forget the impact flowers had...that one little touch of having a sense of somebody really cares, somebody's really making the place look good, had more of an impact than any of us ever realized” (Interview).

Figure 19. Ornamenting the Public Realm

Flowers

Watering Flowers



Photos: Donald Poland (2012)

The importance of image and aesthetics surfaced in many interviews, Feldman referenced image and aesthetics a number of times. So I asked Feldman if aesthetics were important to the remaking of the Center (Interview):

No question. The visual appeal. So, that's why the flowers and that's why...we were very keen to make sure the streets were always clean, that there was little ...you couldn't help have debris and some garbage, but they were very sensitive to how it looked. And people appreciated that because as we would talk to people both anecdotally and we would occasionally do surveys. You know, that always came back loud and clear. People wanted a place that looked good. People take a lot of pride in that. It's like their front yard.

The utilization and importance of ornamentation and beauty has been documented in our suburban and planning histories (Jackson, 1985; Fishman, 1987; Wilson, 1989; Peterson, 2003). Unfortunately, urban studies, including our suburban histories and gentrification literature, are often dismissive or critical of ornamentation, beautification, and the cleanliness of urban space (Jackson, 1985; Kunstler, 1993; Zukin, 2010). Some critics claim that aesthetic embellishments facilitate the suburbanization of urban space (Hammett and Hammett, 2007). Dismissing and criticizing the aesthetics of urban space as inauthentic, sanitized, and suburbanized misses the role of aesthetics and the impact of *the little things*. Ornamentation is not simply the sanitization of urban space. It has become a hallmark of a civilized society (Bushnell, 1847, 1864) and important to creating confidence for investment (Boehlke, 2004).

West Hartford's focus on the little things, attention to the slow moving variables, and investment in the aesthetics of the public realm, was simply the way West Hartford managed the Center. Government cared for the Center, and nurtured the Center's image and aesthetics (Feldman, Rowlson, VanWinkle, Interviews). This approach to managing the Center was aimed at making the Center presentable and inviting, not simply to investors, but also to consumers, who inhabit the space of the Center. Beginning in the late 1980s, this approach evolved through the 1990s, and played a role in the Center's increased vibrancy by the early 2000s. The role and influence of the little things, in this case the flowers and the aim of making the Center clean, safe, and aesthetically pleasing, are evidenced in the largest investment in the Center's history—Blue Back Square. I ask Richard Heapes of Street-Works, the developer who invested \$110 million in the Blue Back Square development, the open-ended question of why he decided to invest in West Hartford. This is how he answered (Interview):

Well when we went to West Hartford the first time before we owned anything there, all the streets and the sidewalks were clean as a whistle. The pots all had flowers in them. And that was West Hartford's view of themselves and their feeling about themselves and there was no formal BID [Business Improvement District], downtown BID ... That was just the town manager and the [public works] department taking care of the public realm ... That was just the West Hartford way...

That was just the West Hartford way—government doing what it believed was important and within the grasp of its role, keeping the streets and sidewalks clean, planting and maintaining flowers, and taking care of the public realm. By seeking out the spectacular, dramatic, and controversial, urban and planning theory often miss or misinterpret the little things that can and do matter. West Hartford was managing the public realm, not planning or predetermining what kind of space the Center should become. Government was cultivating the Center's ecosystem, helping to create a habitat that attracted investment in the form of new species—entrepreneurs and consumers who would inhabit the Center.

7.20 Removing Barriers to Parking

When asked about change and the remaking of West Hartford Center, government officials and other stakeholders indicated that the early and mid-1990s were a critical point (Rowlson, VanWinkle, R. Mahoney, Interviews). When asked what was occurring at this time that influenced the Center's remaking, most indicated changes related to parking and outdoor dining (Feldman, Rowlson, VanWinkle, R. Mahoney, Interviews). In regard to parking, Rowlson explained that the parking requirements in the zoning regulations in effect in the early 1990s did not allow retail storefronts to be changed into restaurant uses. “[W]hen zoning changed to allow parking to be shared” the Center changed (Meeting, October, 2011).

Town Planner Limson explained, “our ordinances...really didn't acknowledge shared parking. And what was happening when we had change in tenants ... when a restaurant wanted to go in ... we were limiting the number of seats in a restaurant by zoning. So we weren't allowing an opportunity for restaurants and other users to come into the Center who could really very well succeed knowing full well we had all of this shared [public] parking” (Interview).

The zoning ordinance, prior to June 25, 1991 required that when a storefront changed from one use (retail) to another use (restaurant), the new use had to provide parking on-site. Since most of the properties in the Center are small with little land available for parking, this requirement had become a barrier to changes in use. In addition, the required parking for retail, office, and service establishments was based on a fixed number of spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. However, requirements for restaurants were based on the number of tables and seats available in the restaurant. This difference in calculating required parking resulted in more parking spaces being required for restaurants than could be provided on-site, as required. The result, new restaurants of any meaningful size could not open in the Center, nor could existing restaurants expand.

Zoning, government regulations, were a barrier to new investment and change. This is evident in my analysis of the storefront database in Chapter V. In the 1980s there were never more than 16 hospitality spaces in the Center. In addition, these hospitality spaces were mostly small eateries, bakeries, and ice cream shops, with fewer than five full-service restaurants serving alcohol. Zoning regulations are an important governance structure (Valerde, 2012; Hoch, et al., 2000). Zoning essentially sets the parameters as to what can occur in regard to use and the density and intensity of how those uses are organized within a given space (Fuller, 1999; Mandelker, 1997). In the context of ecological resilience (Holling, 1973) and the adaptive cycle (Holling, 2001; Gunderson and Holling, 2002), concerns regarding restrictive parking requirements surfaced during a time of uncertainty, the *renewal* phase of the adaptive cycle when the economy collapsed into recession in 1989. As a result, the growth coalition (Molotch, 1976) of property owners, property managers, merchants, and government staff worked together to manage uncertainty and change and to create new opportunities.

In 1990 the Town Council established the “Mayor’s Task Force on West Hartford Center” to “assist in economic development and other matters related to the health of West Hartford Center” (West Hartford, Council Minutes, June 25, 1991). VanWinkle and Feldman confirmed that the Task Force focused on parking issues (Interviews). Donald Foster, the town planner at the time, explained the proposed change to the Council. “There have been a number of instances lately where existing retail space has been proposed to be converted to a restaurant use that has a slightly

higher parking requirement in the norm than retail. We simply have had to tell that restaurant owner, sorry you can't do it unless you provide additional parking" (Council Minutes, June 17, 1991). West Hartford was responding to uncertainty through the generation of novelty, a key to dealing with surprise or crises (Westley, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002). They identified a barrier, created a process to resolve, and implemented the change (Pickering, 1993). While small and seemingly inconsequential, this micro-scale innovation was a human ecological system responding and adapting to uncertainty (Elzen, et al., 2004; Alberti, 2009).

West Hartford was not actively seeking hospitality establishments (West Hartford Plan of Development, 1987). However, West Hartford, the Task Force (the growth coalition), and ultimately the Town Council were open to change and allowing the potential for restaurants in the Center. Limson explained how government managed this change to parking requirements. "[S]o we said what can we do? We all came together and said why don't we see what we could do? And we did baby steps... The first time we amended the ordinance we said let's start with first [ground] floor ... interchangeable use on the first floor...we won't limit the amount of seats in a restaurant. And that really inspired bigger more successful restaurants in the Center" (Interview).

Limson's explanation of baby steps is important. Limson's *baby steps* translate as small incremental changes. West Hartford was not only open to change, but willing to experiment, test ideas, and scale interventions (Holling and Goldberg, 1971; Pickering, 1993; Walker and Salt, 2012). The change in the zoning ordinance on June 25, 1991 eliminated a barrier to investment and new hospitality uses at the same time the Center was transitioning from the *renewal* phase to the *exploitation* phase of adaptive cycles (Holling, 2001). With the retail regime starting to contract in the late 1980s (French, Interview), this small and coincidental change in parking requirements paved the way for a shift toward the hospitality regime. Nine years later on, March 14, 2000, recognizing the change in parking requirements was successful with storefront tenants, West Hartford amended the zoning ordinance again—an incremental change—to apply the 1991 change in parking provisions to all floors and uses.

Not only did the change in parking requirements open the door to new restaurants, but the change also allowed for larger, full-service restaurants. By allowing full-service restaurants, the ordinance opened the door to more formal dining and a nighttime restaurant trade that was not being served by the mostly small breakfast, lunch, and specialty hospitality establishments. This also opened the door for more formal restaurateurs and professional chefs. Most interesting is the fact that government, at the time, was unaware of what it had done (Pickering, 1993). From government's perspective, it simply changed the parking requirements. Yet in the six remaining months of 1991, after the change to the parking provisions, five new restaurants—Osaka Sushi, Butterfield's, Harry's Pizza, Lemon Grass Thai Cuisine, and Pizza Hut—would open in the Center. By 1995 the number of hospitality establishments would increase to 25, from 16 in 1990.

However, I want to be clear that West Hartford's intervention, the change of parking requirements, was not simply the catalyst for the remaking of the Center that was to come. Government was simply responding to uncertainty, paying attention to slow moving variables, and managing change (Walker and Salt, 2006, 2012). There was no guarantee by making this change that any new, larger, or more formal restaurant would find the Center suitable or open. For example, Peter Brainard, who discussed his opening of Peter B's Espresso in 1992, explained that he was unaware of the change in parking requirements in 1991 (Interview).

7.30 Experimenting with Outdoor Dining

West Hartford's resiliency approach, managing the little things and slow moving variables, is also evident in the emergence of outdoor dining. In 1990, at the same time West Hartford was responding to uncertainty and exploring changes to the parking requirements, something unexpected and illegal occurred—two small restaurants in the Center placed tables and chairs on the sidewalks in front of their storefronts. When asked, government officials could not recall specifically when outdoor dining started in the Center or who was the first restaurant to place tables and chairs outdoors (Limson, Interview). However, most recalled that it was some time in the early 1990s and that outdoor dining was illegal in the Center at the time (Feldman, Limson, VanWinkle, Interviews).

Limson explained that West Hartford adopted an outdoor dining zoning ordinance in 1985, but that “there were probably [only] two establishments [in West Hartford] that successfully achieved an outdoor dining permit through the planning commission” (Interview), both of which were in locations outside of the Center. In the summer of 1990, as documented by photos (Figure 20) in West Hartford’s permit files, two small eateries, Ann Howard’s and Nanshe’s, illegally placed tables and chairs on the sidewalk in front of their storefronts. These businesses were innovating, pushing the boundaries of what was possible and what was legal and in doing so, they introduced novelty (Westley, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 118) in the form of outdoor dining to the Center. Jayne, et al., explain, “creativity is not something that can be imported into a city, but must be achieved *in situ* through the interactions between the relations of work, social life and production” (Jayne, et al, 2010: 1414). The photos were taken by a government inspector and placed in the property files to document the violations. However, no enforcement orders or other documentation was found in the property files with the photos. In fact, as it turns out, while government was concerned enough with these violations to document them with photos, officials were intrigued by the table and chairs that had been placed on the sidewalks (Feldman, Limson, Interviews). Government opted not to take formal enforcement actions, but to take a wait and see approach.

Figure 20. Outdoor Dining 1990

Ann Howard’s Eatery

Nanshe’s



Photos taken by government inspector to document illegal outdoor dining.
Source: Town of West Hartford Building and Zoning Permit Property Files (1990).

Young explains, “[s]tate-decisions, though, are not the end of the story. We must also consider non-decisions...” (Young in Hamel and Keil, 2015: 49). Valverde

(2012) notes that decisions to not enforce regulations are common and shape urban space as much as decisions to enforce regulations. This is important in regard to West Hartford Center, outdoor dining, and the Center's remaking. It would have been easy for government to simply enforce the violation and put an end to outdoor dining—it was also the legal role of government to do so. However, that is not what government did, which substantiates that importance of “addressing head-on the issue of paths not taken, lessons not learned, and decisions not made” (Pritchard and Sanderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 167), understanding that “most historical events have a good deal of contingency built into them” (Thrift, 2005: 3; see also Paradis, 2002), and that we need to be careful when we assume an “historical inevitability” (Thrift, 1996: 4; see also Pickering, 1993) of events and outcomes. At every moment and every turn, West Hartford Center has revealed that what occurred was not preordained (Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999) to arrive at what the Center is today.

Limson, explained how West Hartford approached and dealt with the idea of outdoor dining in the Center similar to how the changes in parking requirements were handled (Interview):

We had requests in the Center about why can't we place a table out here? ...we got our heads together, we said well, what could we possibly do to make this happen? And what you'll see in West Hartford is we take little baby steps before we get to the big prize. And the little baby step was that, the subcommittee of the town council as well as upper management, said let's just do it on a trial basis.

Between 1990 and 1992 a handful of hospitality establishments placed tables and chairs on the sidewalks. However, it was not until 1993 when the planning department, without a formal ordinance in place authorizing outdoor seating permits, allowed outdoor seating in the Center by implementing an informal permitting process to allow limited outdoor seating—no more than four tables and a total of 16 chairs and no table-side service. In 1993 and 1994, approximately twelve establishments were issued informal permits for temporary outdoor seating as part of this trial program (West Hartford Property Files).

Brainard, the owner of Peter B's, was one of the business owners who took advantage of the outdoor seating permit in 1993. Even though his explanation is lengthy, it is worth including as it demonstrates the informality and emergence of

outdoor seating and how government struggled with outdoor seating and how to best manage it (Interview):

I want[ed] to have tables and chairs outside because it creates excitement, people seeing, “Oh, okay, what’s that? I want to go over there.” I knew people would sit out there and it was sort of like a big advertisement for [the business]. So, I found out quickly that having outdoor seating of any kind was illegal... So, I talked to my landlord...I believe he talked to some people on the Town Council and they came up with a temporary permission for me to have two tables and six chairs. It was funny how they explicitly laid out exactly what I could have. Two tables, six chairs could be outside. So I put those out there and I’m sure I had three tables...or four tables and twelve chairs, or something, but...I probably started with two tables and six chairs and if they got full up, I might put more out there [...]

And there were numerous times where...it would be a busy summer evening and I’d have four tables, ten chairs and some policeman or town official would come by and say, “You have to put these back in,” and I’d be like...“What are you doing? I mean, this is commerce for your town where nothing is happening at night, or there’s not a lot going on.” “You know, there’s only a handful of restaurants ... this gets activity. People love this. I mean...this isn’t a fire hazard. This isn’t a health hazard. You know, we put it all away at night when I close.” But...for the most part, that became a constant game of cat and mouse, but I think they probably got tired of...after a while, there usually were a few more tables and chairs out there... It wasn’t until a couple of years later, at least...maybe 95, or something like that that you’d start to see a few restaurants and they had little roped off areas and people could actually have dinner outside, or drinks outside.

Brainard’s account reveals the experimental nature, for both businesses and governments during this early period of outdoor seating. He also reveals the tension between entrepreneurs like himself, trying to attract more business and the conservative local-government unsure about this change and experiment. The government officials—the professional staff—were very clear that outdoor dining was a constant struggle for the Town Council—the elected officials—who were more inclined not to allow it but trusted their staff to engage in this period of experimentation (Feldman, Limson, Rowson, Interviews). The experimentation, tensions, and struggles—the nuances and textures of the emergence of outdoor dining—are important to understanding the Center’s remaking. It would be easy to look back upon the Center’s remaking and assume historical inevitability (Thrift, 1996) was the driving force that remade the Center. To say it another way, it would be easy to assume that government implemented outdoor dining as a means of *domesticating the street* (Baldwin, 1999) or as an attempt to plan, revitalize, and

theme urban space as a site of consumption (Zukin, 1991; Hannigan, 1998), rather than it starting out as an illegal practice initiated by business owners. However, the local story (Bell and Jayne, 2009; Latham, 2003) and local contingencies (Paradis, 2002) reveal West Hartford’s suburban governance as nuanced, textured, and worthy of study and understanding (Hamel and Keil, 2015; Keil, 2013).

In time, as outdoor seating became more popular and government felt more comfortable with it, the Town formalized and codified outdoor seating. Limson explains, “we went back to the town council subcommittee, we said this is really a great thing for the Center, the restaurants are liking it, the residents are liking it, it’s working quite well, it’s time to put this into ordinance. So we did...we then adopted an ordinance that said if you have no more than four tables and four chairs [per table] you could do this with a zoning permit [issued by staff]” (Interview). On June 13, 1995 the Town Council adopted the outdoor dining ordinance. However the ordinance was limited in that it prohibited tableside service and the time for outdoor seating to before 10:00PM—government was still taking baby steps (Council Minutes, 1995).

On July 30, 1997 the Town Council revisited outdoor seating again and “approved a measure that will permit restaurants to offer table service to outdoor diners” (Hartford Courant, July 31, 1997). Limson explained, outdoor dining was “so successful” even with “the limitation” that “you could not get served at your table. So then we said, ok this isn’t working for some of the restaurants, let’s revise it again...” (Interview). Limson continued (Interview):

So that’s how we started the small stuff. That’s what really sort of made, people saw that it complimented the sidewalks, because we had the wide sidewalks...it was sort of a gradual introduction of outdoor dining ... And after that level of success, the Planning Commission, the Council, everybody got really comfortable with outdoor dining, so we began to see more special permits in the Center for those that wanted to go beyond the four tables and four chairs [per table].

West Hartford’s experimentation, that is, the small incremental steps to changes in parking requirements and outdoor dining opened the door to more hospitality, new forms of hospitality, and the new practice of outdoor dining in the Center. This incremental approach reveals a local *character and tradition* (Molotch et al., 2000) to West Hartford government and their approach to governance. In other words, a local culture of governance was revealed and while it fits with the narratives of neoliberal urbanism and state-led regeneration (Brenner and Theodore, 2002), it is

also nuanced. This local culture of governance, this character and tradition (Molotch et al., 2000) can be described as *the West Hartford way*. Government's willingness to experiment—to keep options open—released the Center's possibilities and cautiously welcomed and managed change. "Together, the ever changing environment and changing human aspirations create an intricate dynamic that is difficult to foretell. Any credible vision of the future must be highly uncertain" (Westley, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 118). One of these unforeseen changes and unknowable future events occurred in 1996, when Billy Grant opened Restaurant Bricco.

Without the changes to the parking requirements in 1991, Alforno's, the predecessor to Restaurant Bricco could not have opened in 1993, nor could Restaurant Bricco have opened in 1996. In 1997, Restaurant Bricco became the first fine dining restaurant in the Center to seek and be granted a special permit for an outdoor dining area with more than four tables and sixteen chairs (Hartford Courant, July 31, 1997). Bricco's capitalized on the outdoor dining that had been tested and legalized, adding to the restaurant's popularity, and unwittingly enhancing the Center—the West Hartford Center experience.

"The patio, open for only a week, already has become a hot commodity for leisure dining in a town that likes to see and be seen. The six tables cannot be reserved, making them a choice first-come-first-served option to the cool interior of Bricco's dramatic dining room" (Hartford Courant, August 21, 1997), reported the Hartford Courant—an active participant in the growth machine (Molotch, 1976). "People walk in and want to be on the patio. So many people are saying thank God, West Hartford has finally seen the light,' says manager Jerry Jones. 'Customers are thrilled by it. The response has been terrific'" (Hartford Courant, August 21, 1997). Incremental changes—the slow moving variables, openness to change, experimentation, novelty, and government's management approach to the Center—nearly a decade in the making, coalesced and the Center was being remade into something more than a suburban town center.

Government officials seized every opportunity to keep the excitement that was being generated going by promoting the Center's change to media outlets (Rowlson, Interview) and the media, as enthralled and fascinated with the Center's changes as

were the government officials and the general public, continually featured the Center's remaking in news and public interest reports. The Center was becoming a brand and commodity to be marketed and sold (Zukin, 1989; 1991) by the growth coalition (Molotch, 1976; see also Paradis, 2002). As discussed in the last chapter, the arrival of Max Oyster Bar in 1999 thrust the Center onto the regional stage, and in 2002, Billy Grant's encore performance, the opening of Grants Restaurant and Bar on Farmington Avenue with the largest outdoor dining space in the Center (at the time) set the stage for the next act, for what would become the Center's biggest performance in decades.

7.40 Case Study - Blue Back Square and 'The West Hartford Way'

The east side of South Main Street in 2000 was fronted by institutional uses—the congregational church, the town library, the board of education offices, and town hall. One block further east was Raymond Road along with a short side street, Isham Road. This area had long been the downtown frame (Kaplan, et al., 2009) to the Center and was dominated by two car dealerships. As early as 1987, West Hartford's Plan of Development recognized that this area was underutilized and that potential may exist for future development. By the early 2000s both dealerships had closed and the two sites stood vacant and for sale (Rowlson, Feldman, Interviews). Harris explains (Harris in Keil, 2013: 37):

Change gathers pace again as suburbs age ... Two trends create increasing pressure for redevelopment. Buildings age, deteriorate, and become anachronistic. At the same time, land that is becoming more central—even if one of the relevant centers is itself suburban—becomes more valuable. The logic of redevelopment becomes compelling as new types of users, or old users with new tastes and needs, seek to move in.

In the context of ecological resilience and the adaptive cycle (Holling, 1973, 2001; Gunderson and Holling, 2002), this eastern portion of the Center had collapsed in phase three—*creative destruction*—and was now stuck in the *renewal* phase. Knowing that the west side of the Center was now strong and vibrant, local government officials saw an opportunity for new investment and redevelopment on the east side, but they were unsure how to make it happen.

