

Cypress Creek: In Search of its “Territorial Capital”

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1 ABSTRACT

This paper presents the internal structure of the Cypress Creek, South Florida, sub-metropolitan employment center. Results are presented for physical, economic, social, and organizational attributes. Specific attention is paid to the role of both airport influence and territorial capital. The major conclusion is that the core of the Cypress Creek employment center, itself the largest single concentration of non-government employment in the metropolitan region, suffers from lack of territorial capital.

2 INTRODUCTION

Cypress Creek is one of the major sub-metropolitan employment centers in the South Florida metropolitan region, as identