

The Entrepreneurial City: Fabricating Urban Development in Syracuse, New York

Susan M. Roberts

University of Kentucky

Richard H. Schein

Eastern Kentucky University

This paper presents a case study of contemporary urban redevelopment in Syracuse, New York, within a theoretical framework drawn from urban political economy. Our analysis integrates the role of the local state in assuming the financial risk for a redevelopment project with an understanding of the meanings and role of a fabricated cultural landscape in ensuring the success of the project. We argue that the urban landscape is fundamentally embedded and implicated in the ongoing political economy of American urban places. **Key Words:** entrepreneurial city, growth machine, cultural landscape, redevelopment.

Introduction

The face of the American city is rapidly changing and geographers are counted among the scholars addressing the dynamic patterns and processes of what Knox (1991) calls "the restless urban landscape." Recent geographical considerations of contemporary urban questions have been wide-ranging. Various components of an approach broadly defined as political economy may be identified. The American city has been considered in relation to global economic restructuring (e.g., Scott 1986; Soja 1989; Soja et al. 1983). More specific urban geographies have focused on particular components of urban redevelopment, notably gentrification (e.g., Smith 1982; Smith and Williams 1986). The apparently redefined role of the local state in urban redevelopment has received attention from several scholars of urban political economy. For example, as part of his consistent urban focus in considerations of flexible accumulation and postmodernity, David Harvey (1989a, 1989b) has discussed the changing nature and practice of city governance. Harvey's discussion of the "entrepreneurial city" may be compared with Molotch's (1976) writings on the city as a "growth machine" which were later extended in Logan and Molotch (1987). More in tune with traditions in North American cultural geography and concerned with the changing look of the built environment, several scholars of the urban landscape explicitly tackle the social, economic, and political dynamics of contemporary North American cities while re-

taining the appearance and form of the urban fabric as their central concern (e.g., Knox 1991; Ley 1987; Mills 1988; Relph 1987).

This paper presents a recent urban redevelopment scheme in Syracuse, New York, as a case study embodying and extending many of the themes addressed in the literature on contemporary urban North America outlined above. We start from the theoretical frameworks proposed by Logan and Molotch (1987) and Harvey (1989b). We proceed to integrate an analysis of (1) the role of the local state (the city government) in the financial underpinnings of the redevelopment scheme with (2) the meanings and roles of the newly fabricated cultural landscape. By examining the interplay of public and private actors in the murky waters of financial risk with regard to a particular tangible reshaping of urban "architectural geography" (Goss 1988), we suggest how scrutiny of the elements of the political economy of place and an examination of the urban landscape together make up a more inclusive account of urban change. Furthermore, we argue that the actual interplay of these two aspects of urban change—of imagery and substance, of fictitious capital and fixed capital—is a fundamental and characteristic dynamic of urban change in North America today.

The Growth Machine and the Entrepreneurial City

The idea of the city as a growth machine (Logan and Molotch 1987) presents the notion of "place" as a market commodity capable of

generating wealth and power: "the city is a growth machine, one that can increase aggregate rents and trap related wealth for those in the right position to benefit" (Logan and Molotch 1987, 50). The allure of financial possibilities inherent in commodified places and the concomitant desire for growth serve to unite the diverse interests of urban elites. From the urban boosterism of the 19th century to the modern day "good business climate," places have been manipulated for their exchange values. Corporations, entrepreneurs, the local media, utilities, universities, museums, organized labor—in short, almost everyone with a vested interest in urban "success"—can mobilize behind the idea that "growth is good." The challenge, and the key to ensuring the triumph of the growth machine, "is to connect civic pride to the growth goal, tying the presumed economic and social benefits of growth in general to growth in the local area" (Logan and Molotch 1987, 60). Through that challenge, "political structures are mobilized to intensify land uses for private gains of many sorts" (Logan and Molotch 1987, 65).

Activities as diverse as 19th century federal land grants to railroads and their landholding companies and late 20th century local tax concessions to incoming manufacturing plants exemplify an American view of the relationship between the political and the economic, of the state and capital. Resulting in part from an overriding consensus as to the general "good" of capital (a.k.a. "the market") unfettered by the state, this view simultaneously sees it as unproblematically within the state's (local, regional, national) purview to enhance the "climate" for capital. This has taken on a new twist as places, bounded at a range of political geographic scales (e.g., cities, states, and nations) and anxious to retain and attract segments of ever-more mobile capital, compete vigorously with each other (Cox and Mair 1988).

The growth machine thesis as put forward by Logan and Molotch is illustrated by several examples, but as Molotch (1990, 207) admits, more individual case studies could have considerably strengthened their analysis. The growth machine concept also has to be placed within a larger spatial context. By broadening the scope to include considerations of the regional, national, and even global context of any particular city, the idea of the growth machine

might be further fleshed out (Lake 1990; Clarke 1990).