Unwilling to consider eminent domain (Mandelker, 1997; Cullingworth and Caves, 2009), the conventional planning approach of a redevelopment agency (Fuller,

1999; Cullingworth and Caves, 2009; Kaplin, et al., 2009), officials decided that creating a redevelopment plan that would authorize the use of eminent domain was off the table (Rowlson, Interview). Therefore, West Hartford opted to retain an architect, not to design a grand scheme and plan what the east side area should be, but to provide conceptual sketches of possibilities in this area (Feldman, Rowlson, Interviews). Along with the sketches, West Hartford created a 3-D model (Figure 21) of the area—together the intent of the sketches and model was to start a conversation about investment and what might be possible in this area (Rowlson, Interview). Designing sketches and building a model of the area is a mostly top-down planning approach. While it may not raise to the level of a grand redevelopment scheme, it did start at the top, with a vision, and it came from government. It was not solely emergent (Jacobs, 1961; Johnson, 2001). However, as a form of *modeling* and *future goals* (Pickering, 1993), it provided potential for emergent qualities through the process of *resistance* and *accommodation* described by Pickering's (1993) *mangle of practice*.

Figure 21. West Hartford Center Model



Photo: Donald Poland (2012).

The sketches and model conceptualized a higher density mixed-use development with commercial office, retail, and residential uses—a new urbanism form and function (Duany, et al., 2000; Coyle, 2011; Speck, 2012). However, even though the vision for the area was top-down, government implemented an approach to the area that was less formal than a conventional redevelopment scheme (Burayidi, 2001, 2013; Hannigan, 1998; Peck and Ward, 2002; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Hoch, et al., 2000). Similar to its approach to the west side of the Center in the 1980s,

government engaged the stakeholders and initiated a dialogue around investment. With the dealership properties listed for sale and interest from other property owners in the area, government and real estate brokers started to market specific properties and the area for development.

In 2003, a local real estate developer introduced Richard Heapes of Street-Works, LLC from White Plains, New York to the former Grody Chevrolet site on the west side of Raymond Road (Feldman, Rowlson, Heapes, Interviews; Hartford Courant, Mar 28, 2004). Heapes, who above explained his decision to invest in West Hartford Center, now explained his first impression of the site (Interview):

I am sure that at least 20 developers had already looked at the property. They found [the property owner] hard to get along with, couldn't do a deal with her, she wanted too much money.... We paid [her] a lot of money because we knew we could figure out [how] to make the land and her piece of property work as much as the other side of West Hartford [Center] if we could make that site essentially be part of a West Hartford brand.

Once Street-Works secured an option on the property, they started a conversation with government officials, including Feldman, Rowlson, and VanWinkle, regarding the development potential of the area. Around the same time, Whole Foods Market acquired the former William's Ford site on the east side of Raymond Road, across from the Grody Chevrolet site. Whole Foods, through a separate development approval process, opened in 2005.

West Hartford and Street-Works entered into a complex public-private partnership. The partnership was designed around incorporating government capital projects into the development and utilizing public financing of the public projects to leverage the private investment in the development of Blue Back Square (Figure 22). The total combined cost of the public and private portions of the development was approximately \$158.8 million, \$48.8 million of which was for the public capital improvements. The remaining \$110 million was private investment (West Hartford, Town Manager's Office, 2004). While the public investment and finance was being leveraged to support the private investment, West Hartford did not assume any of the private risk (Rowlson, Interview). The development and financial risk remained with the developer (Heapes, Rowlson, Interviews). Let me explain.

During the design phase, it was recognized that more land was needed to accommodate the development that was envisioned by government—evidence of

resistance and *accommodation* (Pickering, 1993)—and the developers in order to maximize the development potential by creating a more complete neighborhood (Heapes, Rowson, Interviews). Therefore, the development site was expanded to include the west side of Isham Road to South Main Street and the south side of Memorial Drive—evidence of *adaptive governance* (Gunderson and Allan in Gunderson, et al., 2010). The land south of Memorial Drive was owned by the Town of West Hartford. The land west of Isham Road was also owned by the Town and occupied by the Board of Education offices and library. West Hartford agreed to sell these properties to the developer.

Figure 22. Blue Back Square



Photos: Donald Poland (2012).

For many years, West Hartford had recognized the need for renovations, new office space, and an expansion of the library. Therefore, in the process of selling public land to the developer, the Town decided and the developer agreed, to incorporate government's capital improvements into the Blue Back Square development. In addition, West Hartford wanted to maintain control of parking and public infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, and other public spaces), as it had in the western portion of the Center. Therefore, the public capital improvements were incorporated into the Blue Back Square development, meaning that the developer Street-Works, as a contractor to the government, would build the capital improvements and public infrastructure as part of the Blue Back Square development.

The cost of the capital improvements and public infrastructure were as follows: approximately \$7 million to renovate and expand Town Hall and the Board of Education offices, \$5.6 million to expand the Library, \$21.9 million to purchase the

two parking garages from Street-Works once constructed, and \$13.1 million for the public infrastructure (streets and sidewalks and other infrastructure). The total of \$48.8 million had to be and was approved by public referendum—a vote of the townspeople—and a second referendum was required to approve modifications to the initial approval. The remaining \$110 million was split between \$40 million in private equity and \$70 million in private institutional financing (West Hartford, Town Manager’s Office, 2004).

The most interesting portion of this public-private partnership is how the financing of Blue Back Square was structured to include the capital projects and public infrastructure. West Hartford did not provide any cash payment upfront—avoiding any risk. Heapes, the developer explains (Interview):

...we, the private sector, took the risk to design, pay for and build all of the public infrastructure with the council agreeing ahead of time to buy it back from us at a fixed cost ... So it’s a complete flip from the old way [where] the public [buys the] land, tears the building down, has an RFP [Request for Proposal] and has to put the bond out in front of everything and the oh ‘build it they will come’ and sometimes they don’t come and sometimes bad things happen and the public’s stuck with the cost of the bond.

You’ve just got to flip that and it requires trust but it means that as the developer, I can tell the bank, ‘Hey, I’ve got the credit [of the] city of West Hartford agreeing to pay for this’ ... and I don’t get hung up on a million things that can stop a project. They get their credit rating enhanced with free infrastructure plus some ... West Hartford had to put \$50 million of infrastructure into that part of town somehow somehow or it was never going to be developed. So they’ve got new infrastructure without risk. We got the ability to build things and get things done quickly knowing we had their financial support.

In addition, West Hartford required the developer to agree to the creation of a special service district—a taxing district. Once Blue Back Square was built, the district would levy an additional tax on the Blue Back Square real estate for government to use toward paying off the bonds it had to secure to buy back the public infrastructure. The special service district tax is approximately \$1.7 million per year, in addition to the almost \$3 million per year paid by Blue Back Square in real property taxes (Rowlson, Interview; West Hartford, Town Manager’s Office, 2004).

The special service tax district, unlike conventional BIDs, does not provide any services to the Blue Back Square development—another nuanced difference from conventional urban governance practices (Burayidi, 2001; Brenner and Theodore

2002; Hardt in Burayidi, 2001; Walzer and Kline in Burayidi, 2001; Zukin, 2010). It simply extracts \$1.7 million per year in additional taxes from the development to pay off the bonds for the public infrastructure. Once again, we see that the public-private partnership (Burayidi, 2013; Robertson in Burayidi, 2001) and neoliberal urbanism (Fraser, 2004; Brenner and Theodore, 2002) in West Hartford Center is not simply resulting in profits for private enterprise, but that government is extracting value—in addition to typical tax revenue—to pay for the public investment in the public infrastructure. By managing the little things, negotiating the local-state's role and removing risk, and extracting additional value from the private development, the local-state was not power-blind (Davoudi, et al., 2012) nor did it fall into “the slippery slope to a neoliberal discourse of ‘self-reliance’” (Porter and Davoudi, 2012: 331) where the aim of resilience is a value judgment that benefits the elite and harms the less fortunate. That is not to say that all negative consequences were eradicated, but the government worked to mitigate the negative impacts to the residents and businesses—the existing taxpayers.

As with the west side of the Center in the 1980s and 1990s and the 1987 Plan of Development and subsequent comprehensive plans, West Hartford did not presume the future or fate of the east side of the Center. While they came up with a general vision for the potential of the area, West Hartford was willing to keep, and did keep, its options open (Holling, 1973). While Blue Back Square, as built, was a high density and mixed use development, its size, configuration, and design was significantly different than what government had initially envisioned in their sketches and model (Rowlson, Interview). In addition, West Hartford was willing to negotiate and enter into a partnership, but in doing so wanted to make sure it was protecting its interests. When VanWinkel was explaining the development, all of the experts the government hired, and the money government spent to protect its interests, I asked about his willingness, even as an economist himself, to bring in other financial specialists. He answered (Interview):

Absolutely. You've got to. You don't know enough...when you're going to make a decision like this. You don't know enough. You've got to bring in all that expertise. We spent a lot of money, and the developer was willing to pay for it all. “I'll pay for your lawyers, and I'll pay for your...” We said, “No. We're not going to let you pay for our lawyers.”

VanWinkel's answer reveals West Hartford's unwittingly embracing Hollings' management approach to resilience, "not the presumption of sufficient knowledge, but the recognition of our ignorance" (Holling, 1973: 21). More important, as discussed above, West Hartford—local government—did not abdicate its agency, power, or authority (Bene, et al., 2012) or assume that ecological resilience "is almost power-blind and a-political" (Davoudi, et al., 2012: 306). While it is true that "in society there are always rewards and punishments: some people gain while others lose in the process of resilience-building" (Davoudi, et al., 2012: 306), West Hartford maintained its power and agency and worked to ensure that the negative consequences were mitigated or minimized.

The unconventional (in practice, not in regard to theory or academic discourse) and informal planning process, the public-private partnership, and the development of Blue Back Square were not only a top-down planning approach, but also fit with many of our understandings of neoliberal urbanism (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Hackworth, 2007; Harvey, 2005)—government and capitalist interests working in partnership to remake urban space. However, the case of Blue Back Square does not fit neatly into our understandings of neoliberal urbanism and state-led regeneration. For example, how the process unfolded, how the public-private partnership was structured, and how the risk remained with the private developer in the case of Blue Back Square demonstrates a more nuanced and textured organization than conventional accounts of neoliberal urbanism (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Hackworth, 2007; Harvey, 2005). Blue Back Square was not a grand redevelopment scheme in the traditional sense, nor did government assume or pay private risk (Hannigan, 1998; Peck and Ward, 2002; Brenner and Theodore, 2002). In addition, the prior property owners were not unjustly displaced or forcibly removed from their property by the threat of eminent domain. They were free to and willingly negotiated the sale of their property to the developer at fair market values.

7.50 Conclusion

In regard to urban governance, planning, and urban regeneration, West Hartford's intervention in the remaking of the Center is interesting because it does not fit neatly into our urban understandings of urban governance. For example, West

Hartford's intervention cannot be simply explained as the grand urban redevelopment schemes of *fantasy city* (Hannigan, 1998), as corporate *landscapes of power* (Zukin, 1991), or strictly as the bottom-up emergence of Jacobs (1961). Nor was the Center's remaking simply a case of state-led gentrification and neo-liberal urbanism (Lees, et al., 2008, 2010; Brenner and Theodore, 2002). However, West Hartford's interventions into the Center's remaking did include aspects of all of these to varying degrees and intensities.

West Hartford, to some degree, struggled to chart its own course and find its own way. We can conceptualize West Hartford's struggle to find its own way, not simply as a rejection of conventional planning approaches, but also as Pickering's (1993) *mangle of practice*. Continually confronted by barriers—resistance—to its goal of creating investment, West Hartford needed to adjust—accommodate—what it was doing. It had to make changes in real time (Pickering, 1993). Pickering's (1993) *mangle of practice*, as a means of conceptualizing and reimagining the urban governance, fits with the need for more sophisticated study and understanding of small city urbanism (Bell and Jayne, 2009) and the need for greater attention and better understanding of post-suburban governance (Hamel and Keil, 2015). The case of West Hartford Center also reveals the self-organizing (Johnson, 2001), ecological (Holling and Goldberg, 1971) qualities of the urban growth machine (Molotch, 1976; Jonas and Wilson, 1999). The coming together of various stakeholders, at various moments in time, and at various scales, coalesced to influence change. Moreover, West Hartford's approach demonstrated the ability of government to nurture and utilize the growth machine to its advantage—as a means to an end.

West Hartford mostly rejected formal planning practices and developed its own approach—a management approach. West Hartford's management approach can be understood through the theories of ecological resilience (Holling, 1973; Gunderson, et al., 2010). West Hartford kept its *options open* (Holling, 1973) and fostered and encouraged “novelty and innovation...trying things in different ways...and...embracing change and disturbance rather than denying or constraining it” (Walker and Salt, 2006: 147-48). In doing so, the case of West Hartford Center also reveals that while ecological resilience in regard to a natural ecosystem may be power-blind (Davoudi, et al., 2012; Bene, et al., 2012), when translated to human and urban ecological systems, the dynamic capacity of human actors has the capability to

manage power and mitigate negative consequences. But that is not to say the risk of a power-blind urban ecological approach is not real and should not be of concern.

In regard to my research questions—who were (and are) the change makers, their roles, and the how and why of the Center’s remaking—the government actors and governance structures are critically important. Government intentionally and proactively intervened in the Center’s remaking. Government was an active participant in the (sub)urban growth machine (Molotoch, 1976; Paradis, 2002). In addition, and in the context of my primary research question regarding the Center as a kind of space, the case of the Center again reveals itself as nuanced and textured. In doing so, the Center both fits and does not fit with our understandings of urban governance in large and smaller city urbanism. This reveals the Center as an enigma and hybrid metropolitan and post-suburban space (Keil, 2013).

In the following chapter, I explore the users, the consumers of West Hartford Center. Knowing what changed, what the restaurateurs were doing, and what government was doing, I now want to understand the consumers and how they understand, engage, and experience the space of the Center. My aim will be to explore and understand how the consumers understand, inhabit, and influenced the Center and the Center’s remaking.

Chapter VIII.

Consumption and the Production of Space: Consumers and the Co-Creation of Space

8.00 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the consumers of West Hartford Center and how they use, experience, understand, and inhabit the Center. To accomplish this, I will continue to draw upon urban ecological resilience (Holling, 1973; Gunderson, et al., 2010), emergence (Jabco, 1961; Johnson, 2001; Latham, 2003), local character of place (Molotch, et al, 2000), and “contingencies of locality, history, and agency rooted in specific places” (Paradis, 2002: 38; see also Latham 2003; Thrift in Massey, 1999; Molotch, et al, 2000). In addition, I will introduce and draw from the work of Daniel Miller (1997, 2010, 2012) on capitalism and consumption.

The chapter is designed to explore my fourth set of research questions: who are the users (consumers) of this space, how do they view and experience this space, and what role does it play in their everyday lives? In doing so, I explore how the consumers can help us to further understand the change makers, the emergence of this space, and most important, to shed further light on the kind of space that is West Hartford Center.

To accomplish this, the chapter will be presented in five sections. The first section will explore who are the consumers of West Hartford Center. The second section will explore how consumers experience the space of the Center. The third section will then explore how the consumers describe and explain the Center as a space. The fourth section will then provide a short case study to explore the consumers as active participants in the production of space. The final section will provide a short conclusion and transition to the final chapter.

8.10 The Consumers of West Hartford Center

Knowing that the “realm of our daily activities now embraces areas far beyond the ‘home-city,’ encompassing the urban region” (Sieverts in Hamel and Keil, 2015: 239) and knowing that West Hartford Center is drawing consumers from beyond the

immediate neighborhood and the town of West Hartford, I wanted to understand who are the consumers of West Hartford Center? Therefore, I did not employ the conventional approaches of demographic, socio-economic, and trade area market analysis (Miles, et al., Kramer, et al., 2008; Brett and Schmitz, 2009; Gibbs, 2012) that are most often based on Census data. Unfortunately, the conventional approach to market analysis is good at telling us a lot about everyone within in a given geography based on where they sleep, rather than where they go and what they do during their waking hours. Therefore, I asked the consumers to describe whom they saw and what they experienced as the consumers of the Center. While such an approach does not provide specific demographic profiles of the consumers, it does provide a contextual understanding of the consumers, as seen and explained by the consumers themselves.

To accomplish this, the interview subjects were asked to think about a specific restaurant that they recently visited and discuss it during the interview. Then they were asked to think about that experience and describe the other customers. The narratives reveal that the consumers are not simply homogeneous, but that heterogeneity exists within this homogeneous space of middle class hospitality and sociality. They reveal that the “suburbs are becoming more diverse in...social composition” (Moos and Mendez in Keil, 2013: 107). For example, Lori a 52 year old married woman who is an attorney described the consumers of McLadden’s, an American style Irish pub (Interview):

I think it’s a pretty mixed crowd. The people who are outside are often families. The people who are inside, as far as I can tell, because I only see who comes in and out to smoke. So, again, there are people of all ages. So, it could be younger people. Some people have tattoos. Some people are older and preppy. So it’s, really it’s a very mixed crowd. When we, we’re usually going on a Sunday, late afternoon, early evening. People there to watch ball games ... Sports fans.

McLadden’s is often a loud and boisterous place, where drinking is as much, if not more, the focus than food and dining. Lori’s description reveals diversity in the appearance and lifestyles of McLadden’s consumers and how consumers engage McLadden’s differently. She notes a variety of ages and ‘looks’ late on Sunday afternoons, when the clientele may be oriented more toward sports fans. However, she also notes that outside is mostly families. Her account also reveals the consumers as dynamic and adaptive—she explains how they navigate and self-organize within the

space of McLadden's, the families dining outside while the boisterous sports fans drink inside.

Rich, a 26 year old from Glastonbury with a master's degree, frequents the Center for happy hours with co-workers and socializing with friends on the weekend nights. Rich describes the consumers he sees at Besito, an upscale Mexican restaurant in Blue Back Square on Main Street. "I would describe the crowd as a younger probably, a mix of people who are obviously professional people who are coming out of work and people who may not necessarily live or work in the area who are here for a night out" (Interview). Discussing McLadden's, Rich explained, "[t]he crowd there trends even younger. I would say from people really just at twenty-one up. It has an atmosphere and I don't mean to denigrate the term, more of a fraternity atmosphere. People are there to have probably more drinks than they should and are there to talk to people who are not necessarily in their group. So I guess more of an almost party...atmosphere" (Interview).

Rich's description of Besito's and McLadden's consumers provides further context and exposes additional textures to the consumers of the Center. Shifting from Lori's late Sunday afternoons to weekday happy hours and weekend nights, the consumers described by Rich are younger, engaged more in drinking, and enjoy a bar scene. Rich does not mention families or dining, and he does not see as much diversity in age. Besito's consumers are young professionals casually socializing, while McLadden's consumers are even younger, college-aged students, who are partying. The two narratives of Rich and Lori start to inform us that the Center is not a singular space, nor does the Center appeal to a singular consumer. The Center is dynamic, shifting day-to-day and hour-to-hour. Even the consumers of McLadden's, a singular hospitality space, are shifting and changing depending on the day of the week and the time of day. In addition, the consumers of Besito, as described by Rich, are not necessarily the same as the consumers of McLadden's (Figure 23). The Center, while fixed in space, is not fixed in time.

Even though the Center is a single space fixed in space, multiple temporal spaces exist in the Center. For example, Filion explains, "[t]ime budgets and work and consumption behavior are tributary of the nature of activities present in suburbs and their distribution" (Filion in Keil, 2013: 40). The result is that different consumers

seeking to satisfy different *needs, wants, passions, and enthusiasms* (Miller, 2010; Thrift, 2006, 2008) are simultaneously consuming the Center. For example, just down the road from McLadden’s is the upscale Restaurant Bricco, whose consumers are described by Jill, a thirty-something married professional (Interview):

People who have a little bit of an ability to cook themselves usually. Bricco’s reputation is like a lot of places you could spend a lot of money for dinner but then you get it and you realize, “I could have made this” or, “I make it better” but at Bricco’s you get something that you feel like, “All right, I’m paying twenty-two dollars for this but I couldn’t have just thrown this together.” And probably, on the wealthier side cause it’s expensive so people who go there have money and I think they are not young usually.

Robyn, a single senior citizen with an active social life describes Bricco’s clientele as “for the most part, White, upper-middle class, mid, upper-middle, and higher level maybe even group, and professionals, working people. There are kids in there some times. I don’t think of that as much as a family restaurant, but there are kids sometimes. It’s definitely, to me, White professional. It’s a mix of ages from probably 25 to 70, but there are a lot of younger people at the bar” (Interview).

Restaurant Bricco’s, known for its quality food and formal dining experience, is the Center’s poster-child for Bistrotville, where consumers “show off their discerning taste in olive oils” and “don’t want suburban formula restaurants” (Brooks, 2004: 27). The older, wealthier, and sophisticated consumers of Restaurant Bricco are not the same consumers watching sports on Sunday afternoon or partying on Friday nights at McLadden’s.

Figure 23. Hospitality



Photos: Donald Poland (2012).

The consumers of Barcelona, a popular Spanish-Mediterranean restaurant that provides a high quality dining experience in a more casual atmosphere than

Restaurant Bricco, are described by Marcia, a middle-aged attorney and West Hartford resident. “Very mixed. You get the young twenty-somethings that are looking to hook up ... the gaggles of young adults looking to socialize ... the more outer-suburb folks coming in for a night; you’re looking at the couples from Avon and Farmington coming in for the night out. You’re getting fuddy-duddy’s like me. You’ll see a fair number of people in their 40s, 50s, and 60s ... it’s not just a young crowd or an older crowd; it’s much more mixed” (Interview). Marcia’s description not only highlights the eclectic crowd at Barcelona, but also that the older suburban space of the Center has become more central (Harris in Keil, 2013) through her narrative of *outer-suburb folks coming in for a night*.

Hillary, who is married, in her early thirties, and works in the Center, frequents Reuben’s, a Jewish deli next door to McLadden’s for breakfast and sometimes lunch. She describes Reuben’s consumers. “Being that it’s morning, it would be a little bit of an older crowd. It would be 60 years old plus.... Sixties is probably even young; I would say 70 plus. It’s a Jewish deli, so it caters [to] that culture, I guess. They do the lox and the bagels, and all that jazz. Matzo ball soup. They have an older, retired [clientele] in the morning” (Interview). Not only do the consumer descriptions of other consumers reveal a diversity in consumers, they also reveal the diversity in hospitality establishments—an eclectic assortment of hospitality functions with the capacity to satisfy the differing desires of many consumers.

