

The first wave of suburbs, built from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s, were white. Until the passage of civil rights legislation in 1964-1965, few minorities could live in the suburbs (and, in fact, were often legally prevented from doing so). And that caused other problems that we will return to later.

The early suburbs were “bedroom communities” – most people still worked in or near the city center. Retailers, however, realized that more and more of their customers were now living outside the city, and began moving branches of their stores into what we think of as “strip shopping centers” today. As the size of suburban developments grew, more and more stores were needed, but strip centers became difficult to use – think of moving from store to store to store where you have to go outside, go inside, go back outside, ad nauseam, depending on how many different stops you need to make. Now imagine doing this in Minnesota. In the winter. In below zero weather. With the wind blowing.

In 1956, just outside of Minneapolis, a new retail innovation was born – an enclosed shopping center, aka, the mall (side note, not really the first mall, but is considered to be the first fully enclosed one of significant size in modern times). This became almost literally an overnight sensation, and large shopping malls were built outside every major American city in a period of a few years. The mall became for many suburbs a pseudo-downtown. Over time, these spaces have become much more complex, including not just retail, but food, entertainment, services, lodging, offices and more.

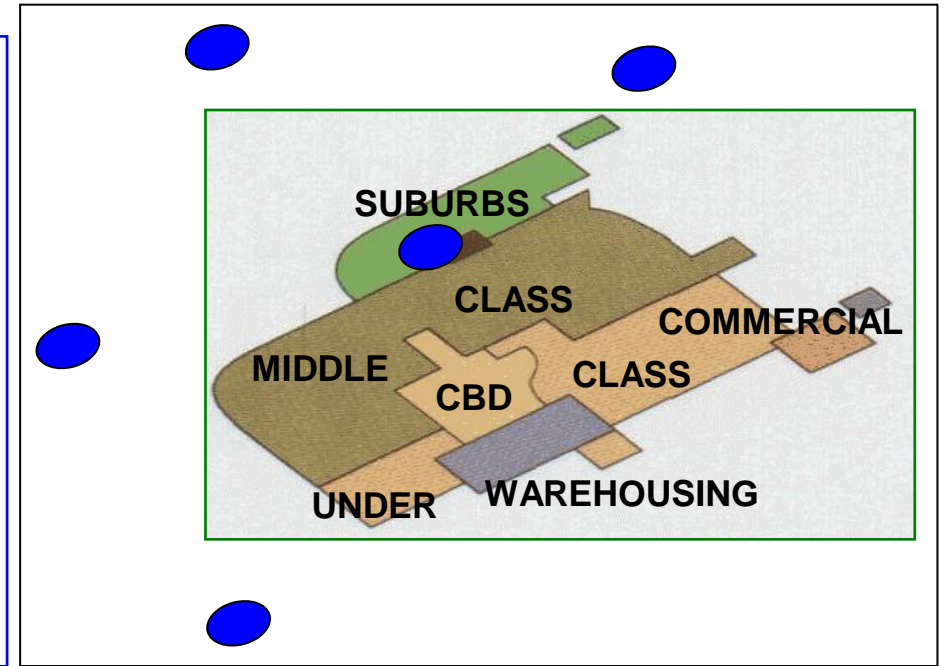
The Harris-Ullman multiple nuclei model describes the first phase of the change from “city” to “metropolitan area.” Instead of having one center of (non-residential) activity – the traditional CBD where virtually all of the commercial, retail, entertainment, social, cultural activities and events were at – now we had many centers (“multiple nuclei”), and various kinds of activities that used to be “only” in the CBD of the central city were diffused across the metropolitan landscape.

Note on the map where these activities move to, and how many there are. Note also that the model shown on the right side is flipped “upside down” – this way, it corresponds surprisingly well with the Baltimore area.

Note also what happens with the population. There is what is often referred to as a “donut hole” around the city center, that has become increasingly depopulated from the 1950s to the 1990s, and more and more people live further and further outside the city – but the population density is very low. This is because we were convinced that having “a ranch of our own” in the suburbs was the way to live... the single family house.