While the city as growth machine can be used to identify local complexities of urban development, Harvey's (1989b) discussion of the "entrepreneurial city" succeeds in placing contemporary urban processes in broad spatial and temporal contexts. These contexts contribute to, and are illuminated by, theoretical considerations of the central role of urbanization in social and economic change under capitalism. Urban dynamics vary across time and space, and North American cities in the 1970s and 1980s faced, and were part of, a particular moment in capitalism's restless course. The erosion of cities' economic and fiscal bases coupled with the loss of federal funds forced a retreat from an old-style managerial approach in local governance. Many urban governments have become innovative and entrepreneurial in their strategies and actions. According to Harvey, the "new entrepreneurialism" has three main characteristics: (1) public-private partnerships; (2) an entrepreneurial flavor in the speculative nature of the enterprises undertaken by such partnerships; and (3) a particular focus on the political economy of place rather than territory or space (Harvey 1989b, 7–8).

In addition to providing a broader framework, (theoretical, temporal, and spatial) for contemporary urban development, Harvey's analysis distinguishes the entrepreneurial city from traditional growth machine boosterism. Boosterism implied government support for private investment decisions, whereas in the entrepreneurial city much of the risk entailed in private investment is assumed by the local state. American cities, existing within a capitalist world system characterized by Thrift (1989, 16) as "addicted to the knife-edge," are one type of place where the social and spatial dynamics of the central and intimate relationship between risk and opportunity may be brought into focus (Leitner and Sheppard 1989, 74–77).

Recent urban redevelopment projects in Syracuse, New York, would seem to be "text-book" cases of the growth machine (focused on social and political coalitions and consensus) and the entrepreneurial city (focused on the engagement of public capital in private real estate speculation). The following account of one particular Syracuse project illuminates the

interweaving of various actors and institutions in the speculative construction of a cultural landscape within the wider context of changing economic, social, and political conjunctures in the late 20th century.

Syracuse, New York

Syracuse, New York, is much like many other American cities, exhibiting the familiar symptoms of a victim of global restructuring, suburbanization, and a concomitant shrinking tax base. While the Syracuse urban area experienced post-World War II demographic growth, the city proper has been losing population regularly since 1950 and generally has been losing manufacturing jobs since 1930 (Fig. 1). In the face of these trends, Syracuse has undertaken the usual series of projects designed to revitalize the city: alternately promoting the virtues of urban renewal, refurbished downtown hotels, convention centers, center city boutique malls, gentrified warehouse districts, urban street fairs, and public festivals. The latest city rejuvenation scheme revolves around the rehabilitation of a decayed industrial district and the construction of a mega-mall at the northern edge of the center city in an area referred to locally as "Oil City."¹

Oil City is a small triangle of land sandwiched between the old central business district of Syracuse and Onondaga Lake (which lies 3/4 mile to the north) and hemmed in on three sides by the interstate highways that were constructed through the center city in the

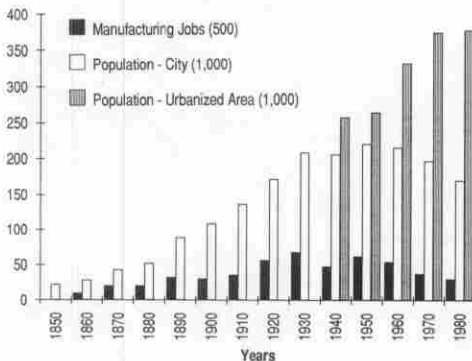


Figure 1: Syracuse population and manufacturing jobs.

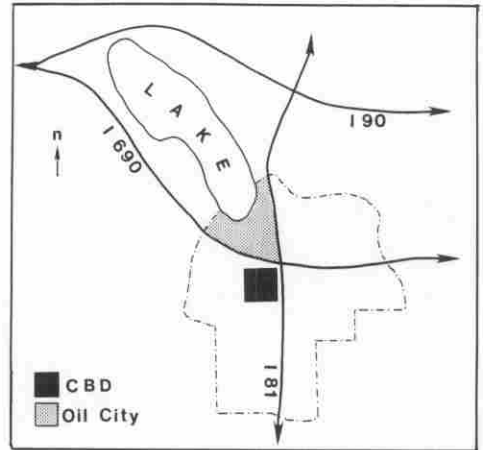


Figure 2: Location of Oil City, Syracuse, New York.

1960s (Fig. 2). Two hundred years ago the site was a swamp owned by the State of New York and leased to individual salt manufacturers who boiled or evaporated water drawn from the bottom of Onondaga Lake to produce salt for northeastern North America. Much of the land was eventually drained to alleviate malarial conditions and to promote the expanding salt industry. This industry provided a nucleus for the founding of Syracuse in the early 1800s, ensured that the Erie Canal would be a profitable venture, and dominated the locality until the turn of the 20th century. With the decline of the salt industry and the relocation of the Erie Canal early in this century, Oil City became the site of a canal boat basin, an oil tank storage facility serving the wholesale market of upstate New York, and several manufacturing concerns primarily clustered at the southern end of the district (Fig. 3). Very few residential structures ever existed in Oil City, except a few frame houses at the margins of the industrial zone, spilling over from nearby downtown workers' neighborhoods.