While the consumers of the Center appear to enjoy who they encounter in the Center, it is not uncommon for residents of metropolitan Hartford to speak negatively of the Center’s consumers. The same is true for some of the interview subjects, and their descriptions demonstrate tensions and struggles that exist between different segments of the Center’s consumers. For example, Kim, a married thirty-something, who also works in West Hartford Center expressed little enthusiasm about the Center’s clientele. “More likely [I will] go to other places, not West Hartford Center,” because Kim is “not a huge fan of the vibe of West Hartford and I don’t identify with West Hartford” (Interview). Asked to explain ‘the vibe,’ she replied, “It’s kind of poser-ish to me ... I just feel like people are being fake. So, it’s not ‘I’m better than you.’ [It’s a] ‘this is fabulous’ ... sort of thing” (Interview).

Reed, a recent college graduate, when describing the consumers in Grant's Restaurant and Bar, hesitantly and quietly explained, "the crowd...is really like; I shouldn't say this too loud because we're in West Hartford Center, upper-middle class, and you can tell they're well off. Kind of snooty I guess you'd say. I don't want to sound...judgmental and I know I do" (Interview). Unlike Kim who tries to avoid the Center, Reed enjoys socializing in the Center and going to Grant's, even though she may be uncomfortable with the *snooty* consumers. What Kim and Reed, interpret as 'this is fabulous' and 'snooty', Laura, a 32 year old professional sees as a matter-of-fact sense of style that comes with the Center. The consumers "seem to be young professionals; people who want to dress up a little bit and go out for a drink." "I think in West Hartford Center, people want to have their nicest designer bag. Guys are in their nicest...they'll shine their shoes and put their shirt on" (Interview).

These consumer accounts reveal the Center and the Center's consumers as more dynamic than what is often assumed of suburban spaces and their inhabitants. Their lifestyles and the activities they are engaged in in the Center are different than many accounts of suburbia and the suburban way of life (Jackson, 1985; Kunstler, 1993, 1998; Fava, 1956; Reisman, 1957; Gans, 1967). Even though the Center's consumers are mostly white, middle- and upper-middle class, and professional, as is the case with much of metropolitan Hartford, a degree of diversity does exist. Participant observations do reveal ethnic and racial diversity and the Center is a space where Anderson's *cosmopolitan canopy* (Anderson, 2004, 2011) is evident. Therefore, the homogeneous quality of the Center is more evident socio-economically. Frey explains, "the social geography of many settlement areas has now evolved to a situation where it is the central city rather than suburbia that is more homogeneous in its sociodemographic makeup" (Frey in Champion and Hugo, 2004: 74). The spatial draw and complex demographic and socio-economic character of the Center points to a changed or changing suburban space—a shift away from the conventional suburban to the post-suburban or metropolitan (Champion and Hugo, 2004; Keil, 2013). Moreover, while homogeneous in some regards, the Center is heterogeneous in other regards. The Center appeals to and caters to a wide range of middle-class consumers seeking not only products, but also lifestyles and a *sense of community*.

8.20 The Consumption of Space – Experiencing, Community Character, and the Center

I now want to explore the experience of the Center as explained by the consumers. To accomplish this, I asked the consumers “what type of experience does the Center provide you?” In general, their narratives demonstrate how the Center satisfies their individual *needs and wants or passions and enthusiasms* (Miller, 2010; Thrift, 2006, 2008). For example, Rich explained that his experience “ranges from relaxation and stress relief to all the way up to a better time than I should have had” (Interview). Rich reveals that the Center provides him more than consumer goods and sociality. ‘*Relaxation and stress relief*’ point to an experience of escapism and the Center as Miller’s *treat* (Miller, 2010).

Clif, also experiences escapism, “it’s sort of relaxing, non-stress, easy going, nonthreatening... you can lose track of time there” (Interview). Candace explains, “I would say is leisure recreation for us [her and her husband] ... this is a fun place for us. We work really hard. Down here [the Center], we have a good time” (Interview). The Center, for these consumers, provides more than restaurants, bars, shops, vibrancy, and the opportunity to spend money and purchase goods and services. While consumption is very much part of the Center’s experience, the Center also provides intangible qualities that the consumers are also consuming.

For example, the quality of escapism can be conceptualized as a reward and a self-indulgence (Miller, 2010), as was expressed by the consumers through the vocabulary of vacation (Carolyn, Interview):

...feeling like I went on vacation, but I’m here in Hartford. Within five or ten minutes [of home], I went on vacation and went to another world. I feel like I’m not in Hartford. I feel like I’m not in Connecticut. It’s a beautiful atmosphere. Probably alive, happy-looking people, so it’s nice to be there. It’s nice to be seen there. In the midst of everything else I do, it’s nice to go there as a getaway and feel good. It’s a real good, feel good kind of place. It’s more than just getting a meal, because I could eat someplace else, but it’s the feeling. What’s nice about West Hartford Center for me is it’s my way of being stimulated, entertained, and indulged. It stimulates my feelings of celebrating my privilege.

It may be tempting to view this account as individualist, indulgent, and materialistic (Miller, 2012), which it is. However, it is not just that. This consumer is real, the people are real, and they are also fulfilling their *needs, wants, passions, and*

enthusiasms through their consumption of the Center—not simply consuming the products sold in the Center. That is not to claim that all consumption is good, but to recognize that consumption is not all bad (Miller, 1997, 2010, 2012; Thrift, 2005, Bell, 2007). The Center rewards the consumer and makes her feel good.

Also, if we simply dismiss consumption as bad and dismiss the Center as a site of consumption, then we miss something very interesting about the Center. West Hartford Center is not Disney. It is not the planned or designed space of *Fantasy City*, the *theme-o-centric, branded, day and night, modular, solipsistic, and postmodern city* (Hannigan, 1999). The Center's quality of escapism, the *treat* (Miller, 2010) that the Center provides, is emergent and self-organizing (Jacobs, 1961; Latham, 2003). As emergent, these intangible qualities that the Center provides are as much a product of the consumers themselves as they are the product of the capitalist producers and government officials.

Cindy explains the homogenized and conspicuous consumption qualities of the Center that are often the focus of grand theories of globalization, capitalism, consumption, and neoliberal urbanism (Harvey, 2005, 2006; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Zukin, 2005). However, if we think carefully about what Cindy is saying and how she says it, many textures, nuances, and shades of grey are revealed. The universalizing (Miller, 2010) and towering structures (Thrift, 1996) of these grand theories are not the only things occurring in this space (Interview):

I regret spending as much money as I do here. I think it's very easy to spend money here. There are a couple of places where you can just go in and be like you're window shopping and the next thing you know, buying something. [...] There still are small places like—there's a tiny jewelry store next to Lux Bond.... It's been owned by the same family the whole time. The only reason we know it because I wanted a place to buy my wedding ring. I wanted to find a small place. They made exactly what I wanted and they send you Christmas cards. It's really old fashioned that way. They know who you are when you walk in ... I think that's part of the experience [...]

One of the things that a friend of mine and I call Blue Back is Fake Town because everything seems like it just sprouted. There was nothing there and then it was like add water, like the chia pet of developments. It happened really quickly. I know new places are coming in and other places are leaving, but they really had people lined up to go in there pretty quickly. Everyone—I don't know maybe it's like a retail thing, but everyone seems happy there. Everyone's got their little kid in their stroller. It's like kind of a surreal experience there. Even though I like it because I go grocery shopping there and I go buy my overpriced clothing at REI and all that, there is kind of a

Stepford Wives aura to it. Even though the people are [the] same between here and there, something about the architecture of this part, the old part of the center, is a little more reality based. Everything is—all the exterior walls look exactly the same. I mean I like going to Fake Town. It's a weird place.

Cindy captures the scalable differences between the global and the local and the older organic Center and the planned lifestyle center of Blue Back Square (Kramer, et al., 2008). Cindy also reveals a human scale or human side of consumption. She is not simply a passive consumer, “merely the end-point to these processes” who then chooses “to accept or reject what commerce has produced” (Miller, 1997: 4). She is actively engaged in these processes, finding her way, sorting out everything that is going on around her, and making decisions and choices that satisfy her specific *needs, wants, passions, and enthusiasms*. She understands the differences in the built environment—even when she is critical of the national brands and other consumers—she openly admits to liking *Fake Town*, recognizing what *Fake Town* is, but understanding that *Fake Town* is part of her own experience.

The Center, as space of specialty or *treats* and the Center's providing intangible qualities that go beyond conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 2009), are noticeable in Jill's differentiation of having dinner in the Center versus other places. Jill explains, “going out to dinner provides a social experience; there is definitely an expectation that if you come here [the Center] you're going to get a certain kind of night rather than if you just went to Bertucci's at Bishops Corner” (Interview). Ley (1996) in his accounts of gentrification and the *new middle-class* claims a “tendency...where the discriminating purchaser may bypass the standardized merchandise of the chain stores in favor of the distinctive products of independent retailers” (Ley, 1996: 18) and concludes that this “symbolic repertoire of non-standardized products is part of the identity formation of members of the new middle class” (Ley, 1996: 18). Ley's conclusion is interesting, especially in regards to Jill's account of the Center.

It not simply that the local restaurants in the Center provide something different or better than national chains elsewhere, but that the Center also provides Ley's *identity formation*—something more than the act of product consumption. This *something more*, the intangible qualities of the Center, is also evident when Timothy juxtaposes the Center against going to a shopping mall (Interview):

I think for the [Center], as a consumer, it lets you almost feel like a little bit more of a citizen. I guess I'll clarify that a little bit. It's like you're out and you're spending money, and you're in Westfarms Mall, you're in the shopping mall. It's like, "Okay, I'm buying from H&M," or "I'm buying from Nordstrom's," or "I'm buying from XYZ." So you're interacting with the brand.

I feel like West Hartford Center still has some corporate style flagships. They're still dealing a little bit with more of an independent shop, so you get that, "I'm supporting my culture." "I'm supporting my town."

You see more of a local crowd, so you could actually identify someone that you might see on the news or that you know owns a business. There's a little bit more interaction with the town as a whole. It's almost like a public square, rather than just a consumer-driven concept.

Timothy's perspective is interesting for two reasons. First, Timothy is making value judgments and projects his own ideals onto the Center. Independent shops and local actors are important to him; they provide a quality of *authenticity* (Zukin, 2010) and his own *identity formation* (Ley, 1996). However, second, Timothy lives nearly 20 miles away in Vernon, yet he speaks of the Center as if it is his hometown.

Timothy feels connected to the Center. He is experiencing a sense of community, and he has developed a personal relationship with the Center. Timothy, although not a resident of West Hartford or the Center, has made the Center his own. Miller explains this very personal experience of consumption as alienable or inalienable. "Any consumer object in a shop is technically alienable—i.e., free for anyone to buy as long as they have the money. But a dress once purchased and possessed immediately becomes the very opposite, something inalienable, that cannot be purchased or even borrowed..." (Miller, 2012: 55). The Center is alienable to those who can afford it. However, the Center is also inalienable when consumers consume the Center's intangible qualities and make it their own, just as Timothy has done.

Timothy is not alone in experiencing this personalized sense of community. Many of the consumers discussed this sense of community. For example, David, who lives West Hartford, explains "Definitely a sense of community I think; a strong sense of community especially with my son and wife now that I know we are going to be rooted here. I get a very good feeling; very positive, uplifting, I like the people, and I like the spirit of the Center..." (Interview). The same is true for Eileen who explained: "I'd say it probably gives me the sense of community that I need. I like being able to go out, walk around, and feel like I'm connected to my town. [...] It is that sense of, "This is my town. This is where I live." I feel connected..." (Interview).

In this regard, as Otto explains, the Center or “[d]owntown offers a platform for realizing individual dreams” (Otto in Orori-Amoah, 2007: 259).

It is evident that the consumers are consuming the *sense of community* that the Center provides. That is, the consumers are not simply buying *stuff* (Miller, 2012), they are relating to, identifying with, and consuming the intangible qualities of the Center. However, there are two important things occurring in regards to these intangible qualities of the Center. First, the Center is spatial. Ley explains this *identity formation* in the context of gentrification as “[t]he search for the inner city by a segment of the middle class included a search for distinction, a rejection of the mass market. It might well be that gentrifiers are the epitome, and among the pioneers, of a post-Fordist model of consumption” (Ley, 1996: 18). The Center is not an inner city location, it is an older suburban center that possesses some similarities, but also differences, to gentrification. As I argued earlier (Chapter II), the similarities between gentrification and suburbanization should raise questions as to what we are identifying, describing, and discussing, especially in regard to spatial location—city and suburb. Ley’s so-called *new middle class* is not only searching for distinction in the inner city, as their rejection to the mass market. The *new middle class* is making similar choices in the suburban. Therefore, claims “that gentrifiers are the epitome, and among the pioneers, of a post-Fordist model of consumption” (Ley, 1996: 18) may be a misappropriation of Ley’s phenomena to the spatial location of gentrification. The *new middle class* and the remaking of suburban space in the post-suburban (metropolitan) space, may be the more interesting phenomena, not simply the spatial location as an argument for an explanation of gentrification, specifically, central city gentrification.

Bruegmann’s “[g]entrification at the center and sprawl at the edge have been flipsides of the same coin” (Bruegmann, 2005: 4) indicates the consequence of greater societal changes, rather than the specific location of such changes—the gentrified city versus the suburbanized suburb. If similar practices and phenomenon are identifiable in both city and suburb, then the *metropolitan revolution* of Katz and Bradley (2013) and the *post-suburban* space of Keil (2013) may indicate the need to diminish our focus on gentrification as the remaking of space in the central city to a broader spatial understanding of the remaking of space at the metropolitan scale (Holling and Orians. 1971)—or even *reimagining* how we conceptualize and understand the urban (Amin

and Thrift, 2002). At the very least, the ambiguity found in the suburbanization and gentrification appear to support claims that “the simple city-suburb dichotomy is obsolete in the present-day U.S. urban region” (Nijman and Clery in Hamel and Keil, 2015: 74).

The second thing to recognize is that no actor, business, or government entity is specifically producing or selling *community* or a *sense of community* in the Center. This *sense of community* is an intangible or non-representational (Thrift in Massey 1999; Thrift, 2008) quality of the Center, both emergent and self-organizing. The only source of oversight or controlling entity that produces or sells the Center is the growth machine (Molotch, 1976), but that growth machine, as discussed previously, was not formally engaged in selling the Center’s *sense of community*. *Sense of community* is simultaneously produced and consumed by the consumer (along with the other actors). The intangible qualities of space, this *sense of community* that the Center provides, in regard to urban ecological resilience, is an *ecosystem service*, a benefit that society gets from an ecosystem that is “unrecognized or considered free” (Walker and Salt, 2006). Jacobs’ *sidewalk ballet*, the improvisational dance of her Hudson Street actors, can also be understood as a self-organized *sense of community* and ecosystem service. Jacobs’ *sidewalk ballet* was not simply about the design qualities of physical space fostering *walkability* (Speck, 2012) and relationships or the relationships themselves. It was also about the performative behavior of the actors coalescing into something greater—emergence (Johnson, 2001). Nancy explained her experience of the Center in the context of Jacobs (Interview):

Nancy: I think [the Center] provides a community, a sense of community. I think it does. I mean who was that famous woman, Jane somebody?

Poland: Jacobs?

Nancy: Yeah, Jane Jacobs. I’ve read, those were way back when and she talked, I meant this was kind of like what she was talking about.

By invoking Jacobs, Nancy reveals the dynamism of the Center and the emergent qualities or complexity of space that Jacobs was describing. Nancy lives in West Hartford, but not in the Center, as Jacobs lived on Hudson Street. Therefore, community or a sense of community is not simply about dwelling in place—a place based sense of community organized around the neighborhood block (Latham, et. al., 2009). Community and a sense of community can also be stretched over space and time, organized around common interests (Latham, et. al., 2009; Amin and Thrift,

2002), and can occur at multiple scales. The Center's *sidewalk ballet* is not the same dance as Jacobs' *sidewalk ballet*. However, the Center's *sense of community*—the ecosystem service—is as real as Jacobs' *sidewalk ballet* and it is being produced, re-produced, and consumed by the consumers of the Center.

Miller's (2010) *treat*, in the context of the Center is similar to this *sense of community*. It is intangible, a non-representational quality of the Center—an ecosystem service that satisfies the *needs, wants, passions, and enthusiasms* of the Center's consumers. The Center provides a platform and space, a hybrid space filled with many specialty uses that allow the inhabitants to perform hospitality, sociality, escapism, and community. The space of the Center was not planned or designed, nor is it programmed or choreographed by a controlling overseer. The Center has no singular equilibria state, but a multiplicity of equilibria states associated with each and every actor—business owner, government official, consumer—constantly shifting in an attempt to satisfy the individual *needs, wants, passions, and enthusiasms*. Otto explains, “downtowns seem to be characterized and influenced by manifold individual preferences and decisions of businesses and property owners” (Otto in Orori-Amoah, 2007: 259). In the urban-ecological space of the Center, the banal *sidewalk ballet* of everyday life coalesces into a spectacular improvisational performance of conspicuous consumption—“*the geography of what happens*” (Thrift, 2008: 2).

8.30 The Vocabularies of Space – West Hartford Center

Our urban vocabularies, as discussed previously, are often limited in their ability to describe and explain West Hartford Center. Words such as city, suburban, and gentrification often fall short of helping us conceptualize and understand the space of the Center. Dissatisfied with these vocabularies and their limits, I wanted to explore how the consumers speak about and describe the Center. Specifically, I explored which words consumers use to explain and describe the Center and if the vocabularies of the consumers can help us to understand the space of the Center.

What I found was that the vocabularies of the consumers are different than the vocabularies used in urban studies and planning (Gottdiener and Budd, 2005; Short, 2006; Fainstein and Campbell, 2011, 2012; Lees, et al., 2010). For example, the consumers don't speak of the Center in terms of gentrification, state-led regeneration,

and neo-liberal urbanism. At times, the consumers do use vocabularies such as city, urban, suburban, village, town, and downtown to describe the Center. However, the use of these different, ambiguous, and sometimes contradictory words reveals that the consumers are challenged by the space of the Center and unsure what kind of space the Center is—city, suburb, town, or village? The consumers, similar to urban academics and practitioners, struggle with what even constitutes city, suburb, or urban (Lefebvre, 2003; Amin and Thrift, 2002; Katz and Bradley, 2013). When asked about the many and differing words the consumers had used to describe the Center, the consumers often expressed their confusion (Interview):

Poland: You've said urban. You've said suburban. You've said city. You've said town. You've noted architectural features that are maybe more urban in density and scale, and then you've also pointed out that it's surrounded by a bunch of lawns. So what is it?

Clif: Well, you know, where I get confused, first of all, is the whole Connecticut system of towns and cities and... The whole thing...confuses the hell out of me.

And the bleed between the city and the town is really hard. You don't know when you've crossed over necessarily from one to the other, where you are. I used to think Elmwood [a neighborhood in West Hartford] was part of Hartford. It was part of West Hartford. So it has this significant impulse of the city, and you know, I think if there wasn't a town of West Hartford, West Hartford would really just be the west part of Hartford. So that kind of confuses me mentally. I'm not sure ... they just bleed together...

While Clif's explanation highlights Connecticut and New England colloquialism of towns and self-governance (Chen and Bacon, 2013; Wood, 1993, 1997; Dwight, 1823; Bushnell, 1864, 1881), his explanation provides insight as to how the physical space of city and suburb blend together when political boundaries are not visible. This returns us to Teaford's claim that "in the United States...most commentators have defined suburbia as that zone within metropolitan areas but beyond the central city limits" (Teaford, 2008: ix-x) and Nijman and Clery's claim that "the simple city-suburb dichotomy is obsolete in the present-day U.S. urban region" (Nijman and Clery in Hamel and Keil, 2015: 74).

Hillary provided further context as to how the consumers struggle to define the Center (Interview):

I think part of my confusion on what it is...when I was growing up in Farmington, West Hartford, to me, was more of a city than anything I knew of. Meaning, I did not go to Hartford ... To me, in that fish bowl, West Hartford

was the city. Now that I live in the actual city of Hartford, West Hartford is...I guess there's a little bit of jealousy in that West Hartford gets to be all the things that I'd rather see in Hartford.

Hillary's explanation is interesting, both spatially and conceptually. Hillary, who now lives in Downtown Hartford, explains that when she was growing up in the second ring suburb of Farmington West Hartford was *the city* to her. However, now that she lives in Hartford, the first ring suburb of West Hartford seems less like a city to her. The jealousy that she attempts to explain is a common sentiment of those who live in Downtown Hartford recognizing that West Hartford Center now competes with Downtown as the region's hospitality center. Even though Hillary now views West Hartford as less urban, her remark, "West Hartford gets to be all the things that I'd rather see, in Hartford" reveals the Center as possibly becoming more urban than suburban.

The challenge of describing or defining the space of the Center is even more evident when the consumers create hybrid vocabularies in attempts to better describe and define the Center. For example, Marcia claimed the Center as "more urban" and when asked to elaborate, she replied, "a more city vibe. Not so much a country vibe. Not sort of a cozy, country inn feeling, but more of an edgier, "urbany" city kind of higher energy" (Interview). 'Urbany', a made up word, provides a contextual feeling to the Center as not quite, but somewhat city like—similar to Alison's "pseudo city experience" (Interview). These hybrid attempts to make sense of this space reveal the Center as an enigma. "I've heard the term 'urburb'. Urban, but suburban. It's not a downtown metropolis, so it's not urban, but it's like a suburban urb," explained Jessica (Interview). Andy explained, "I think there needs to be almost a term in between "city" and "town" that's...a sub-city or a super-burb" (Interview).

