ABSTRACT

URBAN DIVISION AND SOCIAL ANTAGONISM: THE POWER OF PLACE IN THE CREATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITIES IN DULUTH, MINNESOTA

by David Utecht Burns

This thesis is primarily a historical examination of place-based collective identities in Duluth, Minnesota. I argue that the city’s underlying social, economic and political conditions gave rise to collective identities and fostered neighborhood antagonism over time. These conditions, which converged to create place and the identities formed therein, were constructed in large part by economic circumstances and hegemonic forces present in the area during the late 19th century. The natural landscape of Duluth and the nature of the industrial economy during the settlement period convened to form two distinctive residential sections of the city: a blue collar area for the workers and a wealthier area inhabited by capitalists. Over time, these identities continued to be class-based, and were both articulated through and reproduced by key urban controversies that occurred in the history of the city and the social institutions that continue to exist today.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Throughout the history of the discipline, cultural geographers have examined the ways in which both the natural and built environment affect the actions and identity of people. Although both the methods and ideological framework that guide their analysis have evolved, the central focus – how the nature of place contributes to individual and collective identities – remains a primary source of inquiry. Individuals are naturally influenced by their surrounding environment, and this interaction results in the unique culture of a particular place. The very nature of culture is inherently spatial, and may be seen as “the medium through which people transform the mundane phenomena of the material world into a world of significant symbols to which they give meaning and attachment” (Cosgrove & Jackson, 1987). The built environment thus reflects the unique culture of place, and simultaneously creates the identities of people that live within it. To examine place is therefore to examine the very culture that is contained within it, illuminating the forces that contributed to its creation. Culture is a product of a series of unique social, economic, and political events, all of which occurred within a specific place. Thus, by examining these unique events in the history of a particular area, we can begin to understand the underlying culture.

We can determine what constitutes a place by assessing the articulation of collective identities of individuals connected to this place. By determining and evaluating these collective identities, we are able to define the approximate geographic boundaries of a particular place. Since a specific place is defined by the collective identities that exist within it, “place” can occur on any scale – from the national to the neighborhood. With this in mind, I investigate the collective neighborhood identities of Duluth, Minnesota, focusing on the underlying social, economic and political factors in order to understand more about the unique culture that has helped construct these collective identities. In this thesis, I define neighborhood identities as the collective identities within Duluth that are both historically and presently articulated by residents of the city.

In order to understand why residents exhibit and articulate a sense of neighborhood identity, I must first determine the factors that have lead to the formation of the neighborhood of Duluth. As such, my primary goal in this thesis is determining the historical geographical factors that have contributed to forming place-based and neighborhood identities in the city. I employ a broadened approach that emphasizes the
investigation of many of the various factors that weave together to construct place-based identities. The first topic I examine is the formative time of Duluth, where I focus specifically on how the nature of the economy has contributed to the construction of place and neighborhood identities in the city. Next, I document a few key urban controversies in the history of the city that both reinforce and reflect the collective neighborhood identities established during the late 19th century. Finally, in order to better determine how identity is maintained through time, I examine the specific social institutions that are central components of reinforcing neighborhood identity in Duluth. By looking at both the history of the city and these key urban controversies, I demonstrate the power of the natural landscape and the economy in forming collective neighborhood identities and the role of place in reinforcing these identities over time.

This thesis is primarily influenced by the geographic concepts of place, social memory and the political economy of landscape and identity construction. By outlining these concepts, I uncover the geographical factors and historical events that have contributed to both the construction and active maintenance of neighborhood identities in Duluth. Cultural geographic theories provide a framework to help one understand the ways in which the economy contributes to place construction, and, in turn, how place itself works to reproduce these economic relations to future generations. However, in this thesis I expand upon these concepts by examining the power relations that occur in place-making, focusing explicitly on how place is actively constructed by those with economic and political capital. This thesis contributes to geographic literature by providing a clear example of how the uneven destruction of place reflects and subsequently reinforces traditional class-based neighborhood identities in the city, and how these antagonistic identities are reproduced over time by social institutions such as schools.

The primary focus of this thesis is on the development of neighborhood identity in West Duluth, located in the south-western portion of the city. Historically, West Duluth is perceived by residents of the city as lower class and more blue-collar than the eastern neighborhoods. West Duluth is the traditional industrial heart of the city, and attracted laborers and immigrants in times of economic prosperity. Throughout the history of the city, West Duluth is unevenly and negatively altered when compared to the eastern areas of the town. The sense of marginalization and a perceived lack of fairness vis a vis their more wealthy neighbors is a central component of West Duluth identity. In spite of their resentment and the strong perception that their
neighborhoods are unfairly destroyed, West Duluth residents articulate a strong loyalty to their neighborhood.

While I focus on Duluth in order to show the various ways place-based collective identities are constructed and maintained, the concepts are universally applicable. I choose Duluth in this investigation because of my familiarity with the expressions of collective identity among people that live in the city. Additionally, Duluth has ample historical documentation to investigate the specific events, institutions, and urban controversies that have factored into identity construction. Duluth also provides a striking example of how the economy contributes to the shaping and establishment of place, which is also well-documented. In this sense, while on the one hand I investigate the particularities of an individual place, on the other, the themes explored contribute to geographic literature by broadly outlining the factors that lead to the formation of neighborhood identities and the importance of industrial economy in place-construction.

**Methodology**

The purpose of this research is explanatory, as I seek to understand how the nature of work and industry contributes to neighborhood and place identity in a real-world context. Explanatory research seeks to understand “why forces created the phenomenon in question” and “why the phenomenon is shaped as it is” (Kitchen & Tate, 2000, p. 45). I do not attempt to uncover the “truth” behind neighborhood identity, but rather to seek explanation and understand why they continue to exist today. In conducting this research, I endeavor to be as reflexive as possible by acknowledging my motives, status as a researcher, and previously held assumptions on the subject matter.

I subscribe to no hypotheses in this project, but rather investigate the research question and sub-questions. This project examines the historical and modern experiences of individuals in Duluth and uses techniques that will help gain insight into their civic experiences. In uncovering these historical experiences and events, I rely primarily upon historical and archival data. This is the primary source of information for historical geographers, and its worthiness is well-documented in the discipline. Semi-structured interviews and participant observation are also utilized in order to provide supplemental information on how identity is articulated by residents today. These qualitative methods are appropriate and ideal for uncovering issues of identity and place-making, having been historically used by humanists and continuing to be
used by cultural geographers. Additionally, as Mike Crang argues, qualitative methods are increasingly being used in geography to "enable the study of, and emphasize the importance of, seeing economic activity as a set of lived practices, assumptions and codes of behavior" (Crang, 2002).

My goal was to gain knowledge of both historical and modern neighborhood identity in Duluth, and the methods are the appropriate way of obtaining such insights. Qualitative methods are frequently employed by geographers, and a brief investigation of the research within this paradigm shows their ubiquity (Smith, 1984) (Kitchen & Tate, 2000) (Wescoat, 1992). As opposed to quantitative analysis, these methods reject abstraction and rationalism. Qualitative methodology emphasizes strong analytical rigor and direct encounters with a complex social world (Smith, 1984). Additionally, the use of qualitative methods provides the researcher with a personal encounter with the subject matter, emphasizing closeness as opposed to distance and objectivity (Laurier, 2003).

**Sources of Information and Methods of Data Collection and Analysis**

This thesis is constructed from a number of data sources. First, I use secondary data from documents written on the area to contextualize the study. The bulk of my research comes from archival examinations of newspapers and other historical documents. These provide interpretations of the past and allow me to analyze identity and civil rivalry at previous times in the city’s history. In order to understand residents’ thoughts on neighborhood identity and civic rivalry, I employed semi-structured interviews. The information gained from these interviews was used to supplement the study as well as reinforce and expand upon the archival documents.

After arriving in Duluth to work on the project, I conducted a search for archival data. A majority of the data used in this work comes from local newspaper and other published works. I first collected this data from subject-based archives at both the University of Minnesota Duluth library and the Duluth Public Library collections. After exhausting the subject-based archives, I continued the archival research process by collecting additional newspaper articles based on the information gained by examining the works uncovered in the subject-based archives. If a particular subject was important for the study, I attempted to gain more information on it. By not relying solely on the subject-based archives of the libraries, I hope to minimize the effect of what MacDonald and Tipton refer to the "social production of an archive," and account
for "where and for how long" an archive is kept, and "what is thrown away" (MacDonald and Tipton 1996).

I evaluated all archival sources used in this thesis, determining that all were authentic. All sources I used were from published works, and contained the original date of publication, author, and publication name. In evaluating whether to use a source or not, I assessed both the intent of the author and the accuracy in which they recorded the depictions of the event. Additionally, I expanded upon the library archival collections in order to verify the data in the collection with other materials written about the particular events.

The interview subjects consisted of both long-term and recent residents of the city. I selected the participants based upon their knowledge of the city and their willingness to discuss the topic. Every attempt was made to have a diverse age, gender, geography and life experience based sample. Interviews were conducted in local establishments or their places of employment and included civic officials, college students, Duluth historians, and both recent and long term residents of the city. I encouraged the participants to feel as comfortable as possible, and to talk freely about neighborhood identity in Duluth. The analysis of my interviews required recording and transcribing the dialogue. Interviews were recorded with a digital recording device in an audio format, and then transcribed upon their completion.

A total of seven people participated in the in-depth, open-ended interviews. The subjects ranged from recent college graduates of the University of Minnesota Duluth to long-term, life-residents of the city. The interviews are mainly intended to supplement the historical documents, as well as provide modern interpretations of neighborhood identity in Duluth. See the chart below for a brief description of the interview subjects, whose names are withheld to maintain anonymity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudo name</th>
<th>Approximate Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Residential status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>City Official</td>
<td>Long-term, native resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>Early 30s</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Resident of the city for approximately 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>Late 20s</td>
<td>Former student of University of Minnesota</td>
<td>Resident of city for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An Introduction to the Study Area

Duluth, Minnesota is a city of 86,918 people, located on the westernmost tip of Lake Superior. The city is strategically located near both the great lakes and a nearby iron ore range makes it an ideal port in 19th century America. During it’s great industrial rise in the late 19th Century, many predicted Duluth to surpass such cities as Cleveland, Pittsburg, Detroit and Chicago as the country’s next great port city (Western Area Duluth Business and Civic Club, 1994; Cooley, 1925). Yet in spite of its ideal location and proximity to valuable resources, the city has a history of intermittent economic prosperity and stagnation, having never achieved its anticipated status. This cycle of economic boom and bust has fundamentally contributed to the collective identities of neighborhoods within the city, and is articulated by many residents of the city.

The dependence of unstable industry, including lumbering, mining and the transshipment of agricultural commodities has led to an economy that is seemingly in a perpetual state of flux, producing intermittent times of great population and economic growth and, conversely, eras of great decline (Elezar 1965 p. 50). In the latter half of the 20th century, the town made a concerted and (somewhat) successful effort to develop the city as a tourist destination, promoting its natural beauty and redeveloping many sections of the city, according to a city official (Personal Communication 3/14/05).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Subject</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Role/Position</th>
<th>Tenure Time/Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Official at University of Minnesota, Duluth</td>
<td>Long term, native resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Former student of University of Minnesota-Duluth</td>
<td>Former resident; lived in Duluth for approximately 6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>City Official</td>
<td>Long term resident of Duluth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Librarian/Historian</td>
<td>Long term resident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1-1: List of Interview Subjects
While still heavily invested in “unstable” industries, Duluth currently enjoys a more diversified and relatively stable economy. The traditionally unstable nature of the economy has great bearing on the development of Duluth as a city, as immigrants flocked to the city during economic booms and residents fled during the “bust” times. The influence of the economy on the development of Duluth is well-reflected in the following population figures from the last century.