By the mid 1980s Oil City was a devalored landscape (see Smith 1986, 23). Oil storage tanks dominated the visual scene giving the district its name. Most of the factories were derelict. When O. M. Edwards, the last major manufacturing company in the district, announced its closure in 1987, it appeared that the fate of Oil City was sealed. Besides the oil



Figure 3: *Chrysler New Process Gear plant in Oil City, c. 1945.*

tanks, all that remained were a sewage treatment plant, a few minor commercial and light industrial concerns, and the workshops and used-clothing and furniture outlet of the Syracuse Rescue Mission. Isolated from the rest of the city by high-speed transportation corridors, Oil City was a decayed industrial district built upon a swamp and an eyesore to those surveying the larger picture of Syracuse's urban woes.

Today, however, Oil City is rapidly being transformed into a landscape of and for consumption (see Harvey 1989a, 63,92). The first signal was the appearance of sapling street trees and their protective grates, set in newly laid brick sidewalks (Fig. 4). The old Chrysler New Process Gear plant (Fig. 3) was renovated into fashionable office space with the requisite post-modern detailing. A "community" park was fabricated as the focus of an elite residential neighborhood. Industrial warehouses became "Spaghetti Warehouses," and a two-million-square foot shopping mall (Carousel Mall) has been constructed on a toxic waste site at the water's edge.

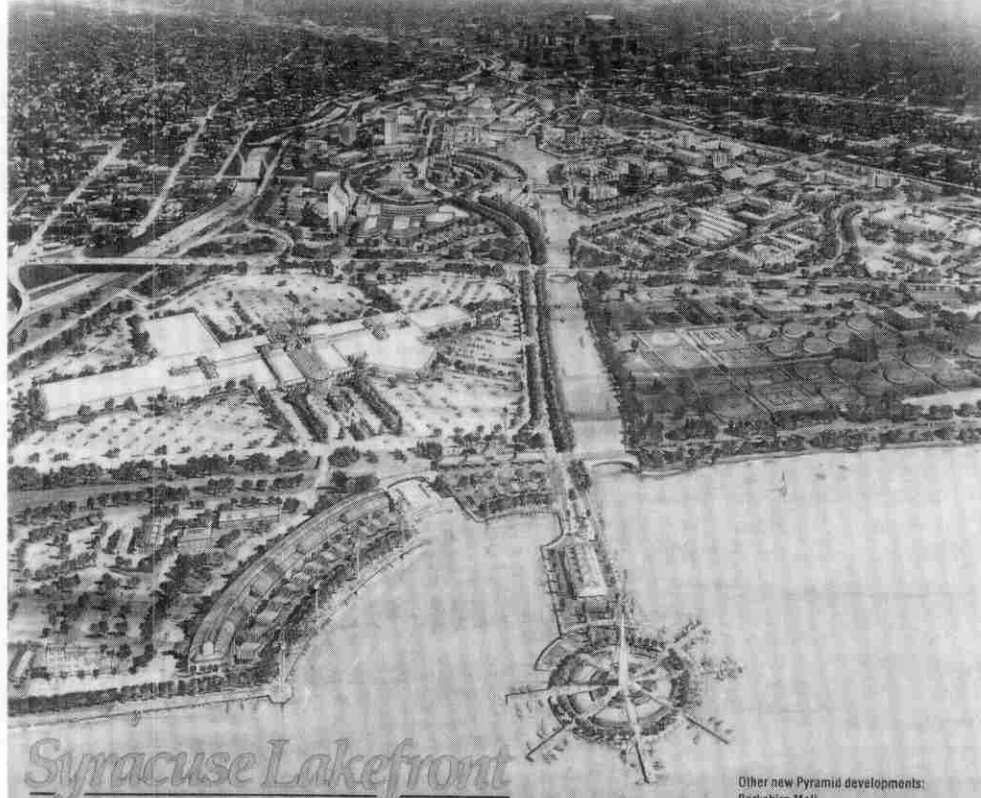
A central feature in the reconstruction of the place—the transformation of Oil City into the "Syracuse Lakefront"—was an imaginary bird's-eye view which first appeared in late 1987 in a Piedmont Airlines magazine and was widely circulated afterward (Fig. 5). Like

Barthes's view of Paris from the Eiffel Tower, the view of an "Oil City to be" from above represents a "transition to knowledge" or an individual conquering of a part of the city (Barthes 1979, 8–10). This representation of a



Figure 4: *Refurbished street, Oil City.*

*Syracuse is reclaiming its
greatest natural resource*



Syracuse Lakefront

The 700 prime, city acres joining Onondaga Lake with the skyline. For decades it was left to random, unchecked industrial development. Community leaders thought its condition a shame; its potential grace lost forever.