These hybrid vocabularies of 'urbany', 'pseudo city', 'urburb', 'sub-city', and 'super-burb' in a sense are no different than Fishman's (1987) *techno-city* and *techno-burb* or Garreau's (1991) *edge cities*. More important, these hybrid vocabularies reveal that laypersons, journalists, and academics alike, recognize the inadequacies of our existing urban vocabularies to describe space—the multiplicity of urban and suburban space that now exists throughout our metropolitan areas and post-suburban space (Katz and Bradley, 2013; Keil, 2013; Amin and Thrift, 2002). What is troublesome about the inadequacies of our urban vocabularies is that we still rely

heavily on words that seem to have lost their meaning, yet we also make categorical claims, such as “Wal-Mart’ wastelands” (Zukin, 2010), implying that all suburban space is the same.

The attempts at hybrid vocabularies, both by the consumers of the Center and by academics, recognize the emergence of these hybrid spaces that indicate the evolutionary or ecological qualities of urban space (Levin, 1992; Batty and Marshall, 2009; Holling and Orians, 1971; Hardt in Burayidi, 2001). Urban-ecological space is not static, but adaptive and evolutionary. Being dismissive (Kunstler, 1993, 1997) or reducing suburban space in attempts to claim inauthenticity (Duany, et al., 2000) shuts down learning and understanding. Miller, in his exploration of consumption and commodities, in regard to what he calls *stuff*, explains this risk (Miller, 2010: 5):

Stuff is ubiquitous, and problematic. But whatever our environmental fears or concerns over materialism, we will not be helped by either a theory of stuff, or an attitude to stuff, that simply tries to oppose ourselves to it; as though the more we think of things as alien, the more we keep ourselves sacrosanct and pure. The idea that stuff somehow drains away our humanity, as we dissolve into a sticky mess of plastic and other commodities, is really an attempt to retain a rather simplistic and false view of pure and prior unsullied humanity.

Suburban space, like *stuff*, is ubiquitous, and problematic. Dismissing the suburban and claiming it as inauthentic misses the multiplicity of suburban spaces, the textures, dynamism, and tensions of the suburban (Lang and Miller, 1997; Keil, 2013). Our dismissiveness of suburban space may be the result of what Miller calls the ‘blindingly obvious’ (Miller, 2010: 51):

This implies that when something is sufficiently evident it can reach a point at which we are blinded to its presence, rather than reminded of its presence. One of the problems we have in persuading people that the study of blue denim is so significant is that its ubiquity seems to make people regard it as less of interest, rather than more of interest.

Has suburban space become so ubiquitous, so *blindingly obvious*, that we dismiss it as uninteresting? Is this why “[s]uburban governance however has been largely overlooked by urban studies” (Hamel in Keil, 2013: 29)? If so, it is problematic that consumers, journalists, and academics alike struggle to describe, explain, and understand spaces that were once easily definable as suburban, but have now become enigmas. The rise of the metropolitan, post-suburban, and hybrid spaces (Fishman, 1987; Teaford, 2006; Katz and Bradley, 2013; Keil, 2013) would seem to indicate and elevate the importance of understanding urban and suburban change

(Champion and Hugo, 2004; Keil, 2013; Katz and Lange, 2003; Berube, et al., 2005). Ecology can help us understand the rise of metropolitan and the emergence of hybrid spaces as the result of “[s]low variables and nonlinear processes [that] are harder to monitor, understand, model, and forecast” (Carpenter, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 189-190). Unfortunately, suburban ubiquity, *blindingly obvious* suburban spaces, and our tendency to be dismissive have resulted in the emergence of hybrid spaces that are now hidden in plain sight. The Center simultaneously is not quite city or suburban, yet we are unable to describe it—unable to find a word to adequately explain the Center.

Thrift recognizes “the impossibility of a complete description; the gaps between what language does and what we want it to do; the unsettled relationship between what we see and what we know...” (Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999: 316). Thrift further recognizes the emergence of hybrid urban spaces and the challenge of defining them in his exploration of place. “Place is still important because there is no other definition of these hybrids but a contextual one: it is how they matter and why they matter” (Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999: 317). Amin and Thrift ask, “Can we find another vocabulary with which to describe the city, one which takes circulation, hybridity, and multiplicity as key urban moments, and fixed boundaries as temporary allegiances and alignments” (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 77)? While it is not my intent to offer a new vocabulary, I want to at least explore the contextual way of thinking about vocabularies and urban space.

To explore how the consumers contextually understand the Center as a space, each interview subject was asked to name three words (or three short phrases) he or she would use to describe West Hartford Center. Surprisingly, this question resulted in 82 total different words describing the Center. Of the 82 words, only 21 words were repeated two or more times. Table 6 below provides a list of these 82 words and notes the 21 words that were repeated more than once in brackets (i.e. (2)). Most interesting, of the 82 words used to describe the Center, the conventional urban vocabularies of city, suburb, or gentrified, are nonexistent—only the word ‘town’ was used once.

These vocabularies simultaneously demonstrate the singularity and multiplicity of the Center. In regards to multiplicity, there is no singular word or even

a small group of words that the consumers use to describe the Center. In regards to singularity, of the 82 different words, only 21 words were repeated, half of which were offered only twice. This appears to indicate that the consumers have very individualized and personalized views and understandings of the Center.

Table 6. Three Words – Consumer Vocabularies of West Hartford Center

Upscale (8)	Exciting (2)	Changing	Evolving	Open	Successful
Safe (6)	Friendly (2)	Charming	Family Friendly	Overpriced	Town
Convenient (5)	Pleasant (2)	Classic	Fulfilling	People Walking	Trendy
Community (5)	Social (2)	Classy	Functional	Pleasure	Unreal
Walkable (5)	Tasty (2)	Clean	Gathering	Preppy	See and be Seen
Restaurants (4)	Thriving (2)	Colonial	Guilty Pleasure	Privileged	All encompassing
Comfortable (3)	Adventurous	Comforting	Happening	Refreshing	Excellent Town Services
Expensive (3)	Aesthetically pleasing	Contrived	Healthy	Relaxing	---
Fun (3)	Affluent	Cool	High-end fun	Retail	---
Active (2)	Alive	Cosmopolitan	Interesting	Social	---
Bustling (2)	Attractive	Different	Inviting	Scenic	---
Colorful (2)	Boring	Dynamic	Lively	Self-contained	---
Diversity (2)	Bourgeois	Educated	Magnetic	Sidewalks	---
Eclectic (2)	Casual	Engaging	Marketplace	Sophisticated	---
Enjoyable (2)	Center	Escape	Niche	Spacious	---

That said, the words that were repeated most may provide some insight into qualities of the Center which may be important to the consumers and to our understanding of the Center. The most frequent word, ‘upscale’ was used by 8 consumers (17.8%), revealing the Center as a middle and upper middle-class space. ‘Safe’, the second most used word, was used by 6 consumers (13.3%), revealing, possibly, the importance of safety or at least a perception of safety. ‘Convenient’, ‘community’, and ‘walkable’ tied for the third most used word, each offered by 5 consumers (11.1%) and may indicate a quality of functionality and sense of community or place. However, the fact that only five words were repeated by more than 10% of the interview subjects further demonstrates that from the consumers’ perspective, the Center is not a universally understood space.

The space of the Center is dynamic, contextual, and experiential—it is a space that can and does provide many ecosystem services and experiences to a variety of consumers at differing moments in time. For example, when Lisa described the Center as ‘scenic’, the context of her use of the word included qualities of experience. “So, scenic. You know, like the walks ... You want to walk around places that you can

window shop or you can see” (Interview). Scenic, in this regard, is not simply an aesthetic quality, but also an experiential quality. Other examples include Ryan describing the Center as, “upscale, I am going to say cosmopolitan like in a New York way but it’s got a lot of depth to it. The great restaurants; it’s sophisticated” (Interview) and Laura explains “affluent...because there’s a certain amount of money and people want to show [off] their car, see or be seen, and show off some new watch or something, carry their designer purse” (Interview). ‘Upscale’ for Ryan and ‘affluent’ for Laura are not simply describing wealth, they are also describing the performance of wealth by the consumers and the experience of wealth that the Center provides.

Understanding these vocabularies as experiential qualities of the Center is important because ‘upscale’ and ‘affluent’ describe a materiality that is being both performed and consumed (Latham and McCormack, 2004; Miller, 1997, 2010, 2012; Pickering, 1993). As a performance, the consumers of the Center are contributing to (producing) the experiential qualities of the Center (Thrift, 2006, 2008). As consumption, these experiential qualities of the Center are intangible qualities. Yet they are a commodity of the Center—an ecosystem service (Walker and Salt, 2006)—that is consumed. In this regard, the consumers are simultaneously contributing value to and extracting value from the Center through their performance of consumption. Essentially, the consumers are self-creating a feedback loop where the performance of wealth is also consumed through the experience of wealth that the Center provides.

The experiential values, the *ecosystems services* that the Center provides create an interesting dynamic related to value and consumptions. The dynamic is that you don’t have to be wealthy or be capable of spending \$100 on dinner at Restaurant Bricco to experience and extract value from the Center. This is not to say that a consumer does not require a certain degree of wealth to access the Center, but for the cost of a \$3.50 latte at Café Sophia or Starbucks or a \$9.00 burrito at Moe’s, consumers can extract value from the Center and experience the *ecosystem services* provided by the Center (Walker and Salt, 2006: 148):

Many of the benefits society gets from ecosystems are either unrecognized or considered ‘free’... These services are often the ones that change in a regime shift and are only recognized and appreciated when they are lost. They are ignored in purely market-driven economies (which, therefore, are inefficient, according to economists’ own definition of market efficiency).

The value of these experiential qualities is important to understand. While consumption may be oppressive at times and capable of objectifying us, a *thrifty* consumer can extract experiential value—consume the self-indulgent *treat*—from the Center with a minimal financial investment (Miller, 1997, 2010, 2012). The *thrifty* consumer can get more out of the Center than what he paid for. I believe this is important—understanding that a *thrifty* consumer can extract greater value from the Center than the cost of his investment—in regard to the bar scene that recently emerged in the Center.

8.40 ‘The Geography of What Happens’ – Co-Option and Adaptation

Chapter V explored and explained the turnover in the Center’s storefront tenants from 1980 to 2012, specifically the increase in hospitality and increase in hospitality establishments licensed to serve alcohol. However, another change or shifting in the Center’s ecosystem was occurring with the licensed hospitality establishments, but this change or shift was not visible in the data. Hidden within the hospitality regime and data was the emergence of a late night drinking scene that by 2010 evolved into a full blow bar scene.

Understanding the emergence of this bar scene is important for five reasons. First, it demonstrates how *episodic* change occurs “with periods of slow accumulation of natural capital...punctuated by sudden releases and reorganization...” (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 27). Second, it also demonstrates how we struggle to notice slow variables of change (Walker and Salt, 2006) and how “[s]low variables and nonlinear processes are harder to monitor, understand, model, and forecast” (Carpenter, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 190). Third, the emergence of the bar scene highlights the active role consumers play in the production of space and their capability to co-opt space and use space in ways that were never intended (Thrift in Massey, 1999; Amin and Thrift, 2002; McManus and Ethington, 2007). Fourth, the emergence of the bar scene also demonstrates how hybrid space can form out of existing and neighboring practices and the reconfiguration of existing spaces (Thrift in Massey, 1999; Spinosa, 1997). Fifth and last, the emergence of the bar scene also demonstrates the adaptive capacity of some of the restaurants, as platforms (Johnson, 2010) for the performance of hospitality and

sociality and of the restaurateurs and their capabilities to adapt to shifting consumer demands.

In 2002, Billy Grant opened his second hospitality establishment, Grant's Restaurant and Bar, on Farmington Avenue (Interview; Hartford Courant, Jun 30, 2000; Jun 14, 2001; August 30, 2001). Grant's was an expensive and upscale restaurant designed with an elegant marble entryway and white table cloth dining. However, by 2012 the white table cloth restaurant of Grant's had also become one of the most popular bars in West Hartford Center for young twenty-something-year-olds. In 2009 a noticeable late night drinking and bar scene emerged in the Center, and by the summer of 2010 it had erupted into a boisterous bar scene and nightlife of drinking, DJs, and dancing. The Center, on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights, is now packed with young twenty-something-year-olds—a demographic that was previously not well represented in the Center's hospitality scene. This shift in hospitality functions was not visible in the licensing data because it did not result from the opening of nightclubs or bars—specific liquor licensing categories that are not permitted in West Hartford. It occurred within the existing licensed hospitality establishments and within the legal limits of restaurant licensing.

The bar scene emerged as the result of a co-creation—an informal and performative dance between consumers and producers. While the bar scene became noticeable in 2009, its inception began many years earlier with hospitality industry employees—wait-staff, bartenders, and kitchen staff—who would go out for drinks in the Center at the end of their work shifts. Rosenthal explains (Interview):

I think the younger crowd kind of just happened. I think my staff are probably somewhat responsible for that, because they can't drink at our place. They go to Grant's and I think the initial wave of that being a busy bar really came from industry people.

End-of-shift drinking is common in the hospitality industry—the industry happy hour—and had been occurring on a small scale for years in the Center. However, with the opening of a half-dozen restaurants in Blue Back Square in 2007, a critical mass was achieved and a threshold was crossed. Folke explains thresholds (Folke, et al. in Gunderson, et al., 2010: 122):

Passing a threshold marks a sudden change in feedback in the ecosystem, such that the trajectory of the system changes direction—toward a different attractor. In some cases, crossing the threshold brings about sudden, sharp, and

dramatic change in the responding state variables... In other cases, although the dynamics of the system have ‘flipped’ from one attractor to another, the transition in the state variables is more gradual...

The years of end-of-shift drinks and the new restaurants in Blue Back Square creating a critical mass that crossed a threshold or tipping point (Gladwell, 2000) delineate a period of “slow accumulation of natural capital [that was soon to be] punctuated by sudden releases and reorganization” (Holling and Gunderson in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 27). In 2009, the Elbow Room expanded into the neighboring storefront and the new space was designed and branded separately from the Elbow Room as Sidebar. The owner, Delbon explains the opening of Sidebar and the Center’s bar scene after I mention to him my visit to Sidebar on a recent Saturday night (Interview):

Delbon: Well you go around here anywhere after 11:00 and see how crowded it is in the whole center.

Poland: [Nodding Yes] Is that new?

Delbon: It's less [than] three years. It's a party town at 11:00...It's young. The whole town is young, at that time.

Poland: How did it start?

Delbon: We always got the young crowd for the roof [top bar]. When we opened that up ten years ago, we got that young crowd [see Hartford Courant, June, 20, 2000]. We've been a very young restaurant ... But I always wanted a bar, every day since I opened that bar up there, I wanted it for the winter time, because I'm like, "Where do these people go in the wintertime?" They would always disappear ... So I was like, "Wow. We've got to have a bar." And we were waiting for this space to come up ... when that came up, I said, "Yeah. We're definitely going to take that space." ...and as soon as I opened that, it just crazy. Crazy busy.

Poland: Young, from the beginning?

Delbon: Oh, yeah. Young group. And we have a DJ and that's what kids want. Kids want to have fun. I remember when I was a kid, that's what I wanted to do. They just want to hook up, man. Flat out, you know? But yeah, it's been very busy ... I opened it during the beginning of the recession and it was one of the best years I had.... Just because of the bar.

Delbon was engaged in what Deming describes as “[n]ew products and...service are generated...by knowledge, imagination, innovation, risk, trial and effort on the part of the producer...” (Deming, 1984: 182) and he who “innovates and is lucky will take the market” (Deming, 1993: 10). Delbon had knowledge and imagination; he was willing to experiment and take a risk. Most important, his knowledge, his hunch was right and he managed to engage the consumer’s *needs*,

wants, passions, and enthusiasms by providing a bar within his restaurant. Delbon's narrative notes this was at the start of the economic recession, a time of shock, disturbance, and uncertainty, a time when the dinner trade was slowing and check totals declining (Restaurateur, Interview). This uncertainty opened the door to a new adaptive cycle, a "period where novelty in the system is likely to emerge as new combinations of old and new elements..." (Gunderson, et al., 2010: 430-431). We see that a "unique property of human systems in response to uncertainty is the generation of novelty" (Westley, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 118).

Wanting to better understand the interaction between the restaurateurs and consumers and how the restaurateurs gain knowledge, innovate, and take risks, I asked the restaurateurs about their role in bringing products to the consumers (Interview):

Poland: So is it you the restaurateur bringing that to us or is it the consumers demanding it?

Pforzheimer: That's an interesting question. I think it's both. I mean I think it's an arrogant, short-lived restaurateur who decides what he's going to bring. You're supposed to be paying attention to what people want. So I think you might blindly stumble on what people want and if you know what you're doing, pay attention.

Rosenthal elaborated further (Interview):

It's kind of a joint thing. And our goal is to bring to the customer what they want, but they didn't know it. We've got it all before they know it.

You know like a raw bar, we opened a raw bar at the Oyster Bar which is a big part of the concept, we figured what made me feel that that would work, I mean nobody was selling oysters in Hartford, other than, you know six oysters on a half shell, right. It was conceptual. What I realized is people are paying all this money for sushi, but not oysters. Sushi made it make sense to me.

Before that, [they were] going to spend \$18 on six oysters...six oysters are expensive. But enough people reacted to it. That we did in a way that made them react. They didn't know, there weren't when we started 2,000 customers saying [to] me open a raw bar.

Pforzheimer's and Rosenthal's narratives fit within the context of what Deming explained, demonstrating that these restaurateurs—producers—are not simply creating a product with the aim of convincing the consumer to buy the product (Deming, 1993; see also Miller, 2012). Rather the restaurateurs *pay attention*, trying to anticipate what is the consumers' desire, and *bring to the customer what they want, before they know it*. They also relate to Pickering's (1993) *mangle of practice* and

resistance and *accommodation*. The restaurateurs exist and function in real time and at times encounter resistance to products and services they introduce to the consumers—their goal—and then have to adjust (Pickering, 1993). Rosenthal’s oyster bar is interesting in that the idea for the oyster bar resulted from the increasing popularity of sushi, a process of adaptation and cross appropriation that is explained by Spinoza. “Special sensitivity to marginal, neighboring, or occluded practices, however, is precisely at the core of entrepreneurship... This sensitivity generates the art, not science, of invention...” (Spinoza et al., 1997: 30; see also Elzen, et al., 2004). Thrift explains this adaptive capacity and cross appropriation as *creolization*, a process that “produces all manner of creative responses out of what might appear to be quite similar materials” (Thrift, 1999: 38).

Delbon’s Sidebar was also *creolization*, a bar as a *neighboring and occluded practice* to a restaurant. However, Delbon may not have been the only person anticipating the shift towards younger consumers and drinking as a key component of hospitality. A few months after Sidebar opened, McLadden’s, an Irish Pub, opened a half a block away on LaSalle Road. While the owners of McLadden’s did not make themselves available to be interviewed, it is safe to assume that the Irish Pub theme, from its inception, was orientated (intentionally) more toward drinking than dining. The proximity of Sidebar and McLadden’s opening, in both space and time, provided a new habitat for this new kind of hospitality and sociality to take hold.

Pforzheimer explained that the restaurateur would be paying attention, and Pforzheimer himself was paying attention. His restaurant, Barcelona opened in 2005 and operated primarily as a restaurant until 2009. When asked to describe Barcelona’s customers, Pforzheimer explained (Interview):

It depends on the night of the week ... West Hartford on the weekend is young. We’ll get a young crowd, one of my youngest crowds. I get Trinity [College] students and I get, it’s a well-known place for kids and to hang out. So, we have a DJ. I think they like that. So it’s a boisterous young crowd from about ten o’clock on, on Friday and Saturday. That’s not true of all my restaurants. It’s true of West Hartford.

Pforzheimer was paying attention and recognized the customers in the Center were younger than customers at his other locations. Pforzheimer adapted, by adding a DJ, music, and dancing—hospitality practices that appealed to the younger consumers.

Capturing the younger consumers and providing the space of a bar in the Center is not simply about catering to the consumer. For example, Miller explains shopping with a woman who “at the end of the day, having inspected more than 150 possible print dresses...goes home without buying a thing because the shops didn’t have the right one for her ... her rejection confirms her own specificity” (Miller, 2012: 54). In 2012, the owner of Reuben’s Deli closed the deli and reopened the storefront space as Bar Thirty Five in an attempt to capitalize on and capture the bar scene. Bar Thirty Five, unable to capture the bar scene, closed a few months later. Contingency is revealed and success or a preordained outcome is never guaranteed.

It is easy to assume that producers drive consumption or that the forces of global capitalism are what create and re-create (remake) urban space when we focus on the businesses that succeed (Simon, 2009). We do this especially when telling “an apocalyptic history of inevitable moments leading inevitably toward a predefined goal or fate which the commentators already know, a goal or fate in which everything becomes faster, more compressed in space and time, more commodified, and so on” (Thrift, 1996: 4; see Simon, 2009). It is also easy for us to “develop pictures in our mind of powerful people with enormous data banks containing financial, personal, and professional information about all those whom they control. And we even worry that we are being manipulated by this advertiser...this company or financier, that political leader, and so forth. In short, we fear that we may be treated as objects controlled by some nearly invisible subject, in all aspects of our lives” (Spinosa et al., 1997: 8-9). However, in doing so, we tend to privilege the producers and production by “mainly look[ing] at the supply-side and the production of innovations ... [taking] the user side for granted or narrow[ing] it down to ‘the market’ which functions as a neutral selection environment” (Elzen, et al., 2004: 3). Elzen, et al., explain the need to pay more attention to how “users have to ‘domesticate new technologies [and practices] to fit existing user contexts” (Elzen, et al., 2004: 4). This, in part, is why “creativity is not something that can be imported into a city, but must be achieved *in situ* through the interactions between the relations of work, social life and production” (Jayne, et al, 2010: 1414). Doing so also misses the trial and error that occurs—the many failures that occur in the shadows of success stories (Pickering, 1993). Since 1990, a total of 83 hospitality establishments opened, 56 of which closed—for various reasons. The 56 establishments that closed are important, because they are part of the

process of trial and error, the shifting and sorting out of what works and what does not work in the Center's experience of remaking.