Joel Garreau (Washington Post)

- 5 million+ sq ft of office space...
- 600,000+ sq ft of retail...
- population that increases during the working day...
- local perception of “functions” – jobs, shopping, entertainment...
- and... 20-30 years ago, the area would have been considered primarily residential suburb (“bedroom community”) or rural in character (*see pictures below!*).



- **Edge Cities:** Suburban nodes of employment and economic activity featuring high-rise office space, corporate headquarters, shopping, entertainment, and hotels. Their physical layout is designed for automobile, not pedestrian, travel.



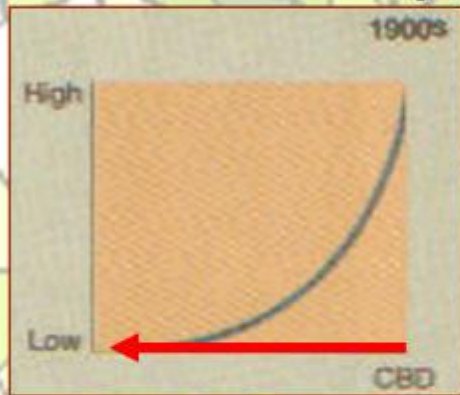
American suburbs continued to grow, both in population and the extent that they spread outward from the “central city.” Joel Garreau, a journalist working then at the Washington Post, had been watching what happened to Tysons Corner (VA), just outside of Washington, DC. Note on the slide above that in 1940, Tysons Corner was very, VERY rural. The main road is paved, the intersecting road is actually dirt. This was a farming region in northern Virginia. Even by the 1980s, when Garreau was writing the articles in the paper that eventually became the book, Edge Cities, the area had changed dramatically. As noted in the list on the previous slide, these areas had become “places” – office space, residential, retail... and often more.

Note the criteria of an edge city having 600,000 square feet or more of retail space. Today, this would be considered a small mall. If you are familiar with the Natick Mall, a few years ago they added a new wing to it... and that new part of the mall has about 1 million square feet of retail space (the entire mall today is over 2 million square feet, and keep in mind that this does not include any of the other nearby retail activity such as Shoppers World, the big movie theaters, the Christmas Tree Shops shopping center across the street, a Home Depot nearby, several furniture stores, a couple auto dealers... and more!

Garreau also noted that in becoming “a place” many of these edge cities were spaces that people moved exclusively in – there was no need anymore to travel into the city, and in fact, we can often see today that people travel from suburb to suburb more than they travel from the suburbs to the central city.

In the graphic model of the multiple nuclei model in the upper right on the previous slide, the blue dots around the city represent edge cities that are developing around Baltimore, including Bel Air, Perry Hall-White Marsh, Hunt Valley, Towson, Owings Mills, Columbia, and Glen Burnie. All of these except for Towson are formerly rural (farm) regions that were developed starting in the 1950s and 1960s as suburbs. All of them have malls as their “town center.” All of them are developing office parks and industrial parks, and many of them have increasingly diverse entertainment and recreational activities as well. The exception, Towson, was an existing small town north of the Baltimore city boundary that became “suburbanized” as well, and also has developed office and industrial space. One odd thing about Towson... in the 1980s, most of the downtown area was torn down, and replaced with... ...a mall!

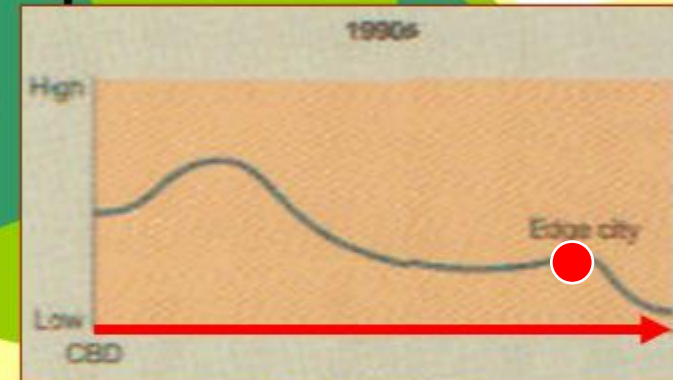
1900



CONCENTRIC RING

Approx. 33 miles across.
Prepared with American FactFinder.