Today, the City of Syracuse and The Pyramid Companies have taken the initiative to erase and correct the mistake by the lake. This initiative is stimulating public and private investment: a high-fashion retail complex; cluster housing; hotel and marina; modern office park; historic renovations; new access roads; even a new rail station. And, keynoted by two dynamic projects already underway, the momentum has been established for the total renaissance of the area.

On what was once the site of a rusting scrap yard, we are developing our most magnificent shopping mall to date. In the spring of 1989, "Carousel Center" will showcase four high-fashion department stores, 150 quality shops,

a 12-screen cinema and an international food pavilion with a panoramic view of the lake. A million square foot, multi-level mega-mall, Carousel Center will invite shoppers with discriminating tastes from Pennsylvania to Canada.

On the same schedule is "Franklin Square" a complete community rising out of long neglected buildings in a forgotten neighborhood. Anchored in history, but geared to modern living, Franklin Square will be highlighted by the transformation of a crumbling New Process Gear Plant into 130,000 square feet of elegant office space. Inside and out, its new-found charm will make it a prestigious address for any firm.

Throughout the Northeast, The Pyramid Companies has built not only shopping centers, but a reputation for professionalism and community involvement. At Pyramid, we're proud to provide the experience, the energy and the leadership to make Syracuse Lakefront a reality.

Other new Pyramid developments:

Berkshire Mall

Pittsfield, MA, March 1, 1988

Walden Galleria

Buffalo, NY, August 1988

Shrewsbury Crossing

Shrewsbury, MA, October 1988

Independence Mall

Kingston, MA, November 1988

Emerald Square Mall

North Attleboro, MA, 1989

Palisades Center

West Nyack, NY, 1989

Maple Tree Place

Burlington, VT, 1989

Binghamton Galleria

Binghamton, NY, 1989

PYRAMID

The Pyramid Companies
4 Clinton Square, Syracuse, NY 13202
(315) 422-7000

Figure 5: Bird's-eye view of the "Syracuse Lakefront." Source: Piedmont Airlines magazine, PACE 14 (December):xii; reprinted by permission.

landscape was a fiction, existing on paper only, but it very quickly became a forceful image at once enframing and laying claim to the future of Oil City and to the development of Syracuse as a whole. The imaginary view conflates the designs of a private developer (The Pyramid Companies) with the publicly held landscape image of the city as a whole. The aerial image of the city is one with which all Syracusans can identify and feel a part. By naming and incorporating Oil City into that public landscape, the distinctions are blurred between public ownership and control and private speculative interests.

The visual blurring of the boundary line between public and private landscapes and, by implication, their ownership and control, accurately reflects processes at work in City Hall. Behind the facade of these rapid landscape transformations, both real and imagined, lies a public-private coalition based on an original \$75 million tax concession that has brought together the city's elite in a tangled web of public officials, quasi-public agencies, private developers, and many people who individually fall into more than one of these categories. Like so many American cities in similar situations in the mid 1980s, Syracuse's urban government began to redefine its role and form partnerships with private corporations in order to promote city redevelopment (Squires 1989; Gruen 1986; Bradford 1983; Frieden and Sagalyn 1989; Gleye 1988).

In June 1988 the City of Syracuse and Pyramid enthusiastically announced a tax and development deal that began to make the bird's-eye vision a reality. Syracuse Mayor Tom Young said "for the last two and a half years I've been wringing my hands and beating my breasts crying 'how are we going to offset the loss of federal funds . . .'" and suddenly the genie produces Congel." Congel is Pyramid President Robert Congel, local favorite son and often controversial real estate developer. Congel's Pyramid, with assets of over \$2 billion, ranked as the Northeast's biggest and fastest growing mall developer in the 1980s. According to one journalist, "Bob Congel will do anything to build mammoth malls in rust belt cities that time has passed by" (Behar 1988, 36). A Pyramid executive has apparently boasted that "we're considered the Green Berets of mall building" (Behar 1988, 36). The

New York Times' Sunday Magazine recently featured Congel and Pyramid noting that:

Pyramid is changing the face of New England in a way that strikes fear in environmentalists, terrifies established retailers, provokes outrage in local citizens' groups, causes unease in state officials, exasperates planners, and sparks joy in the hearts of shoppers (Gratz 1990).

Pyramid is regionally famous for, among other things, buying Bonwit Teller to ensure an upscale anchor for its Syracuse mall, for several brushes with the Environmental Defense Fund, for allegedly spending \$1 million to buy a "pro-mall" councilman in Poughkeepsie, and for giving life to a network of citizens and public officials throughout the Northeast aimed at monitoring and opposing Pyramid's schemes (Behar 1988; Gratz 1990). Nonetheless, Syracuse Mayor Tom Young remained undaunted. Young claimed that the Syracuse-Pyramid partnership in Oil City "can only bode well for not only the northeast crescent of downtown, but for the entire tax base of Syracuse" (Gratz 1990, 54).