Rosenthal explains the challenge and complexity of *surfing the right side of the capitalism wave* (Thrift, 2005) in the context of Max Oyster Bar and the Center's bar scene (Interview, 2012):

The Oyster Bar's *bar* was crazy [at] first, until it got a little more competition. And now the bar, [at] the Oyster Bar has become kind of more fitting for the restaurant. The bar was probably busier then. I wouldn't say busier than we wanted it to be because we loved the revenue and the profit. But it was not necessarily our best friend as far as the noise level and the craziness. But the bar was crazy on a weekend nights. It was busy every night ... today it's not. It's more of a before dinner style. It's...not a young crowd. The young crowd...now are at Grant's ... I think that happened by accident...the bar scene is kind of a hard ... And now we're probably not as busy as we'd like to be, but there's no real secret of how you, we don't really know how to get it back.

Rosenthal's account points to a finicky bar business and a bar scene that has self-organized in some restaurants more than in others. While the owners' willingness to cater to the younger drinking crowd and the bar scene is important, it does not guarantee that the bar crowd will come. Billy Grant further explains the uncertainty and the elusiveness of the bar scene (Interview):

For us, we did really well in the bar here [Grant's] when we opened and only a couple nights, Thursday, Friday, Saturday probably we did really well. And then things tapered off after a while. And then when McLadden's opened, it seemed to slow down. It seemed to hurt us in the beginning ... I remember being really nervous meaning like "oh my God, I hope we don't lose the few good bartenders we got" ... And then we just started to crawl back and...I think they're still doing great, and also Barcelona has helped there, so it's gotten to the point where McLadden's, Barcelona, and now the new addition [Sidebar] at the Elbow Room has brought a younger crowd. So I think...we had a kind of a shift in the crowd where we got a little quieter and now, knock on wood, we're really back to being very busy on the weekends.

The uncertainty of Grant's narrative about the bar scene, how business has ebbed and flowed, and his not knowing, exactly or confidently why, shows the uncertainty in capitalism on the production side, an uncertainty that is not often adequately portrayed in production driven accounts of capitalism (Harvey, 2000, 2006, 2009; Simon, 2009). Grant, Rosenthal, and the other restaurateurs are not some omniscient wizards or puppet masters controlling the consumers (Miller, 1997; Spinosa, et al., 1997).

So how do the narratives of these restaurateurs inform us? First, the restaurateurs are not trying to create a specific kind of urban space or scene in the Center; they are more focused on running their businesses and trying to create a product and service that appeals to the consumer. Second, while they *pay attention* to the Center and what is going on in the Center's scene, they often view the Center/scene as external or separate from what they are doing. As a result, they may try to better fit into the Center's scene. Third, they know who their customers are and know how to cater to their customers, but they are not confident they have power or control over their customers. They are hopeful that they get it right and thankful when their customers appreciate what they are doing. In many ways, the restaurateurs are engaged in Pickering's mangle, "an evolving field of human and material agencies reciprocally engaged in the play of resistance and accommodation" (Pickering, 1993: 567)—*resistance and accommodation* in ecological terms being the process of adaptation. Consumers create *resistance* to ideas, concepts, products, and services, resulting in the need for changes, alterations, or alternatives—*accommodations*. This process is a feedback loop between the producers—the restaurateurs—and the consumers that takes place on the platform that is West Hartford Center.

Interestingly the consumers appear, at times, more confident about what the restaurateurs are doing and what is going on in the Center's scene. That is not to say the consumers are correct, but simply to show and juxtapose their confidence. David, a thirty-something newlywed who frequented Grant's when he was single, explains (Interview):

Poland: Who would you describe as the customers at Grant's?

David: It's changed recently.

Poland: How recent?

David: Maybe a little longer than a year because I haven't been going out as much as I used to but what they are trying to do—what I've noticed the whole Center trying to do—is like when we used to go it used to be business professionals and maybe a little older crowd with a few younger twenties coming in. But it seems like what they are trying to do on a Friday or Saturday night is kick up the music to attract the younger crowd. The Elbow Room opened up the Sidebar and that attracts the young to the bar because they have the roof deck in the summer which closed down so they opened up the Sidebar so drinks for more money. So I think they'll get more competition with the Irish bar on the LaSalle—McLadden's... So I think they are trying to attract the younger crowd—the bar crowd—so that sort of turns me off a little bit

only on a Friday and Saturday later at night. It's a little clubbier feel. But my experience has always been a classier business crowd when I used to go a lot.

David's comments are astute. He sees the change in age that has occurred, observes that a bar scene has emerged, and understands why the Elbow Room opened Sidebar. David is confident about what he is describing and what Grant's and '*the whole Center*' is trying to do—to '*attract the younger crowd*'. David further explained how he uses or engages the space of Grant's (Interview):

So we usually just walk in and go right to the bar area. I actually had my bachelor party there. It was very classy, we bought the keg that they serve so everybody could drink for free, we ordered a bunch of food...for everyone and they actually blocked off a certain area of the bar for us. So normally we definitely hang out in the bar. I've eaten in the dining area a few times with my brother and my wife and the dining area is nice.

It is evident in his narrative that David's primary use of Grant's has been the bar area—as a bar—not for going out for meals in the dining room. He continues (Interview):

It was always a meeting place. All my friends—again especially when I was single—we would all meet there because it's a classy place, wasn't too crazy, it was a nice atmosphere, great food, decent TV's. So we usually hung out in the bar area or in the summer there was great outdoor seating and I think it was just a point of reference that everyone just seemed to like to gravitate towards Grant's. Personally I love some of their menu items and yeah it just seemed to have a variation of things like the food, the atmosphere; it was a nice place to be.

I interviewed David in 2012 and he married in 2010, the year when the bar scene erupted in the Center. Therefore, the period when David and his friends were frequenting the bar area of Grant's was the period of slow accumulation of late night drinking and the emerging bar scene before 2010. Prior to the time when David and his friends *gravitated towards Grant's*, Grant's was an upscale restaurant that appealed to a mostly middle-aged dinner crowd, and Grant's provided a bar area to accommodate diners who were waiting for tables to dine. While David is astute in his observation and understanding of changes in the Center's dining and drinking scene, he misinterprets and even projects his own behavior on to Grant's and the Center when he claims, '*the whole Center*' is trying to '*attract the younger crowd*'.

David does not recognize that he and his friends were the leading edge of these changes in the Center's scene. He and his friends were part of a younger crowd, before Sidebar and McLaddens opened, who had started drinking in the Center, co-

opting the bar area of Grant's and using it as a bar—not as the accessory to the restaurant as the bar was intended. Just as Jane Jacobs did not recognize that she was a gentrifier (Zukin, 2010), David does not recognize that he and his friends were early pioneers (Clay 1979 in Lees, et al., 2010) and possibly trend setters—the co-opters of space. However, David is not the conventional bohemian or neo-bohemian of gentrification (Lees, et al., 2008, 2010; Lloyd, 2002, 2006). He is mainstream and middle classed. It simply turns out that the atmosphere of Grant's bar area appealed to the *wants and needs* of David and his friends, and they co-opted the bar area as their own—making it into a bar, separate from the restaurant. For David and his friends, Grant's was never a restaurant; it was always a bar. David also expressed displeasure about the Center's bar scene and the younger drinking crowd (Interview), which returns us to Lloyd (2006) and Rosaldo's *imperialist nostalgia*, as David resenting “those that followed” (Lloyd, 2006: 96). David mourned the passing of the casual drinking experience that he and his friends are implicated in creating, now that their casual drinking scene has evolved into an intense bar scene.

The evolution of the Center's bar scene was mostly emergent, self-organizing, and driven mostly by the consumers with willing producers who adapted to and accommodated these new and younger consumers during a time of economic uncertainty. The trial and error and risk taking of the restaurateurs and the reconfiguration of restaurants into hybrid restaurant-bars can be understood through Spinosa et al., when they explain, “we are developing flexible ways of dealing with ourselves and with things. As we try to get the most out of every situation, things shift identities as much as we do ... Everything becomes a resource” (Spinosa et al., 1997: 11). The conventional spaces of restaurants—a recognizable and definable platform—were adapted into hybrid spaces of restaurant-bars. The restaurant becoming a restaurant-bar was occurring in plain sight, yet it was hard to see while it was happening (Thrift in Massey, 1999). The same can be said of the Center's shift from being a definable town center to a regional center of hospitality and middle-class sociality. Harris explains, “[i]t is fruitless to try to identify the moment when my block, and others like it, ceased to be suburban ... They are products of a continuous process, made up of innumerable events. By the time residents become aware that neighborhood-wide change has happened, it's history” (Harris in Keil, 2013: 37).

These restaurateurs who survived were resilient. They had “the capacity...to absorb disturbance and still retain basic function[s] and structure[s],” (Walker and Salt, 2006: xiii). They adapted to the uncertainty of economic decline and welcomed a new and younger consumer into the Center and their restaurants. While the notion of the Center as *Bistroville* (Brooks, 2002) still lives on in the collective consciousness of metropolitan Hartford’s middle-aged and middle-class, for these younger consumers who successfully co-opted the restaurant space of the Center into bars and produced the late night bar scene and space of the Center, *Bistroville* never existed. Reed, a 22 year old and recent college graduate explains her experiences at Grant’s (Interview):

Well, it’s very well decorated. It’s very...I mean I don’t mind, I like dive bars, but sometimes, once in while I like to get away from that feel and like being somewhere fancy, especially where I can drink PBR. I’m not too fond of their music. I think it’s a little too loud in there generally but they make great martinis too... I like the dark feel that they have in there. They bring the lights really down and there are also areas, in the dining area if you want to get away from the noise and sit in the dining area, it’s a good experience the socializing.

Later in the interview I asked Reed to describe the food and drinks at Grant’s (Interview):

Reed: At Grants; well their martinis you could tell they’re trying to lean towards more to being very trendy, like trying to stay up with the new. They’re very creative with their drinks. It’s not like you go to some bar and they just make you anything. They put art into their drinks, which I really appreciate. For example, unfortunately I don’t remember what it’s called, but some grapefruit martini and it’s awesome and naturally it’s one of the reasons why I like to go to Grants, aside from their beer selection...

Poland: I wouldn’t expect PBR [at Grant’s]. So I have to ask is it PBR cans or tap?

Reed: They’ve got cans and it’s awesome. You can even like show it off, like look what I’m drinking. They give you a glass along with it, but why? Drink it out of the can. If you’re going to go low, you go low.

Reed’s narrative and experience of Grant’s is clearly the description of a bar, not a restaurant. She never mentions food and when she mentions the *dining area*, it is an accessory to the bar—conveniently and coincidentally located near the bar. For Reed, Grant’s is all about the drinks—especially her PBR. PBR (Pabst Blue Ribbon) is a cheap and low quality American lager that has become trendy in the *urban hipster* scene. PBR, especially in cans, is not a beer someone expects to find in the white-tablecloth restaurant of Grant’s. However, in the hybrid restaurant-bar space that

Grant's has become, as Reed explains, '*if you're going to go low, you go low*'.

8.50 Conclusion:

By exploring the consumers of the Center, who they are and how they use, experience, understand, and inhabit the Center, this chapter revealed the Center as a complex and dynamic space. Not only are the consumers diverse and eclectic, how they use and experience the Center is also diverse and eclectic. For the consumers, the space of the Center, the services it offers, and the experiences it provides, are not singular, but many. In regard to our urban vocabularies, the Center challenges the consumers as much as it challenges urban academics. The vocabularies of the consumers reveal the Center as a hybrid space of ambiguity, challenging to define and explain. More important, when asked what words describe the Center, the consumers do not agree 80 percent of time on words they choose and rely more on words that describe the experience of the space, rather than words that describe the physical space of the Center. In addition, the vocabularies of suburbanization and gentrification were absent.

The consumers reveal the Center as a complex adaptive system. It is a space that is co-created through a symbiotic relationship between the producers and consumers and their intricate performance of consumption. The Center's consumption is performed, it is a dance where producers and consumers are in some ways partners, navigating the steps together and switching off on who leads. This once definably suburban space, today inhabited by new forms of hospitality and sociality, has become a hybrid metropolitan and post-suburban space that has evolved and adapted to new forms of hospitality and sociality. Yet the Center remains an enigma. Suburbanization and gentrification are possibly too blunt words to describe the fine-grained textures of the Center and the Center's remaking. An elusive hybrid space, the Center may in fact be best described as post-suburban (Keil, 2013), a term that still misses so much and leaves us wanting more.

Chapter IX.

Conclusion: The Kind of Space that is West Hartford Center

9.00 Introduction

As explained earlier, in the 1980s West Hartford Center was simply a suburban town center. Today, as demonstrated by my research, the Center has become a regional center of middle class hospitality and sociality. Through my research, I sought to explore what changed between 1980 and 2012 and how these changes inform us about the Center and the Center's remaking as an urban space. Knowing that the physical space of West Hartford Center remained mostly unchanged over the past three decades, I wanted to explore how and why this change occurred if the physical space of the Center did not change. Therefore, I conceptualized the space of the Center as an ecological platform (Johnson, 2010) and as an ecosystem—a complex adaptive system—to better understand how urban space changes and is remade by actors and activities that inhabit the space of the Center.

This exploration of the Center's remaking began in Chapter V with a storefront tenant database and understanding what had changed in the Center in regard to storefront tenants and uses. What Chapter V revealed is that the Center's remaking was, in part, the result of changes in tenant mix and uses—the kind of businesses inhabiting the Center—and that the change was *episodic*. Most notable was the increase in hospitality uses. Recognizing hospitality as the most meaningful change, Chapter VI explored the actors associated with the changes in hospitality, who the restauranteurs were, and what the restauranteurs were doing in regard to the Center's remaking. Chapter VII then explored urban governance, specifically, government intervention—the local-state—and how government intervened in the Center's remaking. Chapter VII revealed government intervention as more of a management approach than a planning approach, and the approach was neither top-down, nor bottom up, but a combination of the two. Chapter VIII then explored the users, the consumers of West Hartford Center, and how they engage, use, experience, and understand the Center today. The consumers reveal the Center—as a space or

ecological platform—as a complex adaptive system. In addition, the consumers were shown to be active participants in the production of the Center as space—the consumers as co-creators of space and the remaking of space.

Collectively, those four empirical chapters were designed to explore ‘what’ changed in the Center and ‘how’ and ‘why’ change occurred. In addition, Chapters VI, VII, and VIII were designed to explore the three forces of capitalism, government, and consumption, and how each of these forces interacted, coalesced, and influenced the Center’s remaking. In other words, I demonstrated how these forces, through the activities and actions of their respective actors, were performed and organized within the physical space of the Center.

The fact that the physical structure of the Center’s space remained mostly constant while the Center was experiencing this remaking is interesting in that it informs us that the Center’s remaking has had little to do with physical development, construction, or the redevelopment of the Center. This is interesting because much of our understanding of urban regeneration focuses on the physical reconstruction, redevelopment, and transformation of urban space (Hannigan, 1998; Peck and Ward 2002; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Zukin, 1989, 1991). Therefore, the remaking of the Center was mostly the result of changes in function, how the Center is used, inhabited, and experienced, not in the physical form and design of the space.

Knowing that the physical structure of the Center has remained mostly constant and knowing from the previous chapters that what has most changed in the Center is its function, I now want to explore my research questions. In doing so, I conceptualize the Center as an ecological platform (Johnson, 2010) in which these functional changes took place.

To accomplish this, I will present this chapter in three sections. The first section will explore my research questions in an attempt to answer and understand them. The second section will conceptualize, reveal, and explore the Center as a platform—specifically as a stage—that is inhabited through the performances of the actors. The final section will provide a brief conclusion.

9.10 Exploring the Research Questions

This research and thesis began with a concern for the *large urban bias*, including paradigmatic cases, spectacular sites, scale, and the need for robust and sophisticated research focused on small city urbanism (Bell and Jayne, 2006; 2009). In addition, this research and thesis began with a general dissatisfaction with our urban vocabularies and urban understandings of suburbanization and gentrification. The foundational premise was that our urban understandings were mostly based on the experiences and accounts of large urban places (Park and Burgess, 1925; Scott and Soja, 1996; Dear, 2002; Smith; 1996, 2002; Zukin; 1989, 1991, 1995, 2010) that too often focus on the spectacular, grand theories and towering structures of globalization (Amin and Graham, 1997; Amin and Thrift, 2002; Thrift, 1996, 2005) and often fall short of helping us to understand the experiences of smaller cities (Bell and Jayne, 2006, 2009). More specifically, my concern was that words such as suburban and gentrification, when applied to the space of West Hartford Center, are limited in their capabilities to inform us about the space of the Center and its remaking.

As a result of this general dissatisfaction, I set out to explore the space of West Hartford Center and the Center's remaking by posing a series of questions to frame my exploration of the Center. The primary question was "What kind of space is West Hartford Center and how can we develop a vocabulary to explain it?" To assist in answering this, I raised three additional questions aimed at understanding 'how' and 'why' this kind of space (the Center) emerged (the remaking of space); who were and are the change makers and what were their roles in the emergence of this kind of space; and 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?

Over the course of my research these questions evolved and organized around the actors whose performances influenced the space and the remaking of West Hartford Center. Three groups of actors or forces surfaced as important and influential in the creation and re-creation—the remaking—of West Hartford Center as a space. These actors or forces included the restaurateurs (entrepreneurs) or capitalists, the government officials, and the consumers. Recognizing that all three of these groups of actors and their associated forces influenced the space of the Center and the Center's remaking, my research tried to conceptualize and understand how these groups of

actors and forces interacted and how their interactions resulted in the Center's remaking.

Dissatisfied with our conventional urban vocabularies and understandings of suburbanization and gentrification, I turned to the vocabularies and understandings of complexity (Jacobs, 1961; Batty, 2007), emergence (Johnson, 2001; Latham, 2003), and ecological resilience (Holling, 1973; Gunderson, et al., 2010)—all of which view urban space as complex adaptive systems (Holling, 2001; Gunderson and Holling, 2002). More specifically, I utilized ecological metaphors that have been persistent in urban theory for a century (Alberti, 2009; Batty and Marshall, 2009; Hawley, 1944, 1950), but in doing so, I relied on ecological resilience (Holling, 1973) as an alternative means for conceptualizing and understanding urban change (Holling and Orians, 1971; Holling and Goldberg, 1971). Ecological theories and *ecological resilience* provided both a metaphorical and theoretical framework for thinking about urban change and the remaking of urban space. Adaptive cycles and panarchy (Gunderson and Holling, 2010) provided a means of thinking through the scale of urban change and the *episodic* nature of urban change (Gunderson and Holling, 2002).

This alternative urban-ecological lens for conceptualizing and exploring urban change revealed the Center as a dynamic, complex, and adaptive space that is *always shifting* around multiple equilibria (Holling and Goldberg, 1971). The *always shifting* results from the improvisational performances of each actor, every group of actors, and every moment in time as they attempt to navigate their everyday lives (Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999; Bruegmann, 2005). For the restaurateurs their performance was hospitality. For the government officials their performance was urban governance and planning. For the consumers, their performance was consumption and changing or new forms of sociality. Together, these actors perform on the platform of the Center, an urban-ecological space, a human habitat. I use the phrase improvisation performance to describe the actors' actions because what they were doing was never choreographed—there was no script, director, or choreographer. The performances of hospitality, governance, sociality, and consumption, and the remaking of space were improvisational (Amin and Thrift, 2002).

So how can these ecological metaphors and theoretical frameworks help us to understand West Hartford Center and to answer my research questions? I start by first

exploring the contextual questions and then conclude with answering the primary question of “What kind of space is West Hartford Center and how can we develop a vocabulary to explain it?”

The first of the contextual questions was how and why did this kind of space (the Center) emerge (the remaking of space)? This is not an easy question to answer because the answer is embedded in the many space-time scales of the Center’s panarchy (Gunderson and Holling, 2002). Many forces, even forces beyond those explored and discussed in this thesis, played a role in the how and why of the Center’s remaking. For example, Elzen et al., explain “[t]ransitions at the societal level then involve a change from one socio-technical system to another” (Elzen, et al., 2004: 3). Wood explains the shifting location of centrality organized around existing settlement patterns (Wood, 1997) and that “[t]he rule is that the older system previously determined always determines the more recent system developed under other economic laws and conditions...” (Wood, 1997: 91). Holling and Orians explain, “[e]ach individual human has a variety of needs—for shelter, recreation, work, and foraging. These activities are typically spatially separated and any qualitative or quantitative change of a function at one point in space inevitably affects other functions at other points of space” (Holling and Orians, 1971: 3). The point is, as we change how we live—as society, culture, technology, economics, etc. change—the urban spaces we live within also change. We continually create, re-create, and reorganize urban space through mostly slow moving variables (Walker and Salt, 2006) of change in how we live our lives.

Therefore, slow moving variables change, such as the shift away from tailored clothes to off-the-rack garments in the 1980s (French, Interview) and the introduction of whole bean espresso and other “simple pleasures” (Brainard, Interview) resulted in meaningful changes in the space of the Center. Ley’s (1996) new middle class and their identity formation and Latham’s (2003) new public cultures centered around hospitality manifest as and help to explain the Center’s shift toward hospitality. Changes at one scale, resulting in changes at another scale, are the essence of complex, emergent, and self-organizing systems (Johnson, 2001; Latham, 2003; Elzen, et al., 2004; Gunderson, et al., 2010). The dynamics of scale point to the influence and importance of both micro-scale “contingencies of locality, history, and agency rooted in specific places” (Paradis, 2002: 38) and the macro-scale forces of

globalization, capitalism, and neoliberal urbanism (Thrift, 1996, 2005; Harvey, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2009) in understanding urban change and the remaking of space.