1990



MULTIPLE NUCLEI

Major changes...

The population is less dense near the city center, and may be “de-populated” in some cities

Population is spread far out beyond the city boundary (30-40 miles, in some cases, much further)

There are pockets of higher density development in some suburban places

Units/Sq Mile

0 - 184

191 - 619

626 - 1278

1290 - 2022

2039 - 3411

3446 - 6288

6301 - 19569

One thing about the increasing level of development – and the increasing “complexity” (from houses and shopping centers to office, industrial and cultural spaces) – of the suburbs is the effect on the distribution of the population. In the above map, we can compare the population density and distribution of the city of the early industrial era to the metropolitan area (including the city and suburbs) of today.

With the addition of so many activities that used to be found only in the CBD of the central city, we are also now seeing changes in the types of housing found in the suburban realm. Higher density condo and apartment buildings are being built, resulting in a “bubble” of higher density populations, often adjacent to the “center” (in many of these places, this often means next to the mall or replacing older homes in small towns that have become part of the metro area).

Note that in the graph representing the population density and distribution in the metro area (the right hand graph, previous slide), the population is now spread much further out, and we now have bubbles of higher density population where these edge cities are.

Let’s think about Boston as an example of this. If we looked back to the 1900 census of Boston, we would find that Boston had a population of about 650,000. There were some outlying areas with sizable populations, such as the new industrial centers in Lowell, Lawrence, Waltham and Worcester, but even adding these up only adds about another 400,000-500,000 people to the total. So in 1900, the Boston area had a little over 1,000,000 people, and most of towns outside of Boston except the four named here were small primarily farming, communities.

Today, the “Greater Boston metropolitan area” extends out to Interstate 495, and beyond. It includes a part of southern New Hampshire (around Nashua-Manchester-Concord) and even a little piece of Connecticut (south of Worcester). The City of Boston today still has a population around 650,000... but the entire metropolitan area includes nearly 4.5 million people!



- **Slums:** Older, run-down inner-city neighborhoods populated by poor and disadvantaged populations.