The Oil City Deal

What exactly are the financial agreements that lie at the heart of the Syracuse-Pyramid partnership? The "Oil City Deal" as it is known, joins together Congel's corporation and the City of Syracuse, primarily through the activities of the Syracuse Industrial Development Agency or SIDA. SIDA is a five member board operating under a state-issued charter whose members serve at the pleasure of the mayor and which functions as the development arm of the city. SIDA coordinates the Oil City project, or as its proponents would prefer, the Lakefront project. The project has three development foci: the Carousel mega-mall at the lake's edge; Franklin Square, a neighborhood of high-cost residential and office space in old factory buildings; and a proposed harbor and marina to be built on the current site of the New York State Barge Canal terminal between Franklin Square and the Carousel Mall.

Seventy-five million dollars in Payments In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) funds are promised to the city through SIDA by Pyramid for the Carousel Mall. Pyramid, in turn, finances the mall through SIDA, who either issues bonds or

aids in arranging mortgages for the project. The city uses the promised PILOT funds as collateral to borrow money to improve the roads around the mall and, in the event that the state relinquishes the barge canal terminal, to finance harbor and marina construction.

Similarly, PILOT money totalling about \$10 million is promised to the city through SIDA for office and residential development in several old industrial buildings on Franklin Square which are owned by Pyramid. Loans secured on the promise of PILOT funds are used to develop the infrastructure of Franklin Square, including the construction of a park, a bridge, and a walkway along Onondaga Creek, and other general improvements to the area.

In addition, there are myriad schemes and agreements within the general framework that make this a particularly labyrinthine public-private deal. For example, in addition to financing the Carousel Mall, SIDA's name is placed on the deeds until 2005, and until that time Pyramid simply leases the mall. Because SIDA actually owns the project, it qualifies for a total of 8% tax exemption, thus cutting Pyramid's construction costs. In order to improve the Franklin Square area, the city has hired Pyramid in a no-bid contract to do the work. Since the city has yet to receive PILOT funds for the project, Pyramid has agreed to front the costs, which are to be repaid by the city with interest at a later date by borrowing against the promised PILOT funds.

Such complex relationships between public and quasi-public officials and institutions and private interests are characteristic of the entire Oil City project, prompting one local reporter to write "the marriage between the city government and private developers is the fuel for the steamroller rolling through Oil City." The liaison is unambiguously symbolized in the bright, splashy watercolor painting of Congel's mall that hangs in the Syracuse Common Council chambers directly behind the city's elected governing body when it is in session. The marriage has not gone unquestioned. Even the staid *Syracuse Herald-Journal* suggested that the city had overstepped its bounds in exercising eminent domain rights in the interests of a private developer. In May 1989 the New York Supreme Court criticized SIDA for nearly acting as "an arm of a private developer." The blurring of public and private in-

terests is exemplified in a bill introduced into the New York state legislature in 1988. The bill, proposing that the state sell the barge canal terminal for \$1, was co-sponsored by Senator Tarky Lombardi who is also a prominent local businessman with real estate interests in Oil City and whose law firm represents both the city and Pyramid in the Oil City project.

The Oil City Landscape

The complex legal and financial arrangements behind the Oil City developments are taking tangible form in the built environment of the Carousel Mall and Franklin Square. The emerging cultural landscape of Oil City embodies the social and political processes of the underlying public-private coalition while also serving as a constituent element of at least one vision of progress. The Oil City landscape is a powerful symbol, manipulated by the developer to project an image of glitter and innovation, an image behind which all citizens of greater Syracuse can rally with civic pride and optimism for the future. The landscape is invested with collective meaning promoting a private landscape as a public space. In the essentially private refurbishment of old buildings and construction of new features of the built environment, the developer has successfully turned Oil City into an image that serves as "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1977, 171-83; Harvey 1989a, 77-82).

The image is decidedly postmodern, particularly in Oil City's proposed mix of industrial, residential, commercial, and leisure uses, in the architectural detailing of much of the renovation, and in the district's distinct allusions to the vernacular in the form of historical and regional quotation (Ley 1987; Harvey 1989a; Knox 1991; Mills 1990). Pyramid representatives visited other cities, including Vancouver, to see how similar projects had been carried out and finally hired RTKL of Baltimore to design a master plan. In an effort to capture what the Syracuse Community Development Director called "an old town character," brick factory facades were maintained and imitation turn-of-the-century street lamps were installed along brick sidewalks. The design aesthetic is policed and enforced by the city which ensures that all buildings in the