By recognizing the dynamic relationship between the local and the global, we start to see and understand the multiple space-times (Amin and Thrift, 2002) and scalable hierarchies—panarchy (Gunderson and Holling, 2002). Changes in demographics and socio-economic structures of work, home, family, and friends reorganize everyday life and middle-class lifestyles and how we engage in hospitality and sociality (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Brooks, 2000, 2004; Holling and Orians, 1971; Katz and Bradley, 2013; Gallagher, 2013). These all become factors—influences—in how urban space is utilized, reorganized, and remade—the remaking of urban space.

In the end, it is the complex relationship and interactions between multiple variables, forces, actors, and adaptive cycles nested within the Center’s panarchy that contribute to the how and why of the Center and the Center’s remaking. The simultaneously symbiotic and competitive interactions of multiple actors and forces tracking multiple equilibrium states at variable space-time scales coalesce into contextual fluid moments that re-create the space of the Center. This urban-ecological space is not static, but fluid, *always shifting*, never achieving equilibrium (Holling and Goldberg, 1971). There is no simple or singular answer to the how and why of the Center’s emergence and remaking, pointing to the need for more dexterous and contextual urban theory (Amin and Graham, 1997; Thrift in Massey, 1999; Amin and Thrift, 2002; Thrift, 1996, 2005, 2008; Latham, 2003).

The second of the contextual research questions was “who were and are the change makers and what were their roles in the emergence of this kind of space?” Similar to the previous question and answer above, there is no simple or singular answer to this question. There were many change makers, many of whom have been discussed in this thesis and many others who remain unknown. Barry Feldman, the town manager from 1985 to 2006, in regard to government and governance, was a change maker. Feldman’s approach to public administration, his nurturing of the growth machine (Molotch, 1976), and his management approach created a local culture (Molotch, et al., 2000) of governance that embraced change and uncertainty (Holling 1973). Carpenter explains, “[a]ny institution that gathers better information on slow variables, puts more weight on future returns, narrows the distribution of

uncertainties, maintains social flexibility for adaptive response, and maintains the resilience of ecosystems to withstand novel perturbations has the potential to ameliorate the risk of collapse” (Carpenter, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 192). Feldman’s management style seems to have accomplished this. He and his team of economic development and planning professionals—who were also change makers—focused on the *little things*, managed the space of the Center, put long term returns ahead of short term gains, and remained flexible.

The restaurateurs were also change makers—each of whom imparted their own twist or touch on the hospitality regime within the Center. Peter Brainard with his coffee shop was an early-in pioneer and change maker in 1992 who sought to introduce whole-bean espresso and expand the hours of operation of his business and the active day (and night) of the Center. Billy Grant’s opening of Restaurant Bricco in 1996 introduced *trendy fine dining* to the Center and in doing so demonstrated that the Center could be a space of new forms of middle-class hospitality and sociality. Benny Delbon’s Elbow Room and Sidebar continually pushed the boundaries of the Center’s hospitality experience through expansion—both physical expansion of the space of the Elbow Room and the conceptual ideas of what hospitality and sociality could be in the Center. The list of influential restaurateurs goes on and on, each owner and establishment contributing to the collective space and experience of the Center. However, one restaurateur stands out, Richard Rosenthal.

Rosenthal was not the first restaurateur to enter the space of the Center—Brainard, Grant, Delbon, Gehami, and others were there before him. However, as Grant explained, Rosenthal was at “the forefront of doing some cutting edge things and bringing some kind of exciting, trendy fine dining, but still casual kind of a city atmosphere to greater Hartford” (Interview). Rosenthal and the Max Restaurant Group introduced cosmopolitan dining—the New York City trendy restaurant food culture (Bourdain, 2000; Buford, 2006) to metropolitan Hartford. Rosenthal’s arrival in the Center with Max Oyster Bar in 1999 legitimized and professionalized the Center’s hospitality scene. More important, Max Oyster Bar pulled the region’s middle-class populations out of their many enclaves and into the Center. Rosenthal is Spinosa’s entrepreneur who “contribute[s] to reconfiguring the practices of their society” and “bring[s] about social change by modifying the style of particular subworlds or the style of the society in general” (Spinosa, et al., 1997: 68).

However, I want to be cautious in highlighting Feldman and Rosenthal (or the other people mentioned throughout this thesis) as change makers. They are notable and important, but they and the others mentioned were also available. Being available means that I had access to them and their stories. Therefore, I can contextualize them and write them into the Center's remaking. Unfortunately, there were also those who were not available (for various reasons) and as a result, their stories and roles remain unknown. For example, the German restaurant Edelwiesse opened in 1974 and closed in 1997. While Edelwiesse was not part of the trendy new restaurants that remade the Center's hospitality regime, Edelwiesse was the staple of the Center's fine dining for a generation. Therefore, the success and influence of Edelwiesse and its owners cannot be brushed aside—displaced—as unimportant to the Center's remaking. Edelwiesse was the “marginal, neighboring, or occluded practice” (Spinosa, et al., 1997: 30) that Grant, Rosenthal, and the other restaurateurs would have been sensitive to and reconfiguring through their experimentations with trendy fine dining. Similar consideration must also be given to the owners of Ann Howard's Cookery and Nanshe's who illegally placed tables and chairs on the sidewalks in 1990 in front of their businesses. Why they did this remains unknown, even though the ramifications of their actions resulted in a dynamic process of experimentation with outdoor dining that is now an omnipresent practice of the Center's hospitality and sociality.

Alforno's restaurant and the mismanaging owners were also change makers. They were at the forefront of the trendy dining scene in the Center, and their demise created the vacancy that was later filled by Restaurant Bricco, the business that happened to work and brought new life to the Center's stage. The consumer Marc and his friends who co-opted the bar area of Grant's Restaurant and made it into a space of their own—a bar for drinking and socializing without dining—can also be claimed as change makers, along with all of the unknown consumers who co-opted products, services, and spaces in the Center to use in ways they were never intended (Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999; Jayne, 2006). Recognizing the historical and local contingency (Thrift, 2005; Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999; Paradis, 2002) built into each moment in the Center's remaking reveals urban space as an “on-going experiment” (Latham, 2003: 1719; see also Amin and Thrift, 2002 and Pickering, 1993). By “acknowledging that the world is complexly connected, constantly changing, and contingent; always ‘these’, never just ‘this’” (Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999: 306) exposes every actor

whose lives intersected with and touched the Center as change makers. Each person at every moment (Bruegmann, 2005) in the Center's remaking was contributing to the Center's ecosystem and ecosystem services (Walker and Salt, 2006), and nudging the Center's trajectory.

The third of the contextual research questions was “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?” The Center's consumers are homogeneously middle-class—but not just that. There is also heterogeneity within their homogeneity. The consumers of the Center are not a singular species, nor do they provide a singular definition or understanding of the Center. While the space of the Center is uniform in some regards (i.e. hospitality, retail, and service), how the consumers engage and utilize the Center varies greatly based on the individual and what she desires to extract from the Center experience. Therefore, the Center's uniformity as a space of hospitality and sociality blurs into a textured and contextual space of personal experience. What I mean by this is that the consumers create their own experience and in doing so extract differing value from the Center and their personal experience of the Center. In addition, by creating their own experience the consumers also contribute to the overall experience of the Center—the Center's ecosystem services (Walker and Salt, 2006). Therefore, the consumers contribute as much to the Center as a space, place, and experience as they extract from the Center (Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999; Thrift, 2006, 2008). In this regard, the consumers are implicated in the Center's production—they contribute to the Center's creation and re-creation.

The consumers are not simply consumers, but active participants in the production of the Center. They are co-creators of the Center's space. Through their engagement and attempts to satisfy their individualized desires, the consumers contribute to the creation of the Center's space—not the physical space of brute matter, but the experiential materiality of the Center (Latham and McCormack, 2004; Pickering, 1993; Thrift, 2008). This production of experiential value results in their contribution to the Center's ecosystem services—the intangible resources and values the consumers extract from this urban-ecological space. In addition, the consumers co-opt space, make it their own, and inhabit space in ways that were never conceived

by the producers of space (Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999; McManus and Ethington, 2007).

The Center is one of many spaces within the metropolitan region that the consumers engage for a variety of reasons and activities. While the most notable use of the Center's space is hospitality and sociality, these are not as singular experiences as they may appear. For example, one consumer may experience the Center in the morning as a space for coffee, another may experience the Center mid-day as a space for a business lunch, another consumer may experience the Center in the early evening as space for fine dining and romantic relationship, and yet another consumer may experience the Center late-night as a space for bar hopping and the twenty-something singles scene. Each consumer is engaging in the Center's hospitality and sociality. However, each differs greatly in how he engages and experiences the Center. In fact, one consumer may engage the Center in many different ways. The point is the consumer determines the kind of hospitality and sociality experience he or she wants to have and then engages the Center accordingly. Therefore, the seemingly uniform space of the Center *shape-shifts* the role it plays in the lives of the consumers, just as the roles of the consumers shift in defining the Center.

I now want to explore the primary research question: "What kind of space is West Hartford Center and how can we develop a vocabulary to explain it?" There is no singular word to define the Center. Unfortunately, words such as suburban and gentrified fall short. Yes, in part the Center is suburban and gentrified. And yet, while each of these terms (and others) of our urban vocabularies and understandings help to inform us about the kind of space that is the Center, they also mask and hide in plain sight other qualities that contribute to the space of the Center.

This incompleteness results from their inability to adapt to spatial scale, time, and context. I believe, in part, this why the discussions of the post-suburban have chosen such tentative definitions of the suburban. They provide a "simple definition of suburbanization as the combination of an increase in non-central city population and economic activity, as well as urban spatial expansion" (Keil, 2013: 9). and are "less interested in laying out the conceptual boundaries of a thing called 'suburb' and more keen on contextualizing the continuous suburbanization of our world in a general project of urban theory building" (Keil, 2013: 9). If we seek to contextualize

the continuous suburbanization (and gentrification) of the world, then we need to recognize the limits of these vocabularies and our urban understandings. We must accept that these vocabularies may not be able to adequately describe and explain every space-time account and understanding. Moreover, we need to accept that the suburban may be perfectly acceptable for describing West Hartford Center's past, but has now moved well beyond the Center in space and time. The same is true of gentrification. It may be well suited for large spaces of globalization—say New York and London—but not suitable for explaining and understand West Hartford Center.

Our urban vocabularies work as tools that help us make sense of urban spaces and the processes that create and re-create space. However, as tools, these vocabularies may not scale well to the specific context of the spaces we want to apply them to and the work we often require of them. Unfortunately, the vocabularies of suburbanization and gentrification may not always be the proper tool for the work we are trying to accomplish—especially in the case of smaller city urbanism.

This is a challenge of theory—urban theory. “What is the context within which theory is functional? Generality is desired—but also to be feared. It is to be feared because once a theory is formed, once it seems to resolve paradoxes, and once it passes some empirical tests, proponents are sorely tempted to extend its application beyond its natural context” (Holling, et al. in Gunderson and Holling, 2002: 19). Just because a theory of urban change is formed in London—suburbanization and gentrification—does not mean that it will work as well in helping us explain or understand West Hartford Center.

The vocabularies of hybrid and hybrid spaces (Thrift in Massey, et al., 1999; Amin and Thrift, 2002) are interesting as contextual vocabularies that provide a means of conceptualizing the changing and evolutionary (Levin, 1992; Batty and Marshall, 2009) qualities of urban space. The same can be said of the vocabularies of the metropolitan and the post-suburban (Katz and Bradley, 2013; Keil, 2013). In this regard, the evolutionary remaking of West Hartford Center is a hybrid metropolitan and post-suburban space—a space that has evolved from being a suburban town center into a regional center of hospitality and sociality. “No longer is the contemporary suburb the stuff of television reruns. Yet television's diaphanous images have spread a shroud on the American collective conscious. We think we know what happens in

the suburbs, but we are missing many sides to the story” (Lang in Lang and Miller, 1997: 7). The Center as suburban or gentrified misses the many sides to the Center’s story. And while the vocabularies of hybrid, metropolitan, and post suburban space provide the context that is missed in the conventional vocabularies, they still leave something to be desired.

Amin and Thrift ask, “[c]an we find another vocabulary with which to describe the city, one which takes circulation, hybridity and multiplicity as key urban moments, and fixed boundaries as temporary allegiances and alignments” (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 77). While they produce their own answers, I believe we can also find such a vocabulary in ecological resilience and understanding the remaking of space as a complex adaptive system. Ecological resilience, from my perspective, provides a scalable tool that is capable of exploring and understanding the remaking of urban space. As a metaphor and theoretical framework, it provides a means of conceptualizing and working through the dynamics of urban change. Therefore, it can be used as a tool for exploring and understanding urban change and the remaking of urban space, regardless of size and situation. Ecological resilience is founded in and encourages the contextual. Ecological resilience provides for a “*geography of what happens*” (Thrift, 2008: 2).

9.20 Conclusion

So what kind of space is West Hartford Center and what are the vocabularies to explain the space of the Center and its remaking? First, let me say that the Center is part of the suburban—or once suburban—realm. Keil’s tentative and simple definition of suburbanization “as the combination of an increase in non-central city population and economic activity, as well as urban spatial expansion” (Keil, 2013: 9) is adequate in describing how West Hartford Center fits spatially into our understandings of urbanization. However, it is evident that cities, suburbs, and the urban have changed and the differences between what is city and suburb are no longer easily definable (Amin and Thrift, 2002). “It is clear that the simple city-suburb dichotomy is obsolete in the present-day U.S. urban region” (Sieverts in Hamel and Keil, 2015: 239).

The space of cities and suburbs have morphed into the post-suburban (Keil, 2013) spaces of the metropolitan (Teaford, 2006; Katz and Bradley, 2013). As a result

of this urban metamorphosis, once easily identifiable suburban spaces, such as West Hartford Center, have become enigmas. The “suburbs as a spatial entity is a momentary piece of an urban puzzle that is always reconfiguring, spatially, economically, socially, and in terms of governance [...] urbanization (including suburbanization) is an ongoing process” (Nijman and Clery in Hamel and Keil, 2015: 59). Included in the process of urbanization, is in fact, the process of gentrification, a renewed interest and increased value—new found centrality organized around existing settlement patterns (Wood, 1997)—in specific locations, both urban and suburban. Our urban vocabularies and understandings of suburbanization and gentrification, do in fact, help us make sense of West Hartford Center. However, they also miss the nuances, slow moving variables, local context, and contingencies. If we are to better understand (sub)urban change, then urban studies need to recognize that these vocabularies have limits and as (sub)urban spaces continually change, so do our understandings of suburban and the gentrified.

Suburbanization and gentrification are vocabularies that do work for us, helping us to understand and explain processes that create and re-create urban space. Regardless of the kind of space—urban, suburban, or metropolitan—it is the understanding of space and process by which urban change occurs—the remaking of urban space—that are most important for urban studies. Therefore, the challenge is not simply our urban vocabularies and understandings of suburbanization and gentrification. The greater challenge is the large urban bias and the limited focus on and understanding of smaller city urbanism (Bell and Jayne, 2006, 2009). Our predominant urban understandings of suburbanization and gentrification come from large cities and are too often assumed to inform us about and utilized to work with smaller cities (Orori-Amoah, 2007). Unfortunately, as shown in the case of West Hartford Center, our urban vocabularies and understandings—mostly informed by larger city urbanism—fall short of informing us about smaller cities. The history, organization, experience, and outcome of suburbanization and gentrification in metropolitan Hartford and West Hartford Center are not the same as these of New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles. Therefore, we need a different kind of approach, new ways of thinking about and working through the vocabularies of suburbanization and gentrification, and the geographies of place and what happens.

Ecological resilience, as a metaphor and theoretical framework, is an alternative approach and a way of thinking about and working through the vocabularies of suburbanization and gentrification, and the geographies of place and what happens. Utilizing ecological resilience as a *metaphor* and *theoretical framework* to think about and work through urban change—the remaking of space—does not “strip away human agency, normalise phenomena as if they are inevitable, hide the mechanisms by which ‘systems’ are socially constructed, and depoliticise the value choices underpinning courses of human intervention” (Porter and Davoudi, 2012: 333), provided we recognize that ecological resilience is simply a metaphor and theoretical framework for conceptualizing and understanding the remaking of space. That is in fact, how ecological resilience was utilized in the case West Hartford Center. It provided an alternative vocabulary, a way of thinking about, and a means of working through what changed in the Center and why and how change occurred—the remaking of space. Furthermore, in utilizing ecological resilience, I was able to consider human agency, governance, the politics of choice, and the Center as a socially constructed system.

What proved to be most interesting about ecological resilience as a metaphor and theoretical framework to think about and work through the remaking of West Hartford Center, is that it allowed me to explore urban change without the challenge of size and the large urban bias that is inherent in our urban understandings of suburbanization and gentrification. Furthermore, as demonstrated throughout this thesis, it allowed me to contextualize the unique space-time experience of West Hartford Center into our urban understandings of suburbanization and gentrification, affording me the capability to explore the geographies of place and the geographies of what happened in West Hartford Center (Thrift in Massey, 1999; Thrift, 2008).

Reimagining urban space and the remaking of space through the metaphor and theoretical framework of urban-ecological resilience revealed West Hartford Center as dynamic, adaptive, nuanced, and textured. It is a space of perpetual, yet episodic, change. It highlighted the Center’s evolution from a suburban town center and its transition to a regional center of middle class hospitality and sociality. The Center’s evolution and transition was not planned—in the conventional sense—or preordained. Contingency existed at every moment and in every action. The only thing that was ever certain for the Center, was in fact, change. Urban space—the space of West

Hartford Center—is in a perpetual state of flux, shifting in new directions, being created and re-created. Ecological resilience provides a theory for dealing with the uncertainty, the known, the unknown, and the challenges of even the unknowable—the remaking of urban space.

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Ryan: September 19, 2012.
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Appendix I.

West Hartford Center - Consumer Interview Activity Space Questions

The following questions are intended to help you think about the activities you engaged in during the week leading up to our interview session and to provide me with an understanding of the activities you engage in and the places you visit.

Activity Questions	
Work Related Activities this Past Week	
	Could you explain where your place of work is?
	Can you list where you went for lunch? Coffee breaks?
	Can you list any breakfast, lunch, or dinner meetings?
	Did you attend meetings or events outside your place of work? If so, what and where were they?
	Did you go to any other places as part of your work this week?
Shopping Related Activities this Past Week	
	Did you grocery shop this past week? If so, where?
	Did you go to convenience stores or pharmacies this past week? If so, where?
	Did you do any other shopping this week? If so, what kind and where?
Socializing Related Activities this Past Week	
	Did you go to any restaurants, cafes, bars, or nightclubs this past week? If so, where?
	Did you go to the movies, theater, or concerts this past week? If so, where?

Appendix I.

West Hartford Center - Consumer Interview Questions

Initial Question	Specific Follow-up Questions
How long have you been coming to West Hartford Center?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you start coming to the Center?
What was the last business you visited in the Center? [If a hospitality space, use follow-up questions from below.]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you go there? • How would you explain this business? • What do you like about this business? • Whom did you go there with? • What did you do when you were there? • Did you socialize with other people there?
Can you list the restaurants that you frequent in the Center?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you like most about this place? • Can you describe the interior design for me? • How would you explain the atmosphere? • How would you describe the food? Drinks? • What's your favorite meal? Drink? • Why do you go there? • Can you explain a typical visit? What do you do? • Who do you go there with (friends, co-workers, family)? • Do you socialize with other people while you are there? • Who are the other customers? Can you describe them? • If you were recommending this place to a friend, what would you say about it?
Do you ever sit or dine outside?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where was the last place you sat or dined outdoors? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why there? What is it about that place? • Are there other places you go for outdoor dining? • Do you like being outdoors? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why? ○ What is it about outdoor dining you like? • How is sitting outdoors different than sitting indoors?
Do you ever go bar hopping in the Center? If not, do you ever visit more than one restaurant during a visit? For example, going to eat at one place and then having drinks at another?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was the last time you did this? • Can you tell me what bars you went to? • What do you like about bar hopping? • Is there a specific circuit that you do when you are bar hopping? • What do you do more, visit one place for the night or bar hop?
Do you come to the Center to socialize?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of social activities do you engage in when you are in the Center? • Are the social aspects of the Center important to you? • Is the Center the place you go for a night out or are there other places? • Is the Center a place people go for dates? • Is the Center a place for people to find dates—meet

	<p>new people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a singles scene in the Center?
Do you visit locations other than the Center for similar activities (shopping, dining, drinking, and socializing)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the Center different from other places you go to shop, dine, and socialize? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, can you explain how it is different? ○ If not, how is it similar? • Do you prefer the Center over other places? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why or why not?
Has the Center changed since you have been coming here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, can you explain how it has changed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When did the Center start to change? ○ Is the Center still changing? • Is there anything you would like to see here that is not here now? • Do you consider Blue Back Square as part of the Center? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you like Blue Back Square? ○ Can you describe Blue Back Square for me? ○ What do you like about Blue Back Square?
What type of experience does the Center provide you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you explain your experiences when visiting the Center? • What are three words that would best describe your experiences in the Center?
Can you explain what it is you like about the Center?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What qualities about the Center appeal to you? • Are these qualities you like about the Center different from those of other places you visit?
Can you explain what you don't like about the Center?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What qualities about the Center don't appeal to you? • Are these qualities you dislike about the Center different from those of other places you visit?
How does West Hartford Center fit into your life?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role does it play in your life?
Do you think West Hartford Center is a successful place? If so, why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is successful about it? • Could it be more successful? If so, how? • Can you think of a similar place you have been?
If you had to explain West Hartford Center to someone who has never been here, how would you describe it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some words you might use to describe it?
What kind of space/place is West Hartford Center?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe it to me? • What are three words that you feel best describe the Center?
Is there anything you would like to add that I did not ask?	Thank You!

Appendix I.

West Hartford Center

Interview Participant Information

The information provided on this sheet will remain confidential.