Table 1-2 - Duluth MSA Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Population Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>119,267</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>210,696</td>
<td>91,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>256,162</td>
<td>45,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>251,179</td>
<td>-4,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>254,036</td>
<td>2,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>252,777</td>
<td>-1,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>276,596</td>
<td>23,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>265,350</td>
<td>-11,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>266,650</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>239,971</td>
<td>-26,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>243,815</td>
<td>3,844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US. Census Bureau

Table 1-2: Duluth’s Metropolitan Statistical Area Population

While economic activities have had a profound influence on the narrative of the city, in western neighborhoods economic hardships are a central component of neighborhood identity. Residents of West Duluth, the traditional blue-collar area of
town, have articulated a feeling of being disproportionately affected in cases of economic hardship. Originally settled as an independent town and later incorporated into the city of Duluth, West Duluth was ideally suited for lumbering, shipping, and factories. Throughout its history, West Duluth residents have expressed umbrage towards residents in the eastern end of the city, which is both economically powerful and has historically had more political influence. Once separate cities, western and eastern Duluth have a long history of neighborhood antagonism, as expressed by the following passages from historical documents:

Piled high just west of downtown, there’s a mountain of black, jagged rock that geologists say has been here more than a billion years. That rock is part of Duluth’s massive gabbro formation, the likes of which are found only a couple of other places on the Earth. Duluthians call this mountain the “Point of Rocks.” (It) has been more than just a geological treasure or unusual downtown landmark, however, it was, and in some ways still is, a kind of unofficial dividing point in Duluth. The unspoken but understood border between the East and the West, between the so-called haves and the have-nots, between the working class and the wealthy “cake-eaters” (Duluth Energy Resource Center, 1986, p. 8).

The two subcommunities have become so alienated over the years that they have rarely been able to cooperate in any civic endeavor. Indeed, local folklore has it that, when one element takes a stand on an issue, the other will automatically embrace the opposite position just out of spite (Elazar, 1965, p. 51).

Neighborhood identities and neighborhood antagonism, both historical and modern, ultimately stem from the initial factors which contributed to form the city; namely, industry and labor. The cumulative effects of geography, economic forces, and political factors have formed the neighborhood identities of East and West Duluth. The neighborhoods were not always part of the city, however, having formed as independent and competitive entities. Duluth’s city boundaries have shifted dramatically through time, and the city has a history of aggressively annexing proximinal towns. See figure 1-1 for a map of the townsites that became later became modern Duluth. The neighborhoods that exist within the city today grew as separate entities and each have their own unique history and role in the region’s economy. Each
of the 12 original townsites was seen by the settlers as having vast economic potential, vying with each other for preeminence:

“the towns had certain geographical characteristics, and aspirations and in common: each was situated on the waterfront so as to facilitate the building of docks and trans-shipment of freight...each expected to be the lake terminus of a great western railroad..Each, according to the publicity of town promoters was the potential site of a future great city of the nation (Kaups, 1976, p. 71).

Figure 1-1: the 11 original townsites, platted in the 1850s.
East Duluth attracted the wealthy capitalists and managers of the factories, while the laborers resided in the west. These class-based distinctions remain in the city in spite of changes in the economy and the nature of work in Duluth. Today, Duluth still experiences social antagonism, and citizens of West Duluth continue to feel marginalized. The following from a resident reflects how the relationship between the two areas of the city:

The West Duluthians are more low-income, and that’s how the east-Duluthians see it as...In east Duluth, you were the best. But in west Duluth, people don’t see it as being special. East Duluthians were special, West Duluth was not. West Duluth was gross, it was...not....not fancy. It isn’t fancy....I don’t necessarily know why but it seems to me that in the history of (the city), that West Duluth is more low income and they just weren’t accepted in the city. That’s partly why they are called West Duluth and the other part will say “Duluth” which, why doesn’t it say “East Duluth” and “West Duluth”? So I think it is East Duluth is too proud to be associated with West Duluth. At least in the history of it and it’s never really completely gone away ("Jacob", 2005).

Duluth serves as a unique location to examine the historical geographical factors that have contributed to form antagonistic neighborhood identities in the urban arena.
These class-based identities are evident in the city today, and have historical roots that reach as far back to the formation of the area. Before examining the historical roots and economic factors that led to antagonistic neighborhood identities, I provide a review of the relevant literature. In the following chapter, I outline the geographical concepts that have structured my research questions and provided context for my study of Duluth, exploring geographic conceptualizations of place, social memory, and the political economy of landscape and identity construction. By outlining these key geographic concepts, I provide a basis for how the economy creates place and the power of place in reconstructing identity throughout time. In looking at the theoretical constructions of culture, landscape and identity, the literature review creates a foundation for understanding the ways in which the economy supports and promotes social differentiation and distinctive neighborhood identities and how, due to the power of place and social memory, these are reinforced to future generations.
Chapter 2: Place, Landscape Production, and the Economy’s Role in Neighborhood Identity Construction

Geographers have long argued that there is a clear connection between one’s sense of place and one’s identity, noting that the specific intricacies unique to a particular place are intimately connected to the identities formed therein. Collective identity construction is a central component of cultural geographic literature and continues to be argued and explored in the discipline (Anderson 1987; Entrikin, 1992; Foster 2004; Low 2000; Massey, 1994; Mitchell 2004; Nijman 1999; Pinder 2001; Pompke and Ballard 2003; Sibley 1995; Sibley 1992; Till 1999). As Tim Cresswell explains, central to collective identity construction is the role of space and territoriality, which demarcates specific spaces to particular groups (Knight 1982). Place serves as a grounds for identity construction (Cresswell, 1996), serving as a locus for group membership. Place exerts a powerful effect on cultivation of group collective identities, serving as both an arena in which group membership is formed and as a meeting ground for group identity construction.

The Foundations of Place and Collective Identity: Humanist explanations of Neighborhood Identity Formation

To examine place is to examine of the medium in which collective identity construction occurs. Rather than study the ways in which place is contested and the powers which help to form place, humanists seek to understand how one feels within a place and its relationship with individual and collective identities. The study of place is therefore either implicitly or explicitly central to the work of all human geographers, and is intrinsically connected to geography as a discipline.

Humanist geographers originally emphasized the uniqueness of place by underscoring its reliance on human experience and subjectivity (Tuan 1974, Tuan 1977, Relph 1976). Place is subjectively measurable, unique to an area, and dynamic. Humanism conceive place as not a simple abstraction, but rather as an essential part of
the everyday life of individuals and communities. Humanism emphasizes reflexivity and the richness in the human experience, focusing on the emotions a particular landscape or symbol may elicit to an individual (Tuan 1977). Humanist studies place importance not only for the feelings experienced by individuals by symbolic vernacular landscapes, but also events that occur in a place.

Central to the rise of place as a geographic concept is Tuan’s (1977) *Space and Place*, which introduced the discipline to a “sense of place,” drastically altering the perception of the influence of place in geographic literature. Tuan’s sense of place emphasized the importance of the individual’s experience of place, showing how humans are directly affected by place via their experiences with the environment. He argued that humans feel attachment to certain locales that are at the center of meaning and belonging – one’s home. This could be a city, a neighborhood, or a myriad of other locations. For Tuan, home could inspire feelings of ambivalence as well as attachment, as one may come to associate negative feelings with home.

Humanist theory and research focuses primarily on the individual, and unpacks how identity is constituted by and within place. Humanist theory underscores how individuals live in a tangible world of meaning that is experienced, felt, and subjectively processed. These theories help to explain why an individual, perhaps without conscious knowledge, may be influenced by his surroundings and feel attached to a particular environment. In the context of this thesis, neighborhood may be understood to be place, and these ideas allow us to decipher how identity is reinforced through both key events and community activities.

** Territory, the Economy, and Landscape**

Humanist explanations of place are further expanded by theorists that understand how place is actively produced and reflects the social relationship of a community. These ideas help to explain how political influence and economic disparity may have contributed to identity formation and place-based collective identities. For the West Duluth neighborhoods the political and economic dominance of the eastern part of town created a collective ambivalence and opposition, which I will explore in the following chapters. Newer theories of culture seek to understand the relationship between culture and society; chiefly how culture is actively constructed and the ways in which it is contested in the urban arena.
Humans are naturally territorial beings, and place is a socially constructed medium, inscribed with meaning by particular groups and used as an active agent in identity construction. While space itself is passive, human beliefs and actions give space meaning to individuals (Knight, 1982 p. 517). Group territoriality has a strong influence on the actions and beliefs of individuals and aids in group cohesion. Individuals and groups instinctively inscribe ownership over spaces, like neighborhoods, and these actions are an important marker of group cohesion: “whereas a socially cohesive group once defined the territory, in time...the territory came to define the people; there was transference in emphasis from group to territory” (Knight 1982: 519). Territory (such as neighborhoods) itself thereby becomes the marker of group identity, and boundaries are set up to demarcate specific spaces to specific identities. Place, and therefore neighborhood, is therefore inscribed with meaning, serving as grounds in which collective identities are created, re-created and actively contested by social forces.

In addition to being actively constructed, place is composed of distinctive boundaries, which are often contested by “agents of change.” Boundaries are drawn by society to distinguish between groups that belong and those who are “out of place” (Sibley, 1995). Groups that are excluded, the "other," are commonly presented by hegemony as being less than human, as somehow dirty and uncivilized. This association with dirt becomes an image that is pervasive, effectively becoming a part of the common knowledge of a community. The identity of the "other" is socially constructed, and certain landscapes come to be associated with these identities. A fear of the other can lead to fear of place, which in turn can reify landscapes or neighborhoods as "places of the other" and marginalize groups and places. Space can reflect division and marginalization, in turn accentuating and perpetuating social division and marginalized identities. This leads to stereotyped representations, which hegemonic forces may use for the oppression of certain groups.

Territory is essential in reproducing social life, and identities are inextricably interconnected with this territory (Dear & Wolch, 1989). Humans ultimately strive to improve their social and material status and social processes are inherently spatial. Importantly, Dear and Wolch introduce the concepts of social reproduction and social change, asserting that the former occurs when individuals, who strive for their own self-protection, are unable to transcend economic and social spheres, resulting in the reproduction of their everyday existence while the latter occurs when individuals are
able to overcome the social structures, thereby altering their practices of reproduction (Dear & Wolch, 1989).

The power relations are inherent in place construction, and landscape reflects these relations (Anderson, 1987). Landscape is composed of uneven social and economic relations, and is linked with the underlying organization of society (Massey 1994 p. 87). Thus, neighborhood patterns reflect the power relations that combined to form it. Doreen Massey asserts that these relations are created, recreated and defined in terms of the economy, and exist in a state of conflict:

...divisions of labor which are stretched out over space (spatial structures) consist...of mutually defining elements, then the function (and social) characteristics of some areas define the functional (and social) characteristics of other areas. If one region has all the control functions, and only control functions (to give an extreme example), the other regions must have all the functions which are controlled, the subordinated functions...it means that as far as the characteristics we are considering here are concerned, any local area can only be understood when analysed in relation to the functions in the wider division of labour which are performed within it, and in the context of its place within the wider system of relations to production (Massey 1994 p. 89).