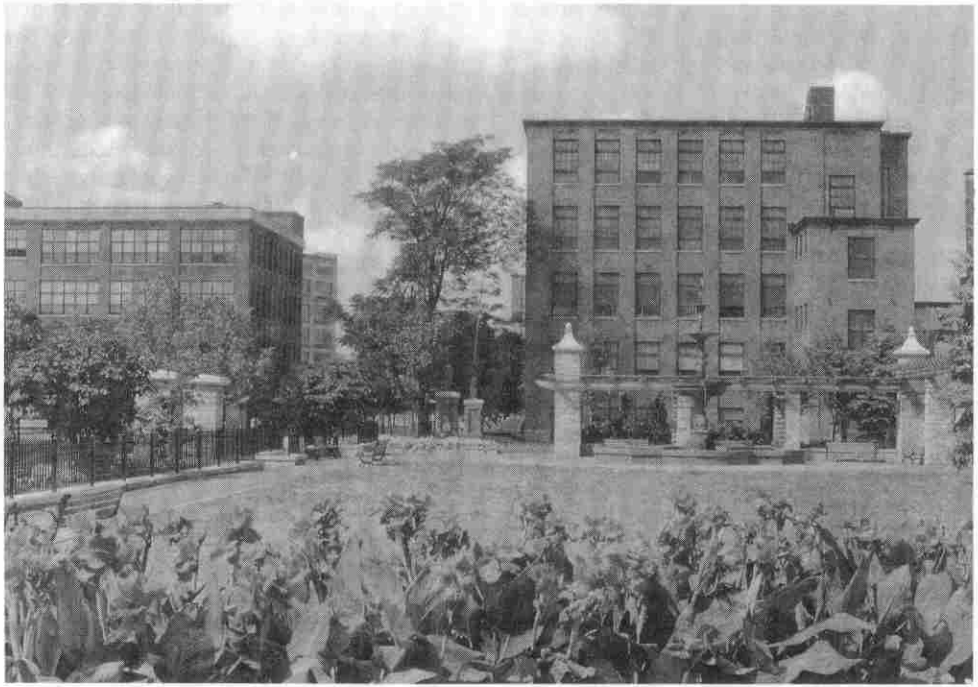


Figure 6: *Franklin Square Park in Oil City.*

Franklin Square area meet minimum design criteria or face condemnation. Several non-conforming businesses have been relocated by the city.

In characteristic postmodern fashion, both the regional and historical context of Oil City have been "imagineered" by the developers and their designers (Relph 1987). The "real" geography and history of both the nation and the region have been selectively appropriated and sanitized in the Oil City landscape. The central focus of the Franklin Square area is a public park created out of an old parking lot, and imbued with fuzzy national collective imagery in the form of statesman-hero Benjamin Franklin (Fig. 6). Franklin is enshrined in a statue and selected quotations have been inscribed in the surrounding sidewalks (including "a true Friend is the best Possession"—presumably presented without irony!).

Quotation of a more local history also takes tangible form in Oil City. The old factory shell that most recently housed the Syracuse Rescue Mission now is composed of \$500,000 condo-

miniums and has been renamed "Mission Landing." Losing "Rescue" and adding "Landing" banishes the building's former occupants, maintains local recognition, and adds historical cachet. The name recalls the earliest white encounter with the area by Jesuit missionaries and the fact that the site was once known as Webster's Landing after a European trader who established a post there in the 1780s.

The industrial past of Syracuse is also celebrated in Oil City. After all, this was an industrial district for over 180 years. A remnant artifact from the long-disappeared salt works has been preserved and displayed as art (Fig. 7). It sits on a pedestal at the origination point of a recently constructed path that winds around the old factory buildings and follows Onondaga Creek toward the lake. An adjacent information box houses a poster explaining that the artifact is a crankshaft, identified as the hub of an old waterwheel. The poster cleverly proclaims a sociospatial legitimacy for the site of the present-day redevelopment scheme; the artifact signifies the hub of the salt industry—