Name: Last: _____ First: _____

Address: Street: _____ Town: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ () _____

E-mail: _____

Occupation: _____

Household Income Under \$50,000 \$50,000 - \$100,000 Over \$100,000 Over \$200,000

Gender: Male Female

Age: _____ 18-29 30-45 45-64 65+

Education: < 12th Grade 12th Grade 2-Year AA/AS 4-Year BA/BS Masters Degree Post Grad

Status: Single Married Co-Habitation Civil Union Divorced

Ethnicity/Race: _____

Housing: Rent Own Own W/Mortgage

Appendix II.

West Hartford Center - Hospitality Business Owner Interview Questions

Initial Question	Specific Follow-up Questions
Can you please describe and explain your business to me?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What year did you open your business? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If now closed, what year did you close your business? • How would you explain this business? • What do you like about this business? • What do you dislike about this business?
What were you doing before you opened this business?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other past work experience do you have? • Why did you want to open a restaurant?
Did you view coming to The Center as a risk or an opportunity? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a risk, why? • If an opportunity, why?
How long have you owned/operated your business in West Hartford Center?	
Why did you choose this location for your business?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why the Center: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What was it about the Center that appealed to you? • Did you consider other locations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, where? • What was it about this specific location that was a match with your business? • Did you do any market research? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If yes, please explain.
Do you have other businesses or locations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, what are they? • If so, where? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How would you compare the other locations to the Center? • Do you plan on opening other locations or businesses? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, please explain? • Are you or would you consider the Center again for these businesses?
Has the Center changed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, can you explain how the Center has changed from when you opened your business to now? • When did it start to change? • Have you changed your business to accommodate such changes? • Has this change benefited your business? • Do you think the Center is still Changing? If so, how?
How would you describe your patrons?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are they? Please describe. • Where do they come from? • Do you do or maintain any market research data on your patrons?
How would you describe West Hartford Center?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Center?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel your business fits into the Center?
What are three qualities about the Center that you feel are important for your business?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please explain.
What are three qualities about the Center that you feel are challenges for your business?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please explain.
Are there other locations in the Hartford region where you feel your business would succeed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, where? • If not, why? • What is it about the Center that is important to the success of your business?
If you had to explain West Hartford Center to someone who has never been here, how would you describe it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some words you would use to describe the Center? • Is there a place that you have been that you feel is similar to the Center? • What kind of place is the Center?
If you had a chance to do it again, would you open a business in the Center again?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, why? • If not, why?
Is there anything you would like to add that I did not ask?	Thank You!

Appendix III.
Coding for Interviews – Codes Paired with Research Questions

Research Questions	Codes
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?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? 	Describing Center – Urban/Suburban/Village
	Describing Center – What Adjectives Tell Us
	Mixed Vocabularies to Describe the Center
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does The Center provide urban experiences or suburban experiences or some other kind of experience? 	Describe Center – As experiences
	Describe Center – By physical attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can The Center help us to understand other resilient spaces and the remaking of a multitude of other kinds of spaces? 	Center as Resilient
	Same Physical Space/Spaces – New Uses
	Constant Change – Slow Change
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?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How and why did The Center remake itself between the late 1980s and 2010? 	Center - What Changed
	Center – How it Changed
	Center – When it Changed
	Center – Why it Changed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why did this remaking of space take place when it did? 	Turnover in Storefronts
	Resilience of Space/Actors
	Innovation – The Little Things
	Actors – Change Makers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was it about this specific time and space that allowed for this remaking of space to occur? 	Change in Government Actors/Intervention
	Actors – Property Management
	Actors – Restaurant Owners
	Actors – Consumers
	Competition – From Other Spaces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were the key factors or ingredients involved in this remaking of space? 	Government Regulations – Parking
	Government Regulations – Outdoor Dining
	Managing Change - Attention to Detail
	Aesthetics and Flowers
	Hospitality – New uses and ideas
	Consumers – ‘Simple Pleasures’
	Cooperation – Between The Various Actors
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?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What roles did these actors play in the remaking of this space? 	Business Vision
	Seeing Opportunities
	Vision for the Center
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was it about this space—West Hartford Center—that attracted them? 	Location Decision
	Location Amenities
	Location Demographics
	Intercept Location to Wealthy Suburbs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were they doing differently in this space than in other spaces in the metropolitan region? 	Change in Hospitality/Food
	Alternative to Downtown Hartford
	Restaurant and Food Themes
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?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the users of this space (age, race, income, etc.)? 	Describe – Themselves
	Describe – How Users Describe Other Users
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do the users come from? 	Comparative description to where they live
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do they utilize this space? 	What they do in the Center
	How it fits in their life/lifestyle
	Time of day they use the Center
	How they describe their use
	Who they use the Center with
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are their experiences in this space? 	Describing their Experiences
	Adjectives Describing Experience
	Examples/Stories of Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do they define, explain, and understand this space? 	Vocabularies used to explain the Center
	Comparative Examples w/other places
	How they explain the Center to friends

Appendix IV.

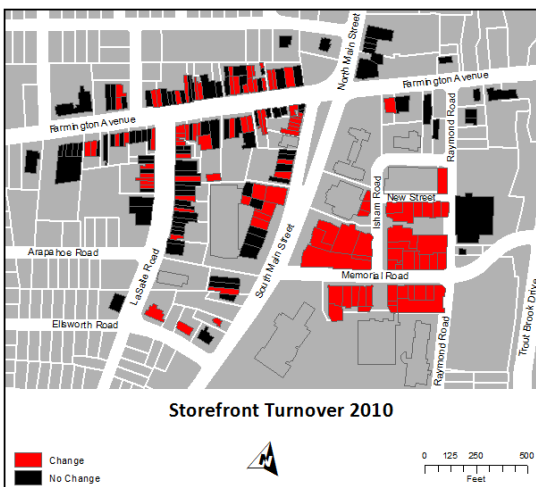
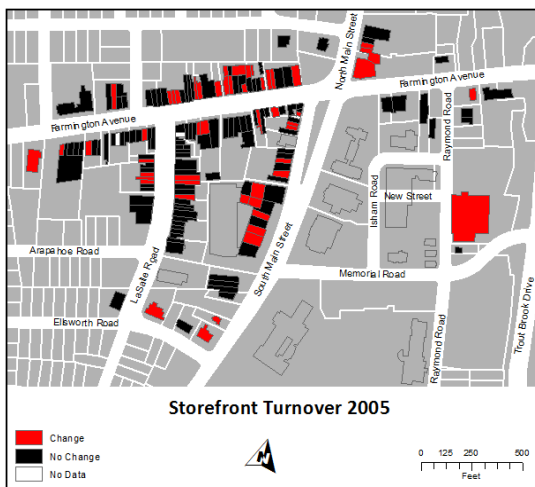
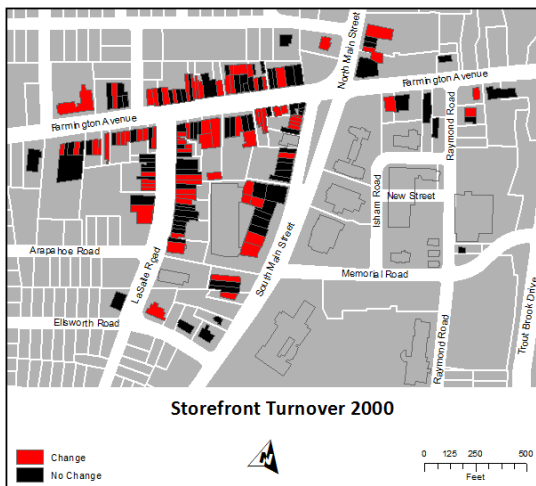
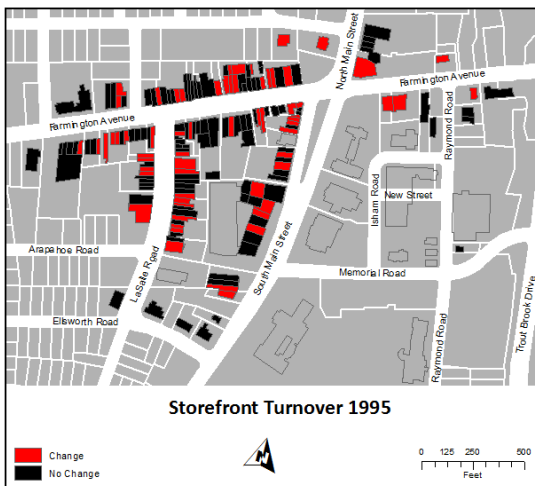
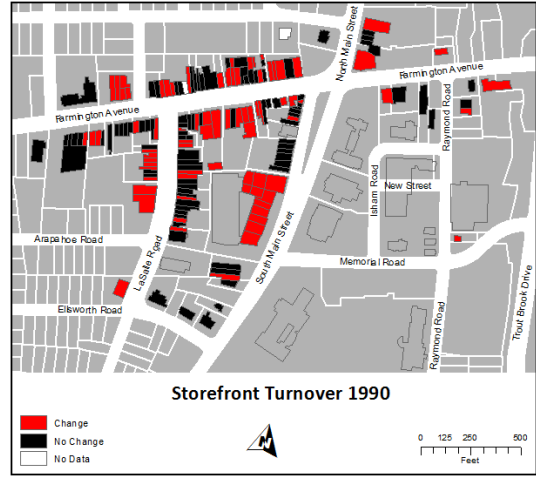
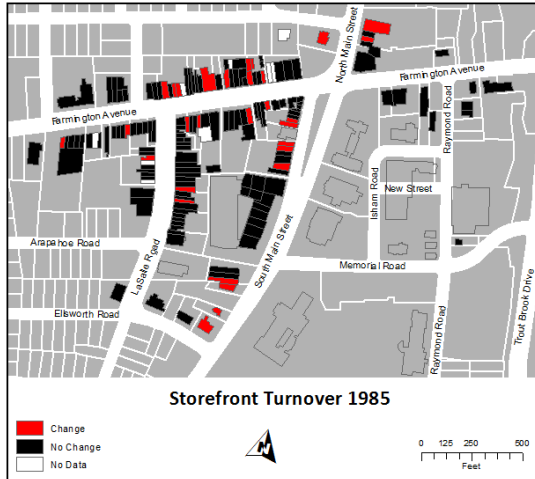
West Hartford Center – Storefront Database Analysis

West Hartford Center – Storefront/Tenant Database Analysis (1980 – 2012)

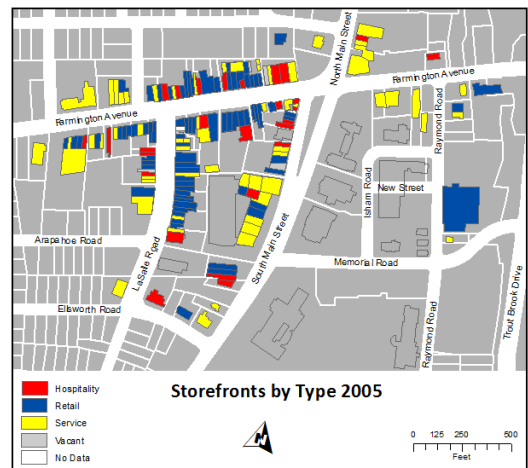
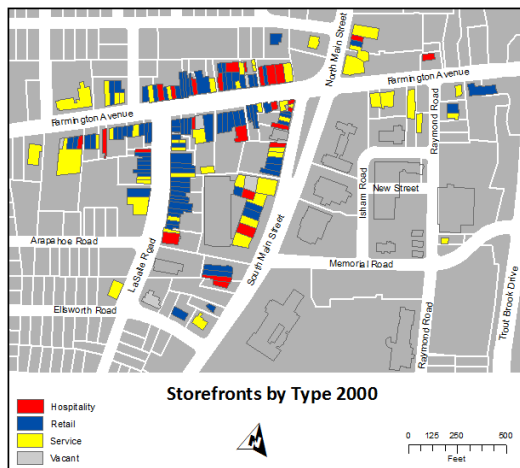
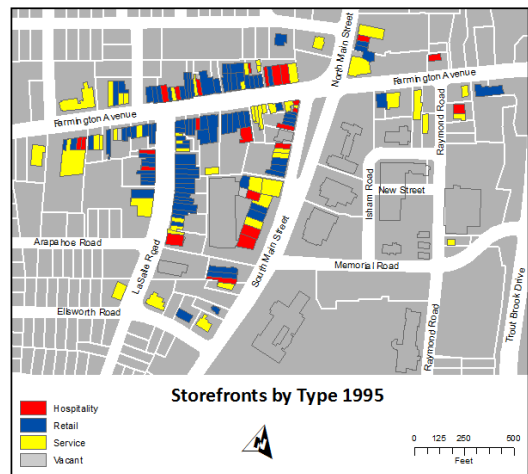
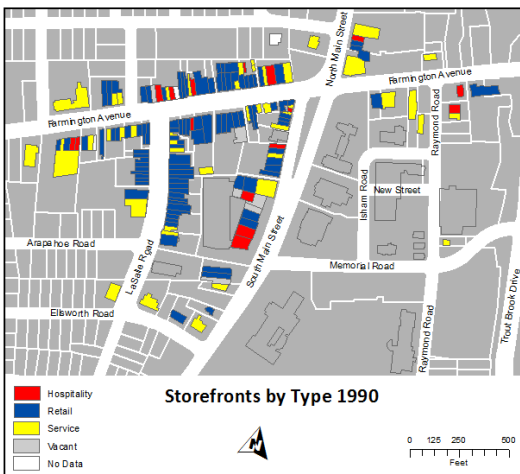
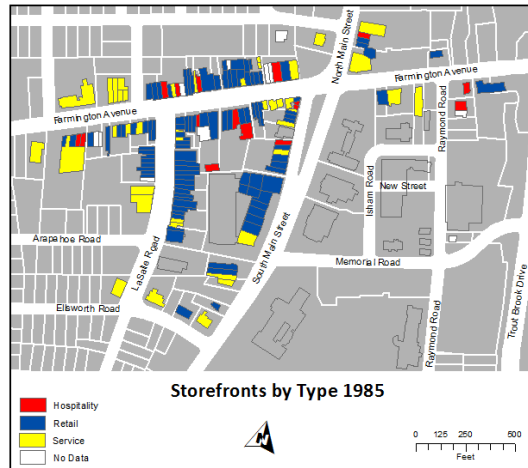
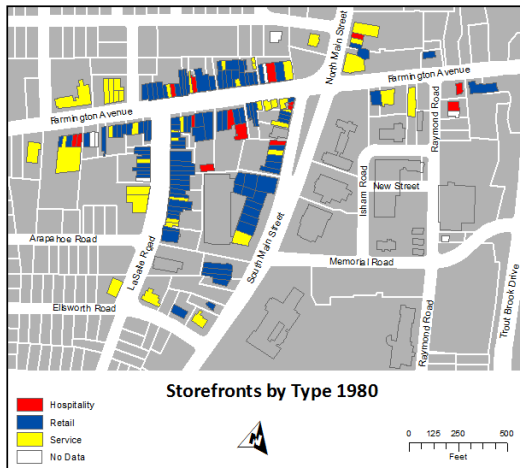
West Hartford Center & Blue Back Square (2010 & 2012) Storefronts								
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2012
Storefronts(SF) #	159	159	169	169	169	169	208	205
Change in SF (#)	---	30	80	63	76	50	110	22
Change in SF (%)	---	18.9%	47.3%	37.3%	44.9%	29.5%	52.8%	10.7%
Storefronts (#)	159	159	169	169	169	169	208	205
Service	43	41	44	50	51	58	68	65
Retail	93	90	100	92	86	78	78	79
Hospitality	15	16	16	25	26	27	46	48
No Data	8	12	3	0	0	2	0	0
Vacant	0	0	6	2	6	5	20	18
Storefronts (%)	159	159	169	169	169	169	208	205
Service	27%	25.8%	26%	29.5%	30.1%	34.3%	32.7%	31.7%
Retail	58.5%	56.6%	59.2	54.4%	50.8%	46.2%	37.5%	37.1%
Hospitality	9.4%	10.1%	9.5%	14.8%	15.4%	15.9%	22.1%	23.4%
No Data	5%	7.5%	1.8%	0%	0%	1.2%	0%	0%
Vacant	0%	0%	3.5%	1.2%	3.5%	3%	9.6%	8.8%
Hospitality Est.	15	16	16	25	26	26	42	43
Licensed	4	4	2	7	11	15	26	27
Licensed %	26.6%	25%	12.5%	28%	42.3%	57.7%	61.9%	62.8%
Outdoor Dining Est.	0	0	2	10	17	20	35	36

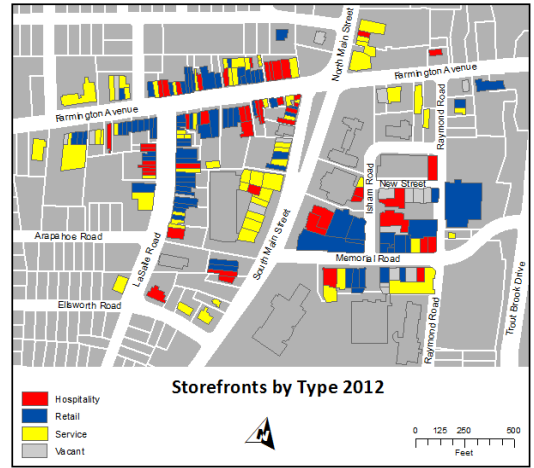
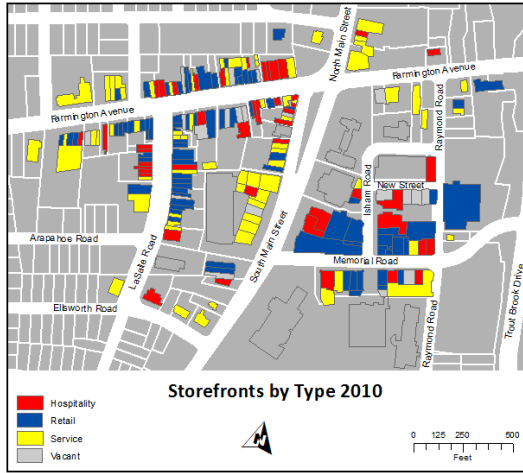
Appendix V. West Hartford Center – Mapping Storefront Change

Maps A-5-1. Storefront Turnover by Year

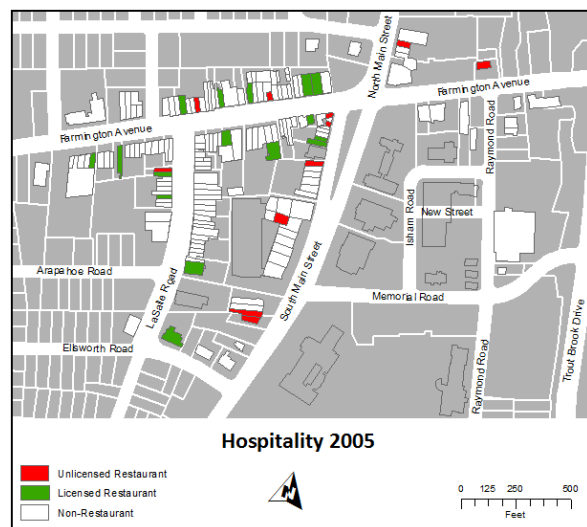
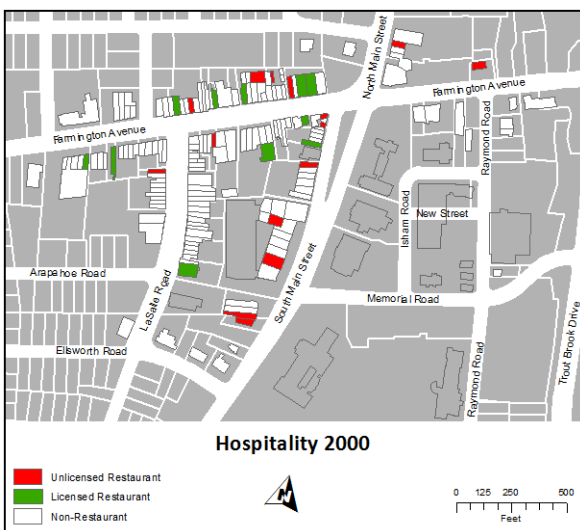
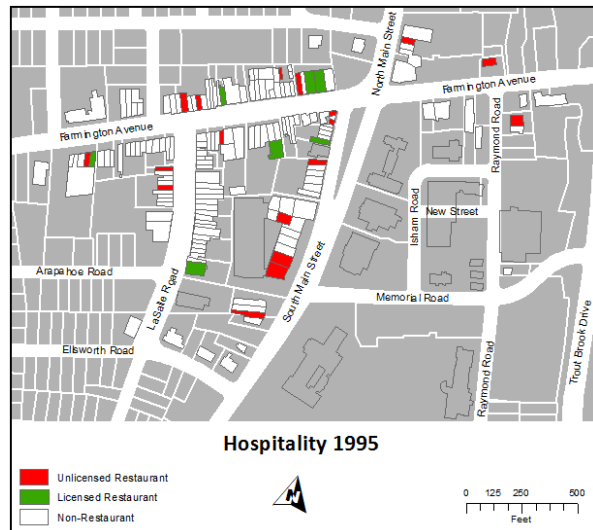
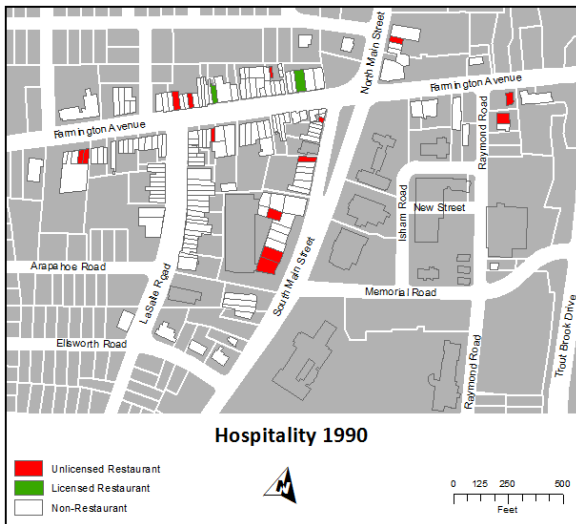
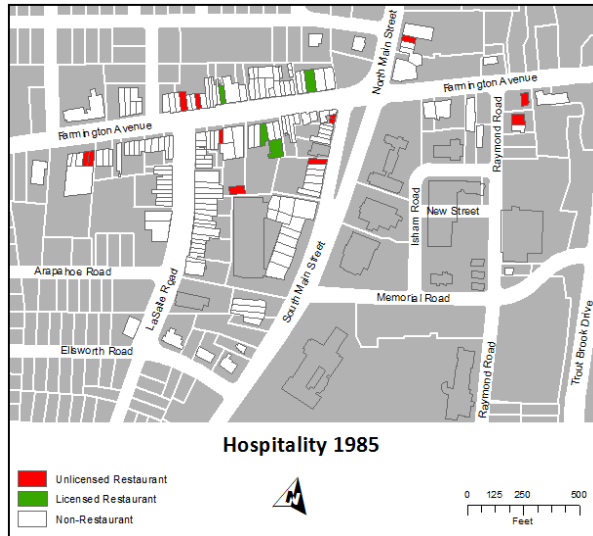
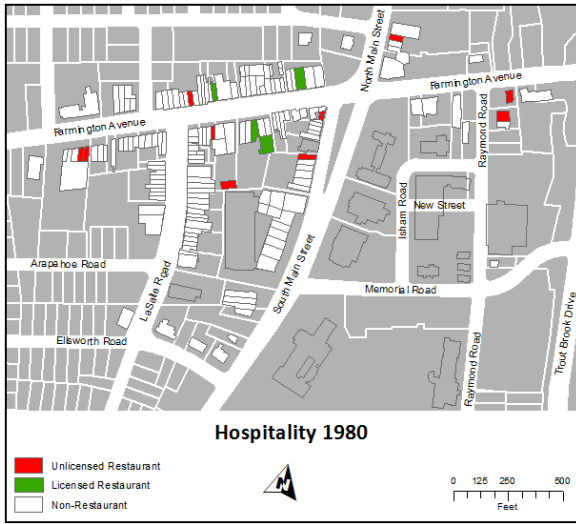