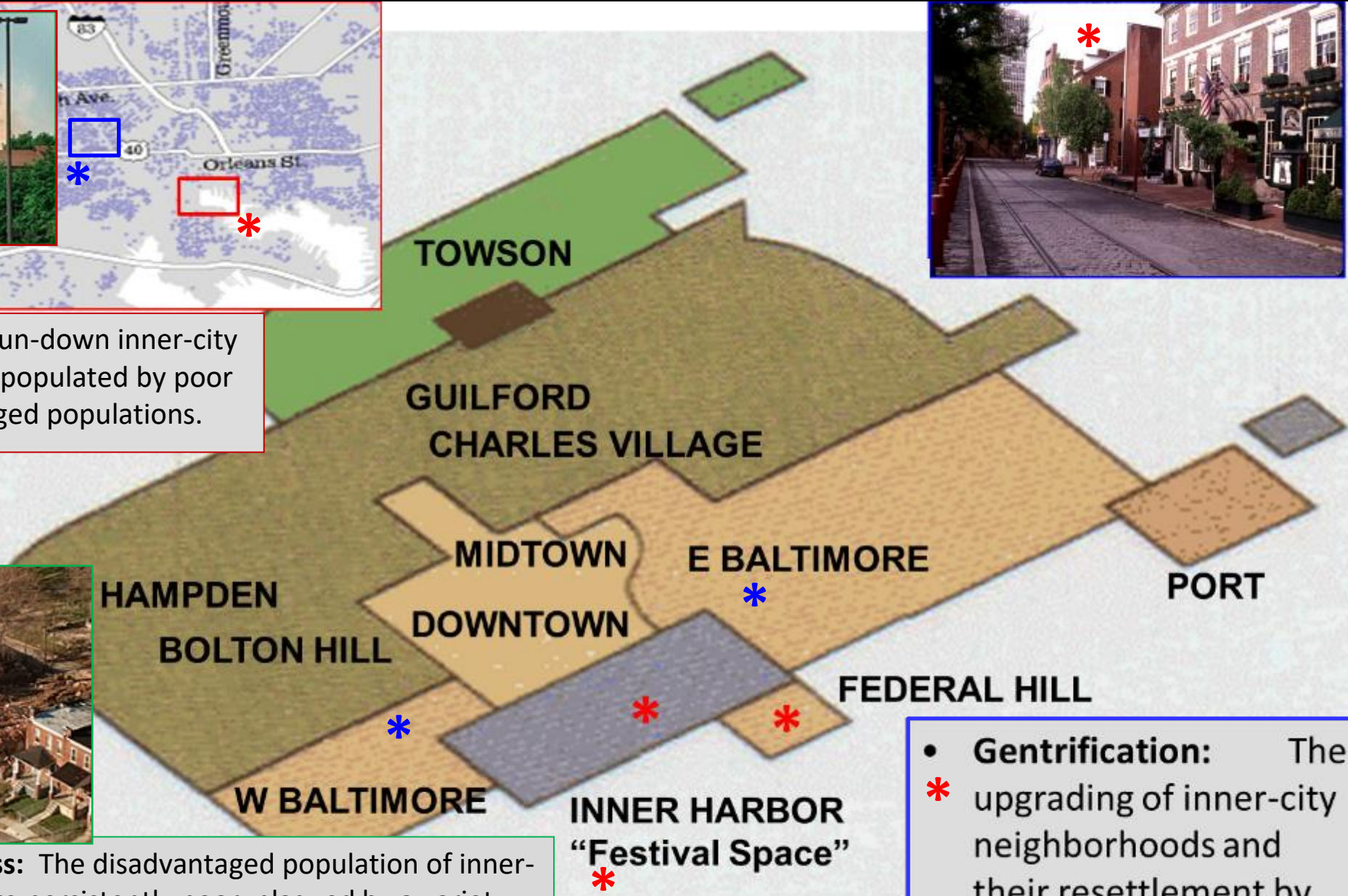
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- **Urban Underclass:** The disadvantaged population of inner-city slums that are persistently poor, plagued by a variety of social ills, and concentrated in neighborhoods where a majority of their neighbors are also persistently poor.

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- **Gentrification:** The upgrading of inner-city neighborhoods and their resettlement by upwardly mobile professionals.

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1980s

Last but not least... what has happened to our cities as a result of these changes?

Taking a look at Baltimore again, one thing that we could see beginning to happen by the 1960s was that many people left the city to move to the shiny new suburbs – although most of those people were middle class white people (giving rise to the term, “white flight”). Most minorities could not live in the suburbs until after the civil rights legislation passed in the mid-1960s (and even for sometime after that, many found it difficult to buy or rent in the suburbs). Many minority populations did not immediately try to move anyway... at that time in our history, there were still a lot of good working class jobs (especially manufacturing) located in or near the center of the city. But as more and more employment moved out to the suburbs, the cities became deserted of working class jobs and sometimes even lower skilled employment such as retail. Most of the major retail stores today are located in the suburbs; many older industrial cities in New England and the Midwest have no major department stores downtown anymore. Even here in Boston, there really is only one major retailer in downtown Boston (though that is starting to change – Boston is luckier than many older cities).

This has led to the development of what is referred to as the “urban underclass” a poverty-stricken group often located close to the city center, in the worst housing, with the highest crime rates, and with the highest levels of drug and alcohol dependence. The popular term for this is the “slums.” In some cities, the middle class minority populations eventually followed the middle class whites out into the suburbs, leaving only the poorest in the city, with few opportunities... and often with school systems that failed them.

The small inset map in the upper left came from a study done by the Baltimore Sun newspaper in the late 1990s... each of the purple dots on the map represents a vacant residential property. There were, at that time, more than 40,000 vacant homes in the city.

A second trend has been the issue of gentrification in our cities, where middle and upper income people move back in and fix an area of the city up. While it does make that part of the city look better, and increases property values in those neighborhoods, it also can force the poorer population there to have to move if they can no longer afford to rent there or pay the rising property taxes.

→ The assignment for Chapter 10 will be sent to you in the next email!