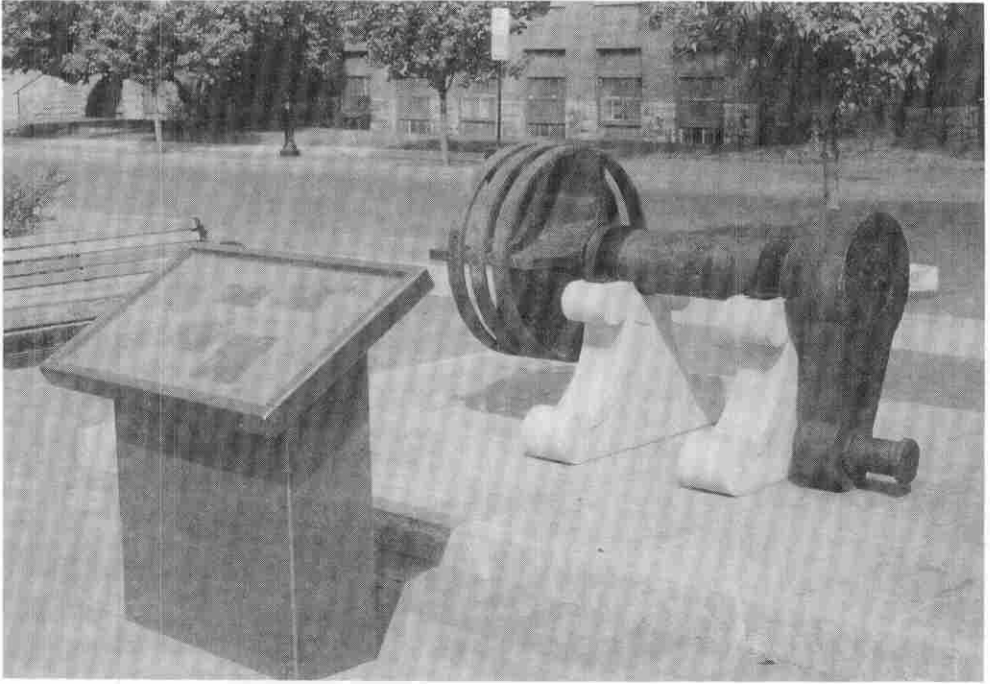


Figure 7: Hub of an old waterwheel used in former salt works.

the salt industry was once the hub of the Syracuse economy—as the Oil City project is reclaiming the centrality of the site and co-opting the role of economic hub for the future of Syracuse.

A final example of allusion to local history is found at the edge of Onondaga Lake in the 120-acre Carousel Mall (Fig. 8) which purports to contain more retail space than all of downtown Syracuse (Gratz 1990). The Carousel Mall houses under one roof all the motifs of the festival market (Martin 1985). The mall's centerpiece is a 100-year-old carousel that was once part of an amusement park located on the western shore of Onondaga Lake. Congel and Pyramid found the carousel in a disused amusement park in western New York State, bought it, refurbished it at great expense and with much publicity, and ultimately proclaimed that the old carousel had been returned to its rightful home in Syracuse when it was set up in the shopping mall (Fig. 9).

Like many redevelopment schemes anchored in a postmodern composition, Oil City

is designed to project the “right look for image conscious tenants” (Nadel 1985, 26). In the case of Oil City, however, “image conscious tenants” refers not only to those actually living or selling in the district, but extends to embrace the taxpayers of Syracuse who ultimately foot a large part of the bill for the endeavor. The commodification of the landscape and the production of symbolic capital not only provide social distinction for those who have day-to-day ties with Oil City, but also the district promises urban distinction for the citizens of greater Syracuse (Jager 1986). That distinction relies in large part on the references to historical and geographic legitimacy in such features as the statue of Franklin, the sandblasted factory buildings, and the antique carousel. Quotations from a regional vernacular—catering more to a collective nostalgic impulse than to an understanding of local historical geography—rework a vague past and provide an ambience to be shared by all who visit the district.

The reworking of history in Oil City gestures to the local while affirming a sense of



Figure 8: *Carousel Mall.*



Figure 9: *Carousel in the Carousel Mall.*

being "up-to-date" since the end result is a historical pastiche that reminds one generally of similar (often successful) enterprises in other cities. The sense of having "the latest thing" is enhanced throughout Oil City by the use of postmodern architectural detailing, notably in the design of the Carousel Mall and in the refurbishment of the old factories. But the postmodern architecture of Oil City is not a radical architecture. Rather it is "facadomy" of a type described by a California architect promoting the economic profitability of a fashion:

Exactly what distinguishes a post-modernist building from the less fashionable modern movement's steel and glass-boxes? These features are determined by functional, economic, and environmental constraints rather than by architectural fancy. With a post-modernist building, only the embellished pastel-colored outer skin and the lobby differ from those of the glass box (Nadel 1985, 26).

In sum, the successful postmodernist imagery of Oil City is an affirmative postmodernism. It is not critical or oppositional but is part and parcel of a consumption ideology, promoted by developers simply in order to "give their product a special allure" (Mills 1988, 176-77). That special allure is what has helped to "sell" Oil City in the first place. It is what has made the public-private partnership so successful, at least for the developer. The Oil City landscape lies at the heart of the Pyramid-City of Syracuse partnership. It has to be acceptable to the decision makers in the city and, indirectly, the taxpaying public, in order for the metamorphosis of "Oil City" into the "Syracuse Lakefront" to be successful. The landscape must "project the right look" in order for an essentially private development scheme to be heralded as the salvation of Syracuse—promising as a "public good" the revitalization of a decayed urban economy and infrastructure.