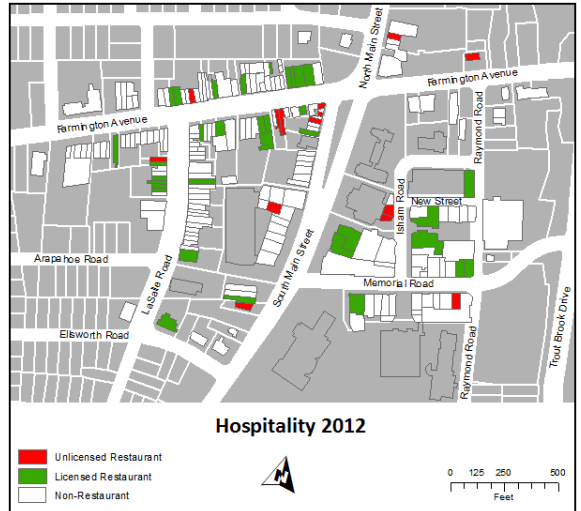
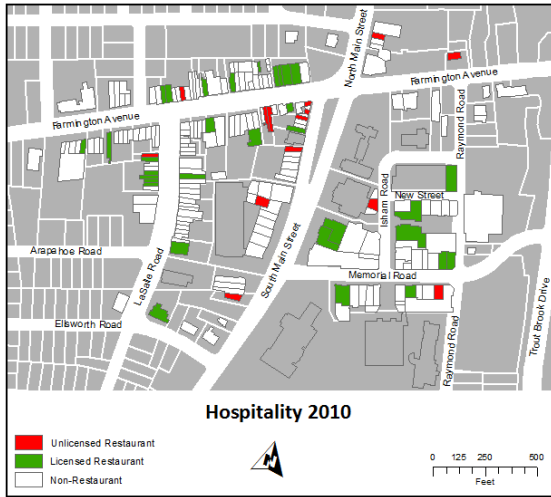
Maps A-5-2. Storefronts by Type (Hospitality, Retail, & Service) by Year



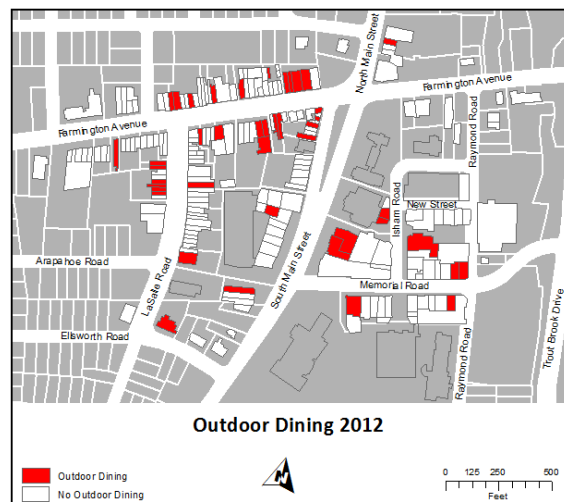
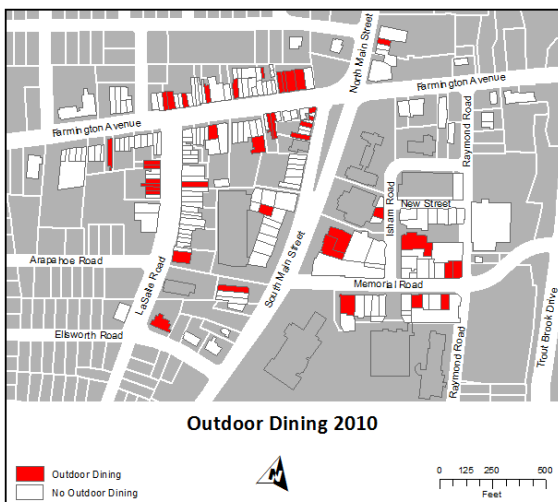
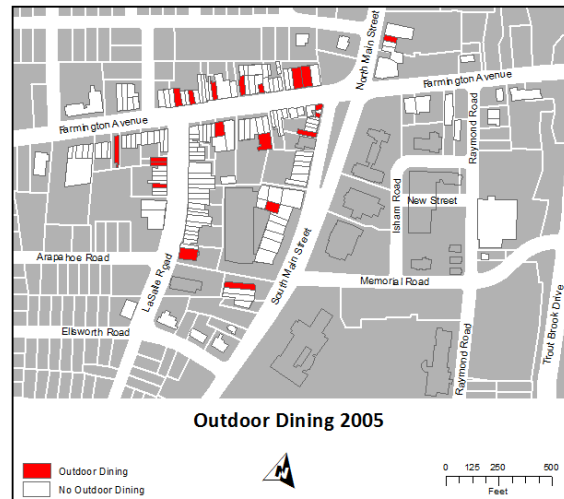
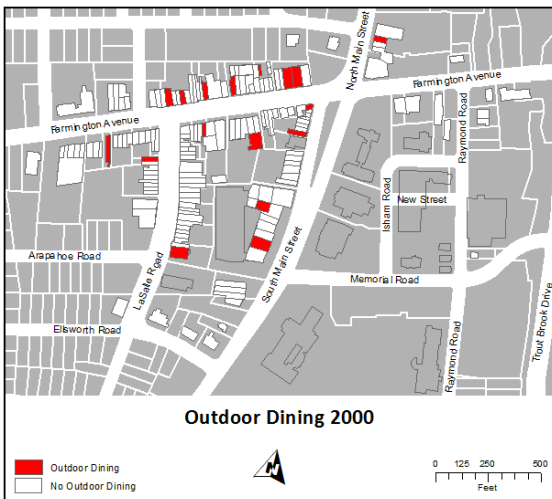
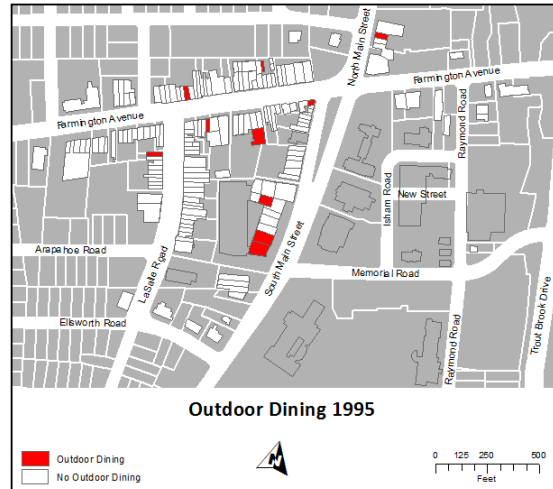
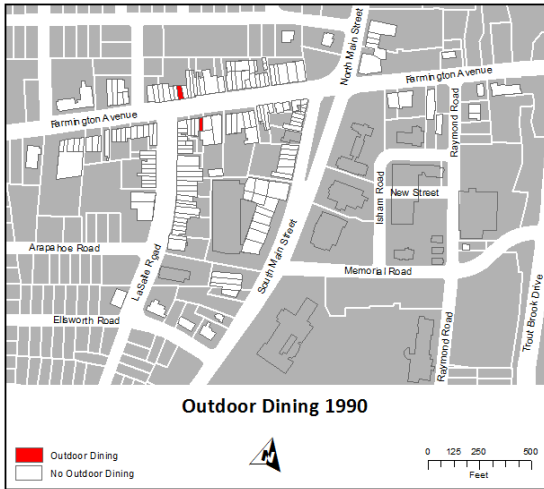


Maps A-5-3. Hospitality (Licensed and Un licensed) by Year





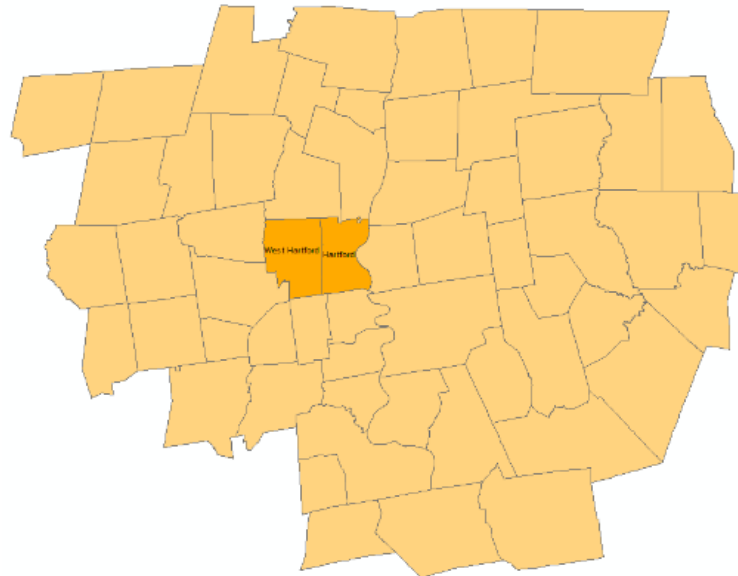
Maps A-5-4. Outdoor Dining Establishments by Year



Appendix VI. **Comparative Demographics**

The following discussion of socio-economic and demographics is intended to help situate West Hartford (and West Hartford Center) within the regional context. West Hartford and the western areas of the metropolitan region historically have been the wealthier suburban realms of metropolitan Hartford. Defining what constitutes the region, currently and historically, as discussed above, is also a challenge. Is the region the MSA, Hartford County, or the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) planning area? For the purpose of situating West Hartford within a regional context, I will begin by using the CRCOG planning area—Hartford and the 28 surrounding communities—since CRCOG produced a report in 2003, *Trends Shaping our Region: A Census Data Profile of Connecticut’s Capitol Region* that provides a comprehensive review of demographic trends in the region based on U.S. Census (2000 and 2002 estimates). Therefore, the report provides a look at the region midway between 1990 and 2012, the period of West Hartford Center’s remaking.

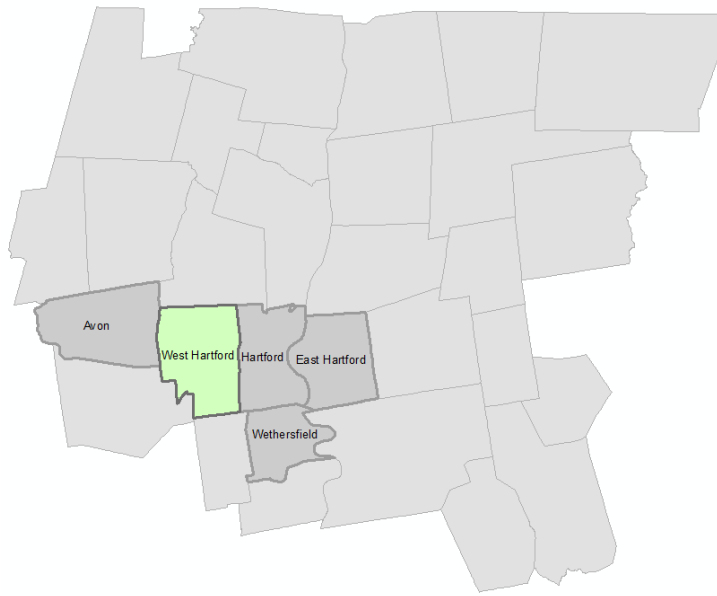
Map A-6-1. The Hartford Metropolitan Statistical Area



In addition to reviewing demographic data at the scale of the Capitol Region and West Hartford, I will present data on four specific communities: Hartford, East Hartford, Wethersfield, and Avon. My reason for doing this is to provide a comparative context between West Hartford, Hartford, and other suburban

communities near Hartford. The communities were chosen to demonstrate a diversity of communities. They include East Hartford, the mature industrial suburb (the home of Pratt and Whitney); Wethersfield, one of the original settlements dating back to the 1630s and today a mostly residential suburb; and Avon, a second ring suburb and the wealthiest community in the Hartford region.

Map A-6-2. 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 A-6-1. Historic Population

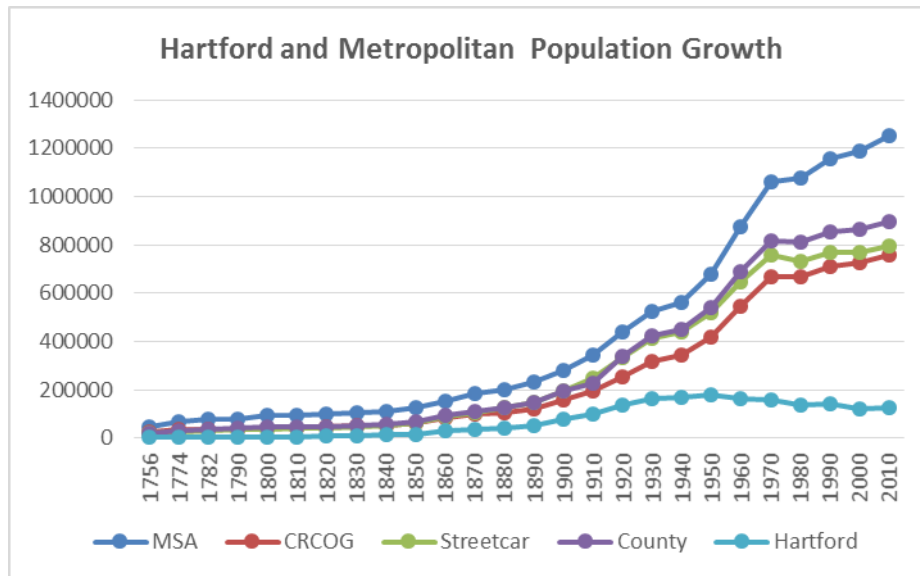
Town	1756	1800	1850	1900	1950	1980	2000	2010
Avon	0	0	995	1,302	3,171	11,201	15,832	17,678
East Hartford	0	3,057	2,497	6,406	29,933	52,563	49,575	50,974
Hartford	3,027	5,347	13,555	79,850	17,7397	136,392	121,578	124,760
West Hartford	0	0	1,202	3,186	44,402	61,301	63,589	62,898
Wethersfield	2,483	3,992	2,523	2,637	12,533	26,013	26,271	26,613
Capitol Region	23,723	42,721	64,480	159,097	418,641	668,479	724,320	769,598

Source: State of Connecticut, Department of Community and Economic Development and CRCOG

The table highlights Hartford and Wethersfield as two of the original settlements and the emergence of the other communities over time, all prior to 1850. The table also demonstrates collective growth—each community was growing between 1850 and 1950—signifying not simply suburban expansion, but collective regional growth. There, the changes in population demonstrate the spatial shift in population outside of the central city—a shift not simply to the suburban, but the rise

of the metropolitan, long before the metropolitan was recognized or deemed to be important (Katz and Bradley, 2013). See Table A-6-2 below.

Table A-6-2. Hartford and Regional Population Growth



The following table compares the median sales price of single family housing units—the dominant housing style in the region—between 1978 to 2006 as a means of exploring and demonstrating spatial shifts in value, a measure of wealth and investment. Most notable is the loss of value—wealth and investment—in Hartford from 1978 and 2006. The table also demonstrates the direction of spatially shifting value and wealth to the west of Hartford, in both West Hartford and Avon. However, while it is evident that West Hartford’s property values increased over this period, Avon, the younger and further out suburban community experienced a greater increase in value and wealth.

Table A-6-2. 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)

This shift in value—investment and wealth—is also evident in the changes in median household income between 1969 and 1999.

Table A-6-3a. Median Household Income, 1969 – 1999

Town	1969	1979	1989	1999	2009
Avon	\$14,484	\$31,565	\$66,602	\$90,934	\$107,447
East Hartford	\$10,568	\$19,314	\$36,584	\$41,424	\$48,747
Hartford	\$6,475	\$11,513	\$22,140	\$24,820	\$29,190
West Hartford	\$12,998	\$24,843	\$49,642	\$61,665	\$79,499
Wethersfield	\$13,247	\$23,284	\$43,888	\$53,289	\$70,525
Capitol Region	\$10,493	\$20,755	\$42,077	\$53,305	\$66,457

Source: Capitol Region Council of Governments, 2006 and 2014

Table A-6-4b. Median Household Income, 1969 – 1999

Town	1969%	1979%	1989%	1999%	2009%
Avon	138.0%	152.1%	158.3%	170.6%	161.7%
East Hartford	100.7%	93.1%	86.9%	77.7%	73.4%
Hartford	61.7%	55.5%	52.6%	46.6%	43.9%
West Hartford	123.9%	119.7%	118.0%	115.7%	119.6%
Wethersfield	126.2%	112.2%	104.3%	100.0%	106.1%
Capitol Region	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Capitol Region Council of Governments, 2006 and 2014

Table A-6-4 demonstrates that median household income has increased in all five communities and the Capitol Region as a whole. However, Hartford experienced the smallest gains and has the lowest income levels in the region, while Avon experienced the greatest gains and is the wealthiest community in the region. West Hartford is interesting because it has historically been a wealthy community. However, its comparative wealth within the region declined from 123.9% in 1969 to 115.7% in 1999. Therefore, West Hartford was still declining in comparative wealth during the 1990s, the decade when its remaking took hold. Since 1999, West Hartford’s comparative wealth has increased to 119.6% of the region in 2009. Therefore, while wealth is important and does play a role in the Center’s remaking, the decline in comparative wealth during the 1990s indicates that the Center’s remaking is not simply about wealth or increased wealth, as is often the case with gentrification (Lees, et. al., 2008, 2010).

The final aspect of demographics I seek to explore is the change in minority populations. Table A-6-5 below demonstrates increases in minority populations between 1990 and 2010 in the central city, suburban communities, and throughout the Capitol Region.

The minority population in the Capitol Region increased by 110,000 persons from 1990 to 2010, more than half of which, 60,000 persons, was from 2000 and

2010. Hartford, with the highest minority population and percent of minority population, increased from 80.8 percent to 84.4 percent, and East Hartford, the mature industrial suburb, increased its minority population from 40.4% to 58.1.4% from 2000 to 2010. Avon, the wealthiest community, increased its minority population from 6.4% to 12.8%. West Hartford’s minority population increased from 17.2% to 25.2%. While the table above and other indicators discussed above demonstrate segregation, in regards to both wealth and race, within the Capitol Region, West Hartford is not as wealthy or racially homogeneous as Avon or other wealthy communities in the metropolitan region. In fact, not including racially isolated Hartford, West Hartford is 25.2% minority population is the fifth highest percentage of minority population in the Capitol Region.

Table A-6-5. Estimated Minority Population Share of Capitol Region Population Growth, 1990-2000

Town	1990 Total Minority	1990 Percent Minority	2000 Total Minority	2000 Percent Minority	2010 Total Minority	2010 Percent Minority
Avon	474	3.4%	1,007	6.4%	2,301	12.8%
East Hartford	8,368	16.6%	20,018	40.4%	29,800	58.1%
Hartford	97,125	69.5%	100,288	80.8%	104,220	84.4%
West Hartford	4,934	8.2%	10,518	17.2%	15,961	25.2%
Wethersfield	932	3.6%	2,314	8.8%	4,068	15.3%
Capitol Region	147,450	20.8%	198,039	27.5%	258,091	33.5%

Source: Capitol Region Council of Governments, 2003 and CERC/U.S. Census 2010

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 has experienced and how West Hartford, as a mature suburb, is neither the wealthiest nor the poorest community. Nor is West Hartford a community that is growing or declining at any meaningful rate. 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 meaningful 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 most other communities and the region. Most important, West Hartford has always been a wealthy community—above the regional average (CRCOG, 2014). Therefore, if the remaking of the Center was simply the result of wealth, then the

Center would have been as vibrant in the 1980s as it is today. Wealth matters, but it is not the sole driver of the remaking of space.