Ideology is intricately connected with place, and the expectations of how one acts within place help to ground the actions of individuals within those place. Expectations about behavior in place are important components in the construction, maintenance, and evolution of ideological values of a society (Cresswell, 1996). Individuals may challenge the ideology of particular places via transgressions, in which individuals act inappropriately in terms of the expected norms within a place. These transgressions serve to foreground the mapping of ideology onto space, which can tell something about the norms of place. Culture is an actively contested politically and place is actively constructed through this struggle over ideology. These ideas help to explain how and why place is a powerful force in the ongoing hegemonic and counter-hegemonic struggles, as social groups may attempt to transgress boundaries in order to seek better social conditions.

Place, and by extension neighborhoods, are contested territories, and many factors weave together to form a specific and unique place. Place is thus a narrative of the power relations of a community, is transcribed in the landscape and passed to
future generations. In order to change place, contesting groups may attempt to transgress a space by acting out of the norm of that place, as is often seen in protests, riots, and other behavior aiming to create and draw attention to a contentious issue. By looking at the influence of hegemonic forces on the dissemination of identity, we can uncover the ways in which identities are actively created and contested within space, shedding light on how certain key events can fundamentally contribute to the creation of collective identities.

Social Memory in Creating Place and Re-creating Identity

The social memory of a place is marked on the landscape, and these markers fundamentally affect the collective identities of individuals. The past is reflected in the landscape, and there are fragments of memory found throughout and within place. Social memory serves as a constant reminder to neighborhoods of their past and provides a vision for the future by reinforcing neighborhood structure. Thus, many of the historical power relations and ideological values are reinforced, and re-articulated via the landscape to future generations. This helps us to understand why urban structures are rigid and how communities are seemingly locked into a particular political, economic, and social fate.

The social memory of a landscape - the specific way a group of people remembers its past - is directly tied to place making (DeLyser 1999, 2001, 2003). Social memory, however, involves remembering the past in a way that it is relevant to the present. The social memory of place is temporal; subject to constant re-evaluations based on dominant social thought and hegemony. The effect of this is that place itself appears to change, when in fact it is merely that social memory changes the way society interprets place. The process of remembering the past dictates future directions and influences the ways in which place reflects dominant cultural norms (DeLyser, 1999). Place reflects these memories via sensory experiences within the environment, and in turn projects these memories back onto individuals.

The vernacular urban landscape contributes to both community identity and social memory, and place is shaped by hegemony, giving it significant social and political meaning. Place is at the heart of the urban landscape and provides a powerful source of individual and community memory. Delores Hayden provides a concept of Place Attachment, which is the psychological process that develops social, material and ideological dimensions and ties one to a place, thereby developing collective memories and identities (Hayden, 1995). The development of space is a political process; excluded
in the urban landscape are the narratives of the other, those in which are excluded by class, race or gender. People invest in places with social and cultural meaning, and the history of the urban landscape provides a framework for connecting those meanings to contemporary life.

The politics of community memory is continually negotiated, and hegemonic forces forge what is remembered and what is forgotten. Moreover, how a community remembers its past is central to the formation of social and neighborhood identities. The “place” of memory is central to the way identity is constituted (Till, 2001). Identity is therefore formed by a “narrative of the past,” in which specific events are remembered and others forgotten. Communities thus focus upon and celebrate certain key historical moments in the history of a place. Focusing on the importance of these events can help uncover the social makeup of a particular place.

Memory helps to shape personal and community identity, propagating "communities of memory,” which create a shared identity and provides groups with a hopeful vision for the future (Linkon & Russo, 2002). In this sense, the reclamation of a positive community memory is the first step towards reconstructing a positive sense of place and therefore recovers neglected neighborhoods. However, community memory can obscure conflict and division (often based on racial and class differences). In the case of Youngstown, OH, this powerful community memory became apparent as the economy faltered, and conflict arose. This helps to explain the importance of the way a neighborhood envisions itself in the morphology of the urban arena.

The process of memory is fundamental to urban social formation, as how a community remembers its past has a bearing on its future. Place is actively tied to community memory, and the ways in which a community remembers its past is important to the social fabric of an urban area. Individuals participate in this process, and through participation maintain and remake identity. These concepts can ultimately help explain both how the past has created community identity in cities and how place ultimately reinforces neighborhood and community identities.

Political Economy and the Perpetuation of Neighborhood Identity

While the memory present within place helps to reinforce identity, the question of how place comes to be remains unanswered. Political-economic theories connect the morphology of a community with the economic processes of capitalism, conceptualizing culture as being mediated through both economic and
(especially) class relations, as a product of capitalism. This economic and class relationship of the “haves” and “have-notes” is reflected in the morphology of the urban landscape. Capitalism reproduces identity and territory socially, a process that is reflected in the landscape. Ultimately, this political economy perspective acknowledges that capitalist forces, including those of both the local and the global national, influence and construct the urban form and the identities therein.

Fundamental to the rise of critical Marxist interpretation in cultural geography is philosopher Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space*. In this work, Lefebvre calls for a theory of space, which he coined spatiality, which looks to unify the three conceptualizations of space outlined: physical space, mental space and social space. Such unification allows individuals to expose and decode space, thereby empowering them to help (potentially) overturn hegemony. Among Lefebvre’s most important ideas is that space is actively produced as a part of capitalist accumulation strategies, as a product of the economy. Central to Lefebvre’s argument is the ways in which individuals perceive space: as representations of space, representational space and spatial practices. Representations of space refers to the space constructed by individuals such as planners and geographers; namely by the academic and governmental sphere. It is a conceived space, and thus reflects dominant ideology, power and knowledge. Similar to humanist conceptions of place, representational space, by contrast, is the lived space of everyday experience; it is felt more than thought. "Spatial practices" are those practices that hide space from individuals, but also connect spaces of representation and representational space.

Lefebvre’s understanding of spatial relationships significantly changed the way many cultural geographers envisioned the ways in which landscape is created and how it influences identity. As opposed to an inventory of cultural iconography in space, Marxist-inspired geographers emphasize the power relations that help to form spatial formations, envisioning landscape as a historically and culturally specific form of representing the land, a "way of seeing." The ideological aspects of landscape help support and normalize class relations; an ideological veil over the real material environment (Lefebvre, 1991).

Don Mitchell, a significant contributor to geographic conceptualizations of landscape production, argues that landscape is a process in which the political economy is reproduced (Mitchell 1996). Mitchell shows that the landscape is important for not only what is visible, but also what is missing and made invisible. The workers, whose blood, sweat, and backs made the landscape, he theorizes, are often eliminated from
narrative of the landscape (Mitchell 1996). Moreover, every landscape is a social construction built on human labor. Mitchell argues that social forces are rooted in capitalism, in doing so shunning a notion of culture used by traditional cultural geographers. Culture is additionally a social construction, existing within larger economic and social forces. Envisioning culture as a "superorganic" entity dispels notions that it is a social construct, thereby "wrongly reifying it" (Mitchell 1995, p. 102). By focusing on what is represented in the land, cultural geographers ignore the economic and social processes that went into its construction. Geographers, then, must broaden their focus and note the importance of the "geography of labor," which is situated in landscape analysis. Focusing on what is portrayed within place can illuminate not only how it is constructed by economic activities, but also reveal how images of labor are a powerful form of social memory.

Fundamental to Marxist perspectives of landscape production is how processes of labor create the landscape and how “place” is ultimately and necessarily tied to economic factors. Additionally, as Don Mitchell argues, we must broaden the area of study in order to analyze how the landscape both reveals and hides labor’s role in place construction. This underlines the importance of hand-on, in depth analysis of the specific icons that display cultural values of a neighborhood. Political-economy perspectives do not concentrate on one’s experience within place, but rather how landscape is ultimately a product of human labor and the economy. By using these perspectives, we can outline a framework to assess how hegemonic forces and capitalism is reflected in the symbology of the landscape and its role in the construction and reconstruction of the neighborhood identities.

The theories outlined above allow one to understand how and why neighborhood identities exist, their formation, and their persistence through time. Initially, humanist geographers stressed the importance of one’s place in identity formation, but did not look closely at the many factors that influence how the identity of a place is formed. Those that followed used the concepts framed by humanists, but ultimately expanded upon them by focusing on the contested nature of place, hegemonic forces, the nature of work, and, ultimately, the role of the economy in place making. By stressing the importance of the economy in place-construction, we can better understand how and why neighborhood identities were formed in the city, as well as their persistence and reinforcement.

While these perspectives provide a framework to understand neighborhood identity and social change in the context of the city, there are few studies that distinctly
connect economic processes with the reproduction of collective identities. This thesis bridges this gap by connecting humanist and Marxist conceptions, allowing us to see not only the ways in which place is actively produced by the economy, but also how this is reflected in the landscape and reinforced by a community’s social memory. This connection will make clear how a neighborhood’s economic and social identity is intricately connected to economic activities and how, through social memory, it is reinforced in the landscape. In the following chapter, I expand on how the nature of economy has great bearing on the construction of place, creating distinctive neighborhoods and forming the collective identities formed within.
Chapter 3: The Historical Geographical Components of Place: Industrial and Neighborhood Development in 19th Century Duluth

In this chapter, I provide a historical examination of the industrial and political activities that have contributed to form both a collective social memory and place-based neighborhood identities in Duluth. This chapter directly addresses my principal research question, in that I investigate the historical geographical factors that contribute to place and identity construction. Additionally, in what follows, I unpack specifically how the economy has contributed to the construction of place and neighborhood identities in the city. By examining archival information, historical documents, and newspaper articles, I provide background to the role of the city within global economic processes, and how this has helped to create the social and material landscape of the city. In exploring the history of the city and its relationship to economic processes of the late 19th century, I illustrate how these contributed to neighborhoods with strong collective identities.

Duluth’s geographical location and its status as a major national port in 19th century America has ultimately guided its economic development. The natural geography of the city has linked to the development of an industrial economy. Geographic and economic forces have combined to vitally contribute to both historical and present-day neighborhood identities in the city. In providing a historical examination of the city and its growth during the crucial period of the late 19th century, I argue that the industrial activities fundamentally influenced the urban morphology and neighborhood identities of Duluth. The growth of industry, coupled with Duluth's geographic location, led to the development of townsites, an influx of immigrants to certain neighborhoods, and a strong sense of neighborhood rivalry between East and West Duluth. As these towns were later annexed by the city of Duluth, they remained identity-distinctive neighborhoods and retained their sense of civic antagonism. The powerful effects of social memory perpetuated class-based and neighborhood identities.
between East and West Duluth, which remained despite changes in global and local economic patterns. This chapter provides a history of the industrial rise of Duluth, which provides background to how distinctive neighborhood identities were formed in the two segments of the city.

There’s little doubt that Duluth’s unique geography influenced not only its industrial rise, but also the very morphology of the area. A large hill steeply rises away from Lake Superior, creating a valley that extends parallel to the lake. The townsites (which later became the neighborhoods) formed in a uniquely linear fashion, stretching out in a parallel fashion to the lake. As the industrial economy developed in the 19th century, the geography of the area influenced the type of settlement patterns that were to come. As a city historian explains:

Duluth was fated by geography to become a long and narrow city, clinging to the hillsides and divided by the point of rocks. The western areas offered more flat acres for building large industrial complexes, while the eastern lakeside areas outside the harbor proved well suited to residential development. Geography and distance separated west from east and led to very different kinds of communities and to a strong sense of rivalry and occasional disdain that often outstripped the expected competition with the city of Superior across the bay (Eubank, 1991, p. 55).