Conclusions

Private developers and public officials in Syracuse have joined in a partnership aimed at rejuvenating the city's tax base, creating jobs, and making a profit. According to Syracuse Mayor Tom Young, the Oil City project "takes a whole chunk of what at this point is less-than-desirable property . . . and offers the prospect of making it one of the most exciting

city developments in the Northeast." The central focus and catalyst for the development lies in "producing landscapes." A landscape is produced through the speculative construction of a place: the transformation of "Oil City" to the "Syracuse Lakefront." That landscape, in turn, is relied upon to galvanize public support for the project and to attract investment and thus produce the economic development sought by all involved. The landscape serves as symbolic capital. Its imagery of historical fixity and future possibility promotes an ideology of collective, public interest in the success of what is essentially a private landscape. People feel as though they have a stake in the Oil City project, both for its own sake and for the sake of the city as a whole. The irony is that they really do; for the risk of this speculative venture is shouldered by the city and thus, ultimately, by the taxpayers.

Like the city as growth machine described by Logan and Molotch (1987), the vested interests of an elite are legitimated as a civic campaign. Furthermore,

Costs to existing residents can be particularly high if the anticipated growth does not materialize. In what Worster (1982:514) calls 'the infrastructural trap,' localities that place bets on future growth by investing in large-scale capacities then must move heaven and earth to make sure they get that growth . . . the results can be a vicious cycle of crisis-oriented growth addiction. . . . (Logan and Molotch 1987, 87)

Through projects like Oil City, Syracuse is treated as a growth machine in which place is manipulated for exchange value. Because local actors in the Oil City project are operating in an extra-local, even global, context of economic restructuring and interurban competition, Syracuse city government has adopted an entrepreneurial stance. Specifically, Syracuse has opted for the second of what Harvey (1989b, 8) calls "basic options" for such entrepreneurialism by improving "its competitive position with respect to the spatial division of consumption." Thus the Oil City redevelopment scheme, controlled by a public-private partnership and hinging on the fabrication of a postmodern cultural landscape, illustrates many of the urban processes at once being played out and constituted, in significantly different ways, in many North American cities.

In our account of urban redevelopment in Syracuse we have attempted to effectively combine the geographical tradition of landscape studies and the range of geographical work which may be labelled political economy. This is more than an academic exercise in inclusivity. Urban political economy and the cultural landscape are intimately intertwined. The cultural landscape is neither divorced from nor simply the end result of the workings of the urban political economy. The landscape—the construction of a particular built environment—is fundamentally embedded and implicated in the ongoing political economy of contemporary urban places. One cannot be understood without the other and, more importantly, nor can what is happening to our cities. ■

Note

¹Details of the Oil City project were obtained from (1) *The Syracuse Post-Standard*, *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, *Syracuse Herald-American*, and *Syracuse New Times* for the years 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990. (Each paper provided almost continuous coverage of the project during those years; the most common bylines were those of Dan McGuire, Mike Grogan, James T. Mulder, John Gallagher, John Mariani, Mike Fish, and Marie Morelli); (2) an interview with Reid E. Dulberger, Assistant Director of Development, Syracuse Industrial Development Agency, in August 1990; and (3) a televised interview with the Oil City project director on the Syracuse CBS affiliate program "Newsmakers," 12 February 1989.

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- SUSAN M. ROBERTS is Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506. Her research interests include various aspects of the contemporary global political economy, especially the international financial system.
- RICHARD H. SCHEIN is Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography and Planning, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY 40475. His research interests include origins and representations of North American cultural landscapes.

The Location of Office Space in the Metropolitan Service Economy of the United States, 1985-1990

Daniel Z. Sui and James O. Wheeler

University of Georgia

As the economic base of most American metropolitan areas relies increasingly on services, office industries have shifted to a more pivotal role in the new metropolitan service economy. Using primary office-space usage data of the time period 1985-1990, the changing spatial patterns of this new metropolitan service economy are investigated. It is found that the primary office activities are predominantly concentrated in a relatively small number of the largest metropolitan areas. However, an emerging spatial dispersion in primary office activities is also exhibited. Such dispersion is extremely strong at the upper end of the urban hierarchy. The Sunbelt-Snowbelt dichotomy fails to reveal any differences in the growth pattern of the new metropolitan service economy. A more diversified growth pattern of primary office activities is observed. Concentrated dispersion is the major spatial characteristic of this new metropolitan service economy. **Key Words:** office space, service economy, urban hierarchy.

During the 1970s and especially the 1980s, most metropolitan economies in the United States have experienced a massive relative decline in manufacturing jobs and a rise in service-based employment (Stanback et al. 1981; Daniels 1985). Such a profound economic shift has dramatically altered the export base of most cities. Services can no longer be regarded as a residual activity dependent on

levels of manufacturing activity for their existence (Beyers et al. 1985). Certain types of services, such as business and professional services, have become increasingly instrumental in achieving productivity growth in manufacturing itself (Ó hUallacháin 1989). Accompanying this economic transformation has been the growth of high-rise office buildings, especially in the largest U.S. metropolitan