Duluth, heavily dependent on the demand and shipment of resources, has been marred by a constant cycle of economic boom and bust, a theme which persists to the present day. As city historian Jerrold Peterson explains, “Duluth’s industrial and economic development has been a continual replaying of this essential theme: Birth of a New Industry, Growth of that Industry, Decay and Finally Death of the Industry” (Peterson, 1979, p. 30). This has had a cumulative effect on the collective identity of the city, particularly in the western neighborhoods, as this area in was more keenly affected by recessions than the East. Duluth’s economic reliance on both its natural resources and unstable industries is seen in a pattern of dramatic population shifts, as immigrants and migrant workers were drawn to the city during cycles of industrial prosperity. By contrast, as local economics took a downturn, unemployment skyrocketed and the town lost large numbers of residents. Consistent success was never fully attained, and by the end of the 20th century the city focused more heavily on service and tourist-based sectors of the economy.
Despite Duluth’s relatively recent shift away from heavy industry, distinctive and pervasive traditional neighborhood identities remain. The neighborhoods present in the city today grew from a number of original town sites planned in the city, each having a distinctive role in the industrial economy. As the city aggressively annexed the land, areas which were traditionally competitive and culturally distinctive were folded into the same government. During periods of economic stagnation, the city government was forced to make cutbacks to city-provided services. However, the cutbacks were perceived by residents of the western neighborhoods to happen disproportionately in those areas, while the more wealthy eastern regions remained unaffected. This theme was evident early in the city’s history, and remains a strong source of neighborhood identity today.

The Rise of an Industry, the Rise of a City.

The natural resources of the northeastern Minnesota area, combined with the geographic position of Duluth, placed the city at the forefront for the growing industrial economy of the United States in the 19th century. Duluth’s location as the western-most outpost of the Great Lakes has naturally predicted its economic fate, as the city is strategically located near the valuable natural resources of iron ore and lumber. The development of lumber, railroads and mining industries in the 1870’s destroyed the self-sufficient economy of the old, replacing it with an economy based on the transshipment of primary materials. 19th Century Duluth, while technically more advanced than its Indian trade post predecessor, was essentially entirely resource-based and highly dependent on the surrounding natural resources. It is at this time that the seeds of an industrial town are planted and the inevitable rise of the “New Chicago” began.

The first wave of industrial development in the area occurred in 1869, as financier Jay Cooke chose the city of Duluth as the terminus of Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad. Tracks reached Duluth the following year, and the population spiked from a few hundred to over 3,000 (City of Duluth Department of Research and Planning, 1975). With the decision by Cooke, Duluth’s “old self-sufficient economy...was actually destroyed by the bold, brash and destructive power of three new industries: lumber, railroads and mining” (Peterson, 1979, p. 30). Yet at the heart of the industrial rise were the railroads, which provided the necessary infrastructure for industry to develop, and connected Duluth to a number of other industrial cities. Soon,
Duluth became the crossroads of both a major water transshipment industry and a railroad hub.

While the lumber and mining activities fueled the economic rise of Duluth, the railroads provided the means for several other industries in the area to expand (Peterson, 1979). By serving as a hub on the major pipeline to other Midwestern cities, Duluth expanded its role from a port town to a major crossroads where rail and ship met. With the continuing expansion of the economy, an influx of jobs was required to fuel the burgeoning industries. This began a swelling of the population, as “construction workers, businessmen, and lumbermen” flocked the area (Eubank, 1991, p. 17). Immigrants choose their neighborhoods by the nature of their jobs, with laborers settling in the Western townsites and the wealthy in the East.

The industrial and population expansion of the city during the middle to late 19th century was tremendous, as citizens feverishly fueled the city that was firmly believed by residents and financiers to be the next great inland port. As one city official noted, “there is no early reason why the same effort that has built up Chicago should not create a vast city here...” (Duluth’s) inner bay has a great advantage over Chicago in harborage” (Neublen, 1871). A resident of this time, describing the attitude of the public, noted that “no city in the country has such brilliant prospects...nothing connected with the city has ever been delayed an hour for lack of funds. Capitalists controlling more of money and influence that any other body of men, are fully determined to make Duluth what nature intended it to be – a giant city” (Eubank, 1991, p. 19). This attitude was consistent of the thought of capitalists of the time, as articulated by an advertising brochure published during the time:

Nature intended Duluth to be a great city. Situated on the highway of trade, at the head of the lakes, the terminus of 1600 miles of navigation westward, and also the terminus of 1700 miles of overland travel eastward – almost midway between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans – Duluth is the only gateway of commerce of the Northwest, embracing a productive region of nearly 2,000,000 square miles. Its claim to greatness is based upon the fact that it is a commercial center, nearer the entire wholesale markets of the world that any other lake port-nearer to the trade of the Northwest, the Pacific coast, China, Japan, India, England, France; drawing from it with one arm the products of the far West, and extending another to Continental Europe and our Eastern cities for their emigration, free manufactures and commodities to meet civilization’s demands (Cooley, 1925, p. 15).
However, just as the city was seemingly realizing its potential, a financial panic nearly destroyed it. Prominent local capitalist Jay Cooke, whose capital input was helping to keep Duluth from financial ruin, was unable to sell bonds and meet payments for his railroad and, by 1873, was forced to close his properties. With the loss of the railroads, the city’s economy was heavily hit. This caused a deep recession and within months of his financial collapse greater than half of the area’s businesses were forced to close. The population dwindled from over 5,000 to 1,300 (Northwestern Industrial Souvenir 1887, p. 4). The Duluth townsites were nearly destroyed by this dramatic setback, and “Jay Cooke’s designs for Duluth had to be forgotten” (Bradley, 1976, p. 244).

Adding to the woe of the financial setbacks, 1873 marked a particularly harsh winter, with ice that remained on Lake Superior until July, further stagnating economic activities and making supplies extremely scarce. The two combined to devastate the remaining residents of the city, and mass poverty and hunger followed. The politicians of the city were forced to make drastic changes, and claim village status for Duluth in order to gain settlement on the debt: “The last act of the city council was to declare a default on $51,000 worth of bonds...Duluth did not incorporate as a city again until 1887” (Bradley, 1976, p. 244).

As the city suffered from economic depression, areas of Minnesota to the west received a heavy influx of migrants eager to cultivate the land for the growth of staple crops. This, along with slow but sustained railroad development and ever-increasing lumbering, helped prevent the city from collapsing completely. The dream of a great inland port seemed as far away as ever, but in the coming decades the city of Duluth broke out of its malaise, and continued to develop its industrial sectors. And, as industry continued to expand, so too did the sense of community identity in the townsites.

The Towns that Became Duluth

The city of Duluth began as a collection of small Indian outposts at the head of Lake Superior, with few non-Indians living in the area before 1855, the year in which the Sault Ste. Marie Canal opened in eastern Lake Superior (City of Duluth Department of Research and Planning, 1975). Although fur traders and explorers had visited the area at previous times, Duluth had until this point been virtually untouched by European
and domestic migration. Settlement is considered to have officially begun in 1853, when George Stuntz, a surveyor under jurisdiction of the Surveyor General, began a trading post and established a cabin on a Lake Superior peninsula in Duluth (City of Duluth Department of Research and Planning, 1975). Due to previous surveys of the land, by 1855 interest had so thoroughly peaked that numerous migrants flocked to the area in the hope to achieve the economic success such material prevalence would seemingly dictate.

The present boundaries of the city of Duluth began not as one city, but rather as a series of townsites stretched upon the shore of Lake Superior. Importantly, as the city of Duluth expanded, it annexed these townsites, folding previously competitive towns, each with a great deal of civic pride, under one governing body. The 11 towns were platted within the present day city limits of Duluth during 1856-1859. According to city historian Matti Kaups:

the towns had certain geographical characteristics, and aspirations in common: each was situated on the waterfront so as to facilitate the building of docks and trans-shipment of freight from waterborne to land-based carriers; each expected to be the lake terminus of a great western railroad...each according to the publicity of the town promoters was the potential site of a future great city of the nation (Kaups, 1976, p. 71).

Place-Making in an Industrial Economy: Morgan Park

Morgan Park, one of the last townsites established and located on the western end of the city, provides a clear example of the role of industry and the economy creating place. Morgan Park is situated in a flat section of the city, slightly farther west than that of west Duluth. Financed, planned and constructed by U.S. Steel, settlement in Morgan Park was only available to employees. Shortly after its construction, Morgan Park was linked to the rest of Duluth by the streetcar line, effectively becoming a suburb of the city. To avoid redundancy, the planners of Morgan Park only built a few churches and one school (Alanen, 1976, p. 119). Morgan Park remained strictly a company town until the closure of the U.S. Steel plant, and continued to be closely aligned with the steel industry post-closure (Alanen, 1976, p. 124).

In 1907, the United States Steel Corporation (US Steel) announced its intention of completing a massive steel plant in the Duluth area. Additionally, US Steel declared that it will create a “planned company town,” expecting it to eventually contribute to a
city population of 500,000 in the Duluth metro area (Alanen, 1976, p. 111). The excitement was particularly strong within the West Duluth community, which would be located close in proximity to the plant:

Seeing that the great steel trust is about to establish a monster plant here, will induce other manufacturing concerns of other cities to seek location in Duluth, and if they come to Duluth they will locate in West Duluth as this is the logical manufacturing district of the city (Alanen, 1976, p. 111).

City and state government echoed these sentiments, and high hopes saturated the air, as once again Duluthians anticipated great economic and population growth:

The construction of the United States Steel Corporation’s large plant on the western edge of the city was a long awaited and much lobbied for event. Duluthians of the time hailed it as the ‘largest individual enterprise in Minnesota’ and were convinced it would put Duluth in the ranks with such steel manufacturing cities as Gary, Joliet, Youngstown, Pittsburg and Bethlehem....The U.S. Steel facility, which became operational in 1915, created an explosion in the populations of Gary and New Duluth, and the company built its own town, Morgan Park, to accommodate many of its managers and skilled laborers (Eubank, 1991, p. 32).

In an effort to attract and retain employees in an area with such harsh winters, US Steel planned the community to offer a higher quality housing conditions than other company towns built during the turn of the century. This included “systemetatic and orderly lines; correct principles of town planning....(that) have been provided in a most modern and satisfactory manner” (American Architect, 1918, p. 743). In fact, the U.S. Department of Labor declared it “an experiment both in physical and social planning” (Magnusson, 1918, p. 730). Citizens were required to work either at the US Steel plant or in direct support of it, and charged rent for their occupancy.

Soon after its construction, it was linked to West Duluth by a street car line. In an effort to deter employees to live in adjacent neighborhoods of West Duluth, the company created community centers to fulfill both social and commercial needs. Additionally, the company placed certain restrictions on personal conduct of individuals in the community, including a strict prohibition on alcoholic beverages.
According to Alanen, “during its tenure as a company town, Morgan Park embodied the philosophy of a paternalistic but benevolent employer that supplied everything from jobs, housing, and services to moral directives” (Alanen, 1976, p. 122).

As the 20th century progressed, steel production, both nationally and at the U.S. Steel plant in Morgan Park, took a dramatic downturn. Through a series of consolidations, the plant began the process of shutting down. Part of this process included disposing the property it owned in Morgan Park. By 1938, the company offered to sell the houses to current residents at a discounted rate; however, by 1941, only 2 families had purchased their homes (Alanen, 1976, p. 122). US Steel was forced to turn over the properties to a real estate firm, and by 1942, the company no longer owned any of the properties in town. This marked the first time citizens who were not steel workers could reside within the town limits. While this significantly altered the face of the community, its ties to the steel industry still shaped Morgan Park:

Once it became possible, during 1942, for non-U.S. Steel employees to purchase residential property in Morgan Park, the direct and complete relationship between home and steel hearth lessened. Nonetheless, the majority of residents who lived in Morgan Park during the post-company town era were still affiliated with steel plant operations. As such, the community continued to be tied closely to the fate of America’s steel industry; and any steel-related issue, whether involving labor contract negotiations, changes in production technology, or foreign steel imports, was followed closely by local residents. The magnitude of these issues, however, was dwarfed by U.S. Steel’s decision to terminate its operations at Morgan Park. While it might have been expected that such an action would deal a deathly blow to Morgan Park, the community has displayed remarkable adaptability and resiliency in the face of adversity. It is such community spirit, when coupled with the qualities of the residential environment, which should ensure Morgan Park’s continued existence as a vital and viable force within the Duluth area (Alanen, 1976, p. 124).

Morgan Park serves as an example of how, in this case, the steel industry actively contributes to place-making. More broadly, Morgan Park serves as a clear illustration of how the economy directly makes place, and therefore the collective identities formed within. US Steel was directly involved in all aspects of the planning and construction of the town, and was able to dictate who had the right to live in Morgan Park. Thus, with Morgan Park we see hegemonic powers actively creating and regulating place. In order
to live in Morgan Park residents had to fulfill specific work requirements, utilize certain civil organizations, and adhere to personal conduct standards. The plant’s closing shattered the economy for the neighborhood, but the community’s spirit remained. The example of Morgan Park thus illustrates the rigidity of neighborhood identity in the face of changing economic circumstances.

**Immigration and the Rise of Neighborhood Identity in Duluth**

The construction of the railroads and the increased exploitation of Duluth’s natural resources attracted a great number of both domestic and international migrant workers to the townsites. By the 1890s, vast numbers of workers flooded into the city, with particular nationalities clustering in pockets of the city. The economic and industrial activities of the cities had already given rise to pockets of workers in the western areas and wealthy capitalists in the eastern sections. Additionally, in the 1890s a wave of immigration from European nations significantly contributed to the formation of distinctive neighborhood identities, as neighborhoods began to have a significant ethnic makeup. While neighborhood identity continued to evolve throughout time, this era contributed significantly to the neighborhood identities present in the city to this day.

As the immigrants that flowed into the city settled by national origin, they in the process created identity-distinctive neighborhood pockets with unique characteristics and strong civic pride. Even as these areas were eventually incorporated into the city of Duluth, they retained their unique identities and civic rituals, with residents often interacting exclusively with those in their neighborhood. As the city of Duluth grew and civic resources became more scarce, neighborhoods began to develop antagonism for one another as they competed for the city’s monetary resources. The city identifies 29 distinctive neighborhoods, with 11 have been originally plotted in its inception. The vast number of distinctive neighborhoods has resulted in both “good-natured rivalries” and “misconceptions about people who live on the other end of town” (Frederick, 1994, p. 50).

This first wave of immigration occurred in the 1860s and 1870s, and came mainly from western European countries, thus characterized as “old immigration” (Bradley, 1976, p. 74). Many of these immigrants came from Scandinavian countries, and settled in pockets across the area. Duluth at this time was affectionately known as “Little Scandinavia” (Frederick, 1994, p. 54). However, with the surge of population by the 1890s, “new immigrants” from southern and eastern Europe flooded Duluth, forming distinctive pockets throughout the city. The pockets “have given residents another
identity and a definite source of pride,” (Frederick, p. 50) as the neighborhoods often created distinctive rituals and festivals, which will be explored later in chapter 5. In addition, neighbors were often united in common language, tradition, and religion, frequently interacting almost exclusively with one-another and attending the same civic events. In doing so, the immigrants created neighborhoods that reflected their common values and differed greatly with those in other segments of the city. West Duluth, whose population in particular grew quickly during the 1880s, drew a large number of immigrants from Eastern European countries, as well as Poles and Italians.

By the 1890s, the second wave of immigration characterized by French speaking people from Canada, as well as immigrants of Scottish, Irish, German, Italian, Polish and Slavic heritages began to flood into the areas of Duluth. The different groups settled together, often around churches. At this time, the “Finns and Jews filled nearly every home near the ship canal...Germans settled in the East and Central Hillsides, sharing their neighborhoods with the Poles...Italians built homes around their church on 10th avenue West...and French immigrants...lived in the west” (Frederick, Duluth : the city and the people, pp. 54-55). These ethnic patterns are visible in the city to this day, often reflected by functions operated and attended by those within specific townsites and neighborhoods.

**Sustained Growth and Annexation: Duluth at the End of the 19th Century.**

By 1880, the townsites of Duluth, having already experienced two major periods of growth and stagnation, was ready to break out of its depression and fulfill its promise of becoming the “next great inland port.” Fueled both by industrial activities and the heavy European immigration that proceeded, Duluth began to make use of its natural resources and strategic location in a growing national industrial economy. Two resources in particular were critical for the precipitous growth at this time: iron ore and lumber. These, coupled with an increase in railroad activity both regionally and nationally, combined to help surge Duluth into a regionally and nationally important port and industrial hub. As the new residents flocked to the area, they settled in particular townsites and neighborhoods. Many new areas were formed and began to form their distinctive ethnic and social characteristics. Of key importance at was the formation of the village of West Duluth, which was at the heart of the lumber industry. The late 19th century was thus a pivotal time in the development of the urban patterns and collective identities seen in the city today.
Local capitalists had long known of the Iron Ore resources in the Minnesota Arrowhead region, but it was not until the 1880s that they actually made use of this increasingly precious mineral. Serious mining of Iron Ore began in 1884, spurning the construction of blast furnaces and ore docks in the west Duluth area. The industrial rise provided Duluth with vast economic and population growth, as “the 1880s and 1890s brought Duluth the great growth it had ever experienced...from a population of about 2,200 in 1878, Duluth grew to an estimated 30,000 a mere decade later (Eubank, 1991, p. 21). Growth was even more rampant in the following years, as in the 1890s the city again nearly doubled in population. It seemed as though Duluth was finally fulfilling its inevitable industrial rise, as “by the turn of the twentieth century Duluth was fulfilling the optimistic dreams of its founders and financiers. The city’s population had grown to 53,000, and the Duluth-Superior harbor rivaled the cities at the Ruhr-Rhine confluence in Germany as one of the largest freshwater ports in the world” (Eubank, 1991, p. 21).

By 1893, with continued financing and development, over 500,000 tons of Ore had been shipped from the city of Duluth (Eubank, 1991, p. 21). While most of the profit for the city was from the shipment of iron ore to the eastern cities of Pittsburg, Cleveland and Detroit, there lingered the hope that Duluth itself would one day become the steel manufacturing center. This provides a clear example of the optimism that residents felt during this time, as the steel industry provided the fuel for mass population growth and a hurried settlement pattern.

At the end of the 19th century the Duluth townsites had expanded their industrial activities to the lumber industry. Soon, the area came into prominence as a major center for the processing and shipment of lumber, and professional lumbermen flowed into the city (Ryan, 1976, p. 167). Mills were constructed across the harbor, centering on the newly formed village of West Duluth. Consequently, the lumber industry exploded, and West Duluth boasted 15 times the production in 1890 than it did in the 1880s (Ryan, 1976, p. 168) as well as a rapidly expanding population. West Duluth became the capital of the Minnesota lumber industry, and clearly marketed and boasted of its position within the industry, claiming that ‘West Duluth will, in time, cause Minneapolis and Chicago to recognize her strength as a rival manufacturing center’ (Morrison, 1916, p. 6).

The surge in the lumber industry jerked the Village of West Duluth into the most visible and successful town site. With confidence high, residents pledged their loyalty to the town, and the seeds of an economic and civic rivalry with their eastern neighbors
were planted. So adamant were the civic leaders to exert their independence from the city of Duluth that, on April 17th 1889, they passed a resolution against annexing any of the land in the Village of West Duluth to the city of Duluth (Morrison, 1916). The neighboring townsites of Oneota and Bay View Heights requested and were granted annexation to West Duluth in the following few years.

West Duluth’s reliance on lumber, while initially propelling its economic success, proved to also propel its economic demise, as an 1893 panic devastated the lumber industry. As explained by an industrial publication at the time, “The grip of a terrible panic of 1893 was beginning to be sorely felt...(m)any men willing to work had no work” (Morrison, 1916, p. 10). For West Duluthians, this was an early example of the area’s misfortune at the hands of economic decline, a theme that echoes for residents of the area to this day.

**Annexation and the Reluctant Formation of a City**

In spite of massive growth in the 1890s, the Village of West Duluth began to be threatened by competing interests, forcing a series of mergers and annexations into the city of Duluth. Even in this time of uncertainty the townsites were hardly willing participants in the union of the city, but were forced to merge out of economic and civic survival. 1890s newspapers proclaimed that “United We Stand, Divided We Fall (Cronk, 1945). Indeed, as former city attorney of Duluth J.B. Richards assessed, the towns at this time were “jealous of its neighbors...(e)ach (townsite) thought itself as the most important settlement and believed that the others were encroaching on its preserves...(w)henever anything went wrong, each thought the others were capitalizing on its misfortunes” (quoted in Cronk, 1945).

In spite of this civic rivalry, however, the West Duluth and other townsites resigned and were forced to merge, with the barren hope that the area would eventually become the next great American industrial center. A quote from *The Duluth New Tribune* perhaps best sums up the fine line between autonomy and economic survival that the townsites often wrestled with during the 1890s:

> Out of the ill-will, the jealousy, and the empty treasuries, however, came the realization that union was inevitable and essential if Duluth was to realize its obvious possibilities and become one of the world’s greatest ports (Cronk, 1945).
Chief among the mergers of the 1890s was the incorporation of the Village of West Duluth into the city of Duluth, advertised at the time as a “merging of two equals” (Duluth Budgeteer News, 1894). Prior to 1893, West Duluth was experiencing not only major population growth, but also an extremely robust economic boom and was characterized as the “Pittsburg of the Northwest” (Morrison, 1916, p. 1). However, a panic and major depression resulted in great losses, and the village was forced to merge with the city Duluth, not without reluctance. The newspapers of this time advertised the merger as a “marriage of great communities, one with the industrial resources, the other with financial wisdom and enthusiasm” (Duluth Budgeteer News, 1894). Citizens were convinced that the newly-united Duluth was soon to be a “leading commercial center, possibly rivaling Chicago” (Weibes, 1994). Perhaps summing up best the excitement of the union was the final speaker of the day, Dr. C.C. Salter, who declared of the union “Whom God in his kind providence has joined together, let no man put asunder” (Weibes, 1994).

With the ceremony of 1894, West Duluth lost its independent government, “but not its neighborhood identity” (Weibes, 1994). West Duluth continued to be advertised and operated as a distinctive community, shunning its position within the city framework of Duluth. Indeed, even after the merging in 1894, the now-neighborhood continued to be a “self-sufficient community, retaining its autonomy while expanding its industrial and manufacturing areas” (Maas, 1998, p. 17). West Duluth was thus only a reluctant partner in the formation of the city of Duluth, merging only out of necessity and continuing to function independently. In spite of this reluctance, prosperity came to the neighborhood of west Duluth and the city of Duluth, as:

The next 10 years after the union were to see Duluth grow into maturity as the greatest inland port in the world. The old divisions slipped from the dignity of separate towns to the mere familiarity of neighborhoods. In the 10 years from 1893 to 1903 Duluth became what the several towns could never have become – a metropolitan city (Cronk, 1945).

The city of Duluth continued its growth through the early 20th century, continuing to gain economic momentum and substantial population growth. Just like the times which came before, the “boom” was followed by a “bust.” As opposed to the busts of the 20th century, however, the economic difficulties the Duluth confronted in the 20th century were irreversible, a product of a macroeconomic, global change. The
decline of industry in the city is familiar to many across the rustbelt of the United States, a part of the economic restructuring of deindustrialization.

In the process of migration and settlement, the neighborhoods of Duluth became distinctive in their ethnic patterns and way of life, developing key neighborhood rituals in which these traditional identities are expressed. Indeed, as time passed and the economic reality of Duluth changed, neighborhood identities remained strong, often “anchored by schools or churches” (Frederick, 1994, p. 55). The latter portions of the 19th century, I argue, are fundamentally important to the construction of place-based collective identities in the city of Duluth. It is at this time where we clearly see how the economy plays a central role in not only place-making, but on the nature of the collective neighborhood identities that formed in the city. Additionally, many aspects of modern articulations of the neighborhood identities in Duluth have their roots in the economic activities that occurred at this time. The neighborhood identities constructed in 19th century Duluth are class-based and antagonistic, two key characteristics that have continued to remain visible in the interactions and expressions of individuals in the proceeding decades. The remainder of this thesis will outline the ways in which the distinctive neighborhoods of Duluth have articulated their identity, as well as how these identities were defined and reinforced through the history of the city.
Chapter 4: The Interstate Debate: An Uneven Destruction of Place

While the fundamental characteristics of collective neighborhood identities were established in the late 19th century, many of their qualities continued to be displayed throughout the 20th century. In this chapter, I explore a key urban controversy in the history of the city that both reinforce and reflect the collective neighborhood identities established during the late 19th century, the development of an Interstate 35 in Duluth. The construction of Interstate I-35 and its eventual extension into Duluth provides a clear display of civil antagonism and the reinforcement of traditional neighborhood identities. For the residents of West Duluth, who long felt that their areas were underserviced and neglected by city leaders as compared to the more fashionable Eastern neighborhoods, this project ignited their passion and united their effort. I-35’s development in Duluth exemplifies how place is unevenly destroyed, and how communities with greater economic and political influence are persevered while the landscapes of “the other” are not. In this example, the landscape of West Duluth is dramatically altered, while East Duluth community activists were able to negotiate to route the highway with little effect on their neighborhoods. In what follows, I provide evidence that shows that the development of I-35 illustrates an uneven destruction of place, which resulted in both reflecting neighborhood antagonism and further reinforcing traditional neighborhood identities.

Civic animosities and social injustices are articulated in key debates surrounding the development of Interstate 35, illustrating the display of neighborhood identities in the city. While the western portions of the city were systematically destroyed with little regard for the livelihood of the neighborhoods or its sense of place, eastern areas of the city were spared at great cost. While developers saw this project as a model for creative interstate design, I argue that this construction shows how power is concentrated with those with capital, and that West Duluth is destroyed due to its lack of political and economic capital. The Interstate 35 project serves as an example of how place is unevenly destroyed, with those lacking the aforementioned resources predominately affected.
Running north to south from Duluth to Laredo, Texas, Interstate 35 serves as a national transportation artery. The Minnesota Highway Department revealed plans for the West Duluth area of the project in 1958, yet it was not until 1992 that the project was completed. Interstate 35 stretches approximately 10 miles through the city of Duluth, and promptly terminates before entering the eastern neighborhoods. However, there is a clear change in the nature of the freeway as one leaves West Duluth and enters the downtown area. As a student of the University of Minnesota Duluth explains in a paper about the project, “I-35 brashly slices through the western neighborhoods, but gently tiptoes through (the) eastern” (Lindberg, 1998, p. 2). Plans called for the West Duluth portion of the interstate to be completed first, as this is the area where it would connect the city to the rest of the road. See figure 4-1 for a map depicting Interstate 35 in the Duluth area.
Figure 4-1 Map of Duluth, depicting I-35. The area near Raleigh Street is West Duluth, and the interstate abruptly ends as it nears the residential sections of East Duluth.
Duluth’s unique topography and linear neighborhood patterns made planning for the interstate project challenging (Flaherty, 1965). West Duluth, situated as the southern entrance to the city, is located on a steep embankment that eventually settles into a flat area which is home to many of the city’s factories. Interstate and civic planners argued that the freeway must be routed directly through the neighborhoods, as the location of the factories and their importance to the Duluth economy as a whole was a clear priority. In order to accomplish this, the massive road would need to be constructed on large pillars, and homes, businesses, and civic organizations in the way would have to be relocated. By the end of the construction of the interstate in West Duluth, hundreds of homes were razed and thousands of families relocated. To citizens of West Duluth, this was yet another reminder of how their community was regarded in relation to its wealthier counterpart. However, the destruction of place in West Duluth only reified neighborhood identity and civic antagonism.

Upon receiving news that Duluth would serve as the national terminus point for the Interstate, civic leaders hailed the freeway with feverish excitement (Duluth Herald, 1958). Then-mayor Eugene Lambert envisioned the road as not only as solution to downtown traffic, but also as a potential face-lift for the city (Krebs, 1991). The project, however, was seen solely in economic terms, with (initially) no thought given to how the road would affect residents currently residing in its path (Lindberg, 1998, p. 4). As it would turn out, economic implications continued to be the sole factor in determining the layout, at least for the western neighborhoods.

After the I-35 plan was revealed, the city called a public hearing for residents of a West Duluth neighborhood that was up for demolition. The plan, billed by civic leaders as an “economic boon” for the area due to the spike in jobs created for the demotion, went unopposed. Soon, a massive, elevated, pillar-style freeway entered the neighborhood, destroying 400 dwellings and displacing 280 families (Krebs, 1991).

The planners of the interstate system in Duluth, the American Society of Civil Engineers, were approached with questions on their conditions in constructing the interstate in Duluth. Speaking at a 1965 conference, a representative outlined some of the problems in constructing the interstate. Included in his comments was language that intrinsically, but not specifically, addressed the West Duluth neighborhoods: “It was desirable that the interstate be located where major industrial uses could be benefitted and strengthened... (and) be located to enhance potential industrial and
harbor front development opportunities” (Flaherty, 1965). This shows how city planners and interstate developers were concerned only with the economic impacts that the interstate could potentially bring the area, and saw little value to the residential sections of West Duluth. Even after razing and relocating hundreds of homes, the Society claimed one of their conditions for development was that the road be “located where the cohesiveness of residential neighborhood areas could be enhanced and not destroyed” (Flaherty, 1965). As it turns out, this happened only in the eastern end of the city.

The portion of the freeway located in West Duluth opened in 1971, and was met by residents of the area “without fanfare” (Krebs, 1991). In all, the seven miles of freeway in West Duluth amounted to over 950 homes and 400 businesses destroyed, in addition to even greater numbers of displaced families. What is clear, upon analyzing the impact social impact of West Duluth vis a vis the eastern area, is that the West Duluth neighborhoods were only seen for their potential to bring economic prosperity to the city as a whole, and the voices of the residents (marginal as they may have been) fell upon deaf ears. It’s apparent that both the Society of Engineers and the Duluth city council never saw the western neighborhoods as valuable for residential life, and instead destroyed these eyesore areas in the name of industrial development. While both the maintenance and destruction of the city is outlined in the development plan, it is only the western neighborhoods that were negatively impacted. Indeed, as the bulldozers moved towards the eastern end of the city, residents took to arms, exercised their political and economic power and ultimately preserved their place while strengthening neighborhood unity.

**Civic Action and Neighborhood Preservation: The Interstate Meets East Duluth**

With the western portion of the Interstate completed in 1971, all that was left in the development was a planned route into east Duluth. However, these next few miles proved to be wrought with controversy, taking 22 years to complete and eventually costing over 220 million dollars (Krebs, 1991). In comparison, the freeway in West Duluth was 37 million. Referred to by interstate officials as the “Cadillac Job” of interstate development (Morse, 1992, p. 6) the freeway proposal served as a catalyst for east Duluth neighborhood identity. However, while providing unity among eastern neighborhoods, it simultaneously proved to increase western neighborhood resentment and provide a springboard for civic antagonism.
Soon after the freeway was completed in West Duluth, a significant number of neighborhood coalitions began to form. These coalitions consisted of community organizers and residents who opposed freeway construction in East Duluth and attempted to halt any development that would destroy their neighborhoods. One such organization, Stop the Freeway, proved to be particularly successful in wielding civic power.

Stop the Freeway was formed in 1972 as an action group opposed having the freeway destroying Leif Erickson Park, located in the downtown area (Duluth News Tribune, 1992). The coalition relied upon civic involvement and political insiders in their mission prevent the interstate from entering East Duluth neighborhoods. By publishing newsletters and actively engaging with residents, the coalition was successful in uniting East Duluthians into action and politicizing the freeway construction (see June 1975 newsletter). Leaders of Stop the Freeway first attempted to make connections between the interstate planners and big business. Their efforts to vilify the steel industry and DM&IR, a railroad company, as well as emphasize the environmental impacts of freeway development (June 1975 newsletter) proved successful in increasing awareness of development and pointing out the shady relationship between city leaders and big business.

With their plans proving successful, the coalition later expanded their initiative by writing on the natural beauty of their area, and how this would be ruined by interstate development. Their efforts ignited a passionate debate among residents of Duluth, and easterners began to loudly voice their opposition to the freeway extension (Furst, 1992). This strengthened eastern neighborhood unity and drew attention to the actions of the freeway developers. However, by emphasizing the importance of their own neighborhoods, east Duluthians simultaneously deemphasized the aesthetic value and economic contributions of West Duluth.

Gambling that by making the freeway extension a city-wide issue would prove fruitful, the Stop the Freeway coalition attempted to gain support in West Duluth. A meeting at a West Duluth school in 1975 sparked a key debate that thrust the neighborhoods’ relationship into the spotlight. Initially advertised as an attempt to enlist western residents to participate in a proposed class-action lawsuit against SM&IR, the event closed with a question and answer session (Duluth News Tribune, 1975). A local West Duluth businessman, Dr. Joseph Balach, “chided (the coalition) for their absence in the era preceding the construction of the freeway through his community” (Duluth News Tribune, 1975). Sniped Balach, “(b)ut there must be something wrong
with it, it’s the first time West Duluth ever got anything first’ (Duluth News Tribune, 1975).

The event and subsequent debate not only displayed western resentment of East Duluth, but served to unify the community in opposition to Eastern efforts. Indeed, upon conclusion of the session, western residents proposed creating their own action group, remarking that the community “had seen nothing of eastern Duluthians when (their) community was trying to stop the creation (of the freeway)” (Duluth News Tribune, 1975). In attempting to unify the city for stronger political power, the leaders of Stop the Freeway served to springboard western residents in opposition of their effort. This event serves as a powerful reminder of the rigidity of neighborhood identity, and illustrates clearly the role of place in creating and recreating identity.

The lack of western support for the action group did little to unhinge the efforts of eastern residents to prevent the interstate from entering their neighborhood. Through their continued lobbying, activists were able to secure federal and state DOT funding for a number of studies that explored the “environmental, sociological, physical and economic impact of highway design through eastern Duluth” (Krebs, 1973). Facing public outrage, the mayor of Duluth formed a Citizens Advisory Committee, which represented a cross section of town residents who both supported and opposed the freeway. Through these efforts, the mayor was able to convince federal and state officials to put a hold on the project, scrap the initial design and start over from scratch (Bray, 2004, p. 239).

The efforts of Stop the Freeway and the mayor culminated with a revamped freeway plan that emphasized a low-profile design, with minimum impact on the lakeshore, park land and historic buildings. The design called for tunnels to avert the destruction of historical districts and parks, and both a creation of new and redevelopment of current recreational areas. Through the efforts of East Duluth activism, the highway stopped four miles short of its original terminus point (Furst, 1992). The 3.2 mile extension opened with great fanfare in 1992 – 35 years from beginning to end. At its opening ceremony, the freeway was lauded as the “citizens’ freeway” and earned the Federal Highway Administration’s best urban project of the country award for the year (Duluth News Tribune, 1992). The money paid for the extension into East Duluth amounted to 10 percent of the total cost of the entire 1,600 mile I-35 system.
While outwardly viewed by many as “a spectacular legacy to citizen involvement, community empowerment of the highest order and a magnificent showcase of what can happen when governments form true partnerships with their customers,” west Duluthians were not so jubilant. Said one resident when asked about the freeway extension: ‘I know this (the freeway) is not something that the East did to the West. But every time I drive through those beautiful tunnels and visit the Rose Garden, I grumble a little under my breath’ (quoted in Lindberg, 1998 p. 14).

**Interstate 35: More than a Road**

The 35 year debate over the interstate extension was a conflict about much more than the economic and civic impacts of the freeway. It provided a strong catalyst for the articulation and reaffirmation of neighborhood identity, further dividing the city along its east/west lines. This historical episode shows that, even many decades after the formation of the original townsites and the economic factors that created the place-based identities in the city, the original collective identities of the city had remained unified. The Interstate 35 debate illuminates how the articulation of neighborhood identity and display of civic discord were present long after the unification of the city, and the essential core of these collective identities had remained. Further, this key urban controversy reinforced these traditional identities, and the public display of antagonism brought the issue of social discord into the open.

The Interstate 35 event ultimately served to strengthen the feelings of antagonism and social injustice for West Duluthians. In an effort for community-wide unity in opposition to the freeway, East Duluthians further marginalized West Duluth residents, perpetuating and reifying this antagonist identity for west-enders. The construction of the interstate further illustrates how place is in unevenly destroyed, as West Duluth neighborhoods were shattered while East Duluth was able to garner the political support for massive capital. While many east-enders see the project as an example of the public having a voice in civic matters, for west Duluthians, it was yet another perceived social injustice.
Chapter 5: The Persistence of Neighborhood Antagonism and the Continued Perception of Social Injustice

The historical place-based collective identities I’ve outlined continued to play a role in civic affairs in the proceeding decades. Previously, I presented some of the factors that lead to the formation of these identities, highlighting an episode that both led to a further reification of neighborhood identity. In this chapter, I outline the social institutions that continue to perpetuate neighborhood antagonism between East and West Duluth, focusing on the social institutions that continued to reinforce neighborhood identities in the city. I continue by providing insight into the social factors that lead to the maintenance of these identities. Finally, I present information on how traditional neighborhood identities are articulated recently by residents of the city. Using the information collected in my semi-structured interviews and archival research, I argue that neighborhood identities in Duluth are primarily class-based, and that the sense of injustice felt by residents of West Duluth fuels antagonistic relationships in the city.

Neighborhood identity is reflected in the everyday experiences of residents of the city of Duluth. These daily experiences primarily consist of class-based antagonism, and is reinforced by the civic institutions such as schools, churches, and neighborhood businesses. There are some events that illuminate how identity and antagonism persists in modern times. In what follows, I show the importance of one civic institution, Denfeld High School, and how the debate around its proposed closure is a modern example of how residents are still clearly persuaded by their place-based identities.

The Social Institutions that Perpetuate Neighborhood Identity

The issue of civic fairness was once again placed at the forefront of public debate during the school closings during the late 1990s and early 2000s. This event led to a strong civil discourse, fueling debate between residents of the city. City planners fully expected Duluth to meet population projections of the middle of the 20th century. At this time,
Duluth was projected to reach 200,000 residents in the proceeding decades. Prior to the 1950s, the city had a tradition of 1 high school, located in the center of the city. In order to accommodate the expected rise in students, the city constructed 2 high schools – East Duluth High and Denfeld, located in the heart of West Duluth.

In the decades that followed, the city lost a large number of residents, and its population shrank instead of rising as anticipated. From 1950 to 2000, the city’s population declined from 106,884 to 86,918. As the city’s budget faltered in the late 1990s, officials looked to consolidate the under-utilized high schools. The first proposal called for Denfeld, located in West Duluth, to be shut down. Much like the interstate, the proposal to shut down Denfeld was met with outrage and cries of injustice from residents of West Duluth. Residents specifically addressed the perception of unfair destruction of West Duluth and referenced its similarity to the interstate debate. As one resident conveys:

When the freeway went through, no one in the western neighborhoods had any say in having their homes taken. It was just done. But when the freeway came to the east side of Duluth, no one’s home was taken; the freeway just ended. This is another slap in the face to the hard-working people of West Duluth (Duluth Energy Resource Center, 1986, p. 14).

The school closing proposal resulted in a strong display of West Duluth civic pride and neighborhood identity, serving as rallying point for the community. Residents began to question why, as had happened so often in the past, their neighborhood was targeted and East Duluth spared. As one resident expressed, 'The neighborhood where I grew up is gone. My elementary school is gone...This part of town has been asked to give enough. Why are we being asked to continue to pay such a large price for this city?' (Duluth News Tribune - Reader's Views, 2003). As one resident, expressing a common sentiment of the importance of Denfeld to the West Duluth community, explains: 'Denfeld is the heart of West Duluth...You take away our heart, the community will die. Its spirit will die' (Duluth News Tribune - Reader's Views, 2003).

West Duluthians viewed Denfeld as the heart of their community, and as a concrete manifestation of the neighborhood identity: 'You build a school (and) a community will develop around it. That's what happened here...You take away a school (and) a community will dissipate. That's what we don't want to have happen' (Duluth News Tribune - Readers Views, 2003). “Where will we get our identity and our pride,”
echoes a writer to the opinion section of the newspaper, concluding that West Duluth needs to preserve their “identity and respect in our future generations before it becomes lost forever” (Duluth News Tribune - Reader's Views, 2005). Summarizing the impact of Denfeld on the neighborhood, one resident expressed: 'I can't imagine West Duluth without Denfeld...(and) I don't want to have to" (Duluth News Tribune - Readers Views, 2003).

Figure 5-1: West Duluth residents rally to protest the proposed closure of Denfeld High School

The proposal sparked an angry debate in the city, and the editorial section of the newspaper was flooded with outrage from bitter residents of West Duluth. Some West Duluthians even suggested that the proposal to close Denfeld and send kids from both East and West Duluth to one centralized high school would result in violence. As one West Duluth resident explains in an editorial, “I don’t think the school board is thinking about how crazy it would be to try to fit East kids in among others. I’m sorry, but that’s just not going to work. More fights, violence, stealing, etc will just result from this (Duluth News Tribune - Reader's Views, 2005). He continues that the proposal is “just a
ploy so that it doesn’t seem like upper income versus lower income” concluding that “East kids always get their way no matter what.”

Duluth residents wrote into the newspaper, publicly vilifying the school board, city officials. As the baffled superintendent explains, ‘I’m not originally from Duluth, but we've lived here 24 years, and it's just a big east-west division all the time," said the St. Paul native…’the city is very divided, and nobody is going to be happy unless something equally is going to be done (Duluth News Tribune - Readers Views, 2003). (Frederick, 2003). The principal of Denfeld echoed the superintendent’s sentiments, stating that “I think, if anything, this...(proposal) has exacerbated the east vs. west thing," (Duluth News Tribune - Reader's Views, 2005). As one educator explained, “The city needs to look at the big picture...if Denfeld is closed, the school board would be creating an even more divided community” (Duluth News Tribune - Reader's Views, 2003). One resident, in referencing the neighborhood antagonism, keyed into a sentiment that is often referenced but infrequently directly addressed, chiming “if you want to get rid of (east-west) rivalry, you’ll have to get rid of capitalism first” (Duluth News Tribune - Reader's Views, 2003).

Unlike during the construction of Interstate 35, this time West Duluth was able to spark enough public outrage to save the high school from demolition. Activists sprung into action and attempted to obtain civic support from West Duluthians. As the Duluth News Tribune explains:

With a threat now to Denfeld, West Duluthians are again organizing. More than 260 neighbors attended a meeting on the issue last week. Hundreds signed petitions. Boxes with 200 "save our school" T-shirts sold out in just two hours during the neighborhood's Spirit Valley Days festival (Frederick, 2003).

This debate ultimately resulted in a victory for West Duluth. Through public outrage, community organization and political pressure, residents were able to keep Denfeld open. The proposal to close Denfeld galvanized residents of West Duluth, bringing to light a long history of perceived favoritism for East Duluth and articulating neighborhood identity for the area. In any other context, the proposal to close an outdated high school may not have prompted such bitterness between neighborhoods and civic rivalry. However, this event clearly shows how the wounds of the past are still fresh on the minds of many West Duluthians. We can see then how place continues to recreate neighborhood identity and civil antagonism.
The public school debate and the uproar stemming from Denfeld’s potential closure sheds light on the importance of schools as an instrument for neighborhood identity. It could be argued that the public school system is in fact the primary vehicle for neighborhood identity and unity, as explained by a columnist for the Duluth News Tribune:

You see, the people of western Duluth are united by a common conviction that somehow, maybe in the dark of night, the School Board is going to build a better school somewhere in the eastern part of town than the west gets. That’s a tie that binds (Duluth News Tribune, 2002).

Schools also serve to reinforce class-based neighborhood identities, re-creating the “haves” and the “have nots.” As one interview subject explains: “It’s the fact that they do get a better quality education (in east Duluth), the school has provided a better education to those kids, the average person is not aware of that, or doesn’t have that knowledge, but it’s fact” ("Jacob", 2005). While there remains a tendency for children to attain the same level of education as their parents, the fact that graduates from the high school in East Duluth more often attain advanced degrees can also be attributed to the curriculum. As often socioeconomic class is closely related to education attainment, it’s feasible to connect high school curriculum with the maintenance of neighborhood identities in Duluth.
West Duluth's Spirit Valley Days: A Forum for Neighborhood Identity

Festivals provide another example of social institutions that reinforce and celebrate place based community identities. Spirit Valley Days, located in West Duluth, is billed a “true neighborhood festival” occurring every summer in the heart of the business district of West Duluth. In addition to parades, vendors and crafts, the festival is most famous for its annual “Miss West Duluth” pageant. According to one interview subject, when asked what differentiates East and West identities, he stated that “West Duluthians have more pride in the city” ("Jacob", 2005). This event showcases this civic pride, and is geared almost exclusively to West Duluth residents. According to another interview subject,

They have the Spirit Valley Days, but that’s in West Duluth. And East Duluth people don’t go to it. I didn’t hear about it until my last year living in Superior. I heard about it, just because there was a parade. Otherwise I would have never heard about it when I lived in East Duluth. It wasn’t advertised as much ("Martin", 2005).

The “Save our Schools” t-shirts sold at Spirit Valley Days, as referenced earlier, illustrates the connection between these two social institutions. The t-shirts sold out in a mere two hours, clearly showing that the festival’s patrons were concerned with the school. As such, this event shows how the festival is both a celebration of West Duluth identity as well as a forum to serve the community’s interests. This argument was further reinforced by the data I collected during the time I spent as a participant observer at Spirit Valley Days. The fair-goers and participants clearly focused on West Duluth during the parade I attended, displaying signs for neighborhood businesses, organizations, and civic institutions. See Figures 5-1 through 5-4 for pictorial examples of how this festival is an integral part of West Duluth neighborhood identity.
Figure 5–2 Spirit Valley Days - "Miss West Duluth"
Figure 5-3: Example of local politician’s attempts to garner support of West Duluth voters.
Figure 5-4: Spirit Valley Days serves as a platform for West Duluth political initiatives.
Figure 5-5: Float advertising a community club for a West Duluth neighborhood.
Figure 5-6: Mural of steel plant in West Duluth bar. This establishment celebrates traditional industries of West Duluth with many similar murals.
Class-Based Neighborhood Identities

There is evidence to suggest, based upon both archival documents and my own interviews, that the identity of East and West Duluthians is currently articulated in terms of social class. This civic antagonism between east and west Duluth is additionally defined in terms of social class. This class-based collective identity construction has roots in the late 19th century, and has continued to remain an essential component of the culture of neighborhood in Duluth over the proceeding century. West Duluth is considered to be a “lower class” neighborhood, while the eastern neighborhoods are identified both traditionally and in modern times as “upper class.” The following passages from the semi-structured interviews I conducted illustrate how the neighborhoods are conceptualized in terms of social class:

The West Duluthians are more low-income, and that’s how the East Duluthians see it as. I worked a lot with people from West-Duluth…they were not as high on the food chain, basically. In east Duluth, you were the best. But in west Duluth, people don’t see it as being special. East Duluthians were special, West Duluth was not. West Duluth was gross, it was…not….not fancy. It isn’t fancy. East Duluth people have always been more proud of themselves and they don’t want, like in the history of the city, I don’t necessarily know why but it seems to me that in the history of Duluth, that west Duluth is more low income and they just weren’t accepted in the city. So I think it is East Duluth is too proud to be associated with West Duluth. At least in the history of it and it’s never really completely gone away ("Holly", 2005).

I think it (neighborhood antagonism) is mostly class based. You can look at the cost of housing related to where the different houses are. If you’re a low-income person you’re going to be targeted to certain areas. Homes are just not worth as much in the areas where the low-income people are and where the more crime is. It seems like the crime and the low-income go together, unfortunately. You know I don’t like to stereotype it, but it’s sort of a fact ("Sally", 2005).

…it seems like that it’s something that’s not even talked about a lot but people know it…they have this idea you know. Well, you know the east end of town sort of has the University, just in general and there are a lot of people who work in the university and there are people who associate that with more of a…a kind of a intellectual snobiness
or something like that and there’s more of a working class a...a.. feel to like the western (side of town) ("Luke", 2005).

Modern definitions of “social class” often include education, income and the nature of one’s occupation. My interview uncovered that this is a continued characterization of the neighborhoods of Duluth. Historically, the nature of work and the conception of West Duluth being the “blue collar” section of town and East Duluth the “white collar” were identified as key components of the collective identities of the city. While the language residents’ use to characterize the collectives of the city may have changed, the nature of work has continued to be a central component of neighborhood identity and antagonism. In the city of Duluth, the influence of place has re-created economic and social class identities for over a century.

The Continued Perception of Injustice

In Duluth there is both a historical and modern perception of economic and political injustice. This perception of injustice, whether it is reality or illusion, is a key component of West Duluth neighborhood identity. Both new and long term residents of the city, regardless of where they reside, are aware of this feeling and know how strongly it factors into community politics and social interaction. A city official, in addressing this perception of East Duluth favoritism, commented:

there’s the other perception that some of the representation whether it’s at city council level or legislature level would maybe be effected or influenced by people who can articulate their position, can articulate their argument, can articulate their needs and will they be better represented than people who cannot, or who need advocates to speak on their behalf and I think that’s where sometimes this perception comes in, that well these people, you know, should step up to the plate and...and say what they need, a...but who’s going to listen to whom? And I think that sometimes people have the sense that not everyone is listened to equally ("Carolyn", 2005).

The perception of injustice by residents of West Duluth has exacerbated many of the civic issues that have come along through the history of the city. Both the school closings and interstate debate clearly show how a sense of injustice has served as a "battle cry" to entice civic involvement. Without this mindset, the historical key events would not have spawned such expressions of resentment by West Duluthians towards their eastern neighbors. While these events reinforce this component of West Duluthian
identity, they also would likely not have spawned so clear of a civic discord had this perception of injustice not exist. Additionally, the perception of civic injustice is closely linked to the other central component of West Duluthian identity, that of social class. Residents have expressed how the perceived inequality that has historically taken place in the city is because West Duluth is home to blue-collar laborers and those without the political or economic savvy to stand up to city leaders. East Duluth, they argue, is favored by city leaders because it is seen by the hegemony as a "higher-class" community. We see, then, that Duluth illustrates how social class is reflected in the landscape of a city, and that "places of the other" are disenfranchised as compared to their wealthier counterparts.
Chapter 6: Conclusion – The Cycle Repeats – The Power of Place in Reinforcing Traditional Neighborhood Identities

The collective neighborhood identities of Duluth were initially created due to the unique geographic factors of the city, the nature of the economy and the settlement patterns that resulted from a precipitous rise in industrial activity in 19th century. Key urban controversies in the history of the city and social institutions have both reflected these collective identities and reinforced them through the proceeding century. The identities were constructed within and maintained by place. Originally, West Duluth was independent from Duluth, but due to stagnation in industry, it was forced to merge with the city in 1894. To this day, however, West Duluthians maintain a strong neighborhood identity that is both independent to and antagonistic towards East Duluth. This antagonism has been reinforced through events in the city’s history, in which West Duluth neighborhoods were destroyed while East Duluth spared. On such event, the Interstate 35 construction, clearly illustrates the uneven destruction of place, as East Duluth was preserved while West Duluth lost hundreds of houses, businesses, and civic institutions. The proposed closing of Denfeld High School in West Duluth rekindled the passions of West Duluth residents, serving as a springboard for civic debate on social injustice in the city. This debate not only shows how traditional identities remain in the city, but also illustrates the importance of schools and other civic institutions in reinforcing both class and neighborhood identities. Class is a primary factor in historical and modern injustice, as the wealthier Eastern section of town has the political and economic capability to preserve their neighborhoods.

West Duluth provides a real-life example of what geographer David Sibley refers to as a “landscape of the other” (Sibley, 1995). West Duluthians, who traditionally were linked with blue collar work activities, are socially constructed in civic discourse as lower class than their Eastern counterparts. This has led to a social construction of the landscape of West Duluth as a “place of the other.” The association of the landscape
with a lower class has given justification for civic leaders to disenfranchised and even destroy the neighborhoods in times of economic crisis, further marginalizing West Duluthians. By linking social class to landscape, hegemonic forces perpetuated social division and antagonism, thus increasing the oppression of residents of West Duluth.

The economic activities of Duluth have persistently influenced the settlement patterns of the city, which has led to a class-based social division. West Duluth, originally a center of industrial development in the area, was physically suited as a location for factories. Foreign and domestic immigrants, who were often lacking capital, were attracted to the laborer positions and settled near the factories. East Duluth, on the other hand, was seen as a more attractive residential neighborhood for higher-income and white collar residents of the city. The power of place and the social memory of neighborhoods have reproduced the association of class with neighborhood in the city, further strengthening collective identities in the areas and perpetuating civic antagonism.

The construction of Interstate 35 in Duluth is a key moment in the history of the city, illustrating how place may be unevenly preserved through the influence of class-based politics. Due in large part to outrage and public action by East Duluth residents, the interstate was delayed for decades and resulted in one of the most costly public transportation systems in United States history. The neighborhoods of East Duluth are spared through clever transportation planning and strong civic resentment, while West Duluth neighborhoods are ripped apart. This event reinforced neighborhood identity in the city, perpetuating a sense of injustice for West Duluth residents and unifying East Duluthians in civic action. It clearly shows how place can be preserved by those with the economic and political means to make it happen.

The proposed closure of Denfeld High School in West Duluth sparked a bitter debate which illustrates the perception of class-based injustice in the city. For residents of West Duluth, it was just “more of the same,” as their neighborhood was once again targeted by civic leaders. The surrounding controversy brings to light the importance of schools as a civic institution for articulating and reinforcing neighborhood and class-based identities. Spirit Valley Days in West Duluth similarly illustrates the role of civic institutions in perpetuating identity by both celebrating the neighborhood and providing a forum for residents to engage in civic discourse and form action committees. These civic institutions, coupled with the power of place, have worked to reproduce neighborhood identities in East and West Duluth that are class-based.
The city of Duluth provides a striking example of how landscape passes down collective identities from generation to generation, influencing social class and perceptions of injustice. While the circumstances I outlined are specific to Duluth, the power place exerts on influencing identity are universal. Duluth illuminates the role of the economy, specifically in this case an industrial economy, in creating collective identities. In turn, these collective identities are reproduced through key urban controversies and social institutions that are within place. The Duluth example lends credence to the theory that hegemony has a direct role in the uneven development (and destruction) of place, an idea that can be universally applied. And, of course, issues of social class discrimination and civic injustice are experienced in every city, directly affecting the lives of all people.

This thesis illustrates how collective identities are constructed within and maintained by place. It shows how our world is inherently spatial, a product of the unique social, economic and environmental factors that occur within place. The framework I use may be applied in a wide range of contexts, as “place” is defined by the very culture and cultural identities that are contained within; it is not bound to a specific scale. In this sense, we can apply the geographical concepts to any area in order to conceive the morphology of place and the forces that contributed to its creation. Duluth is but one example of the countless ways the geographic concept of place is directly linked to the everyday experiences of people.

Place itself is a product of environmental, social, political, and historical actions, and influenced by hegemonic powers. By examining the historical events that illuminate how place is developed, we can better understand the underlying culture which is reflected in place. In unpacking the hidden narratives of unique events in the history of place we not only outline the specific constitution of the culture, but potentially arm residents to begin to transgress the boundaries of hegemony and create more equitable social relationships. Clearly, the events I’ve outlined in this thesis show that the knowledge (or at least perception) of social injustice will spawn community unity and political activism. Uncovering these stories of “the other” may potentially inform people of place inequality and spur activities for greater equality within place, thereby enhancing the lives of residents of disenfranchised communities.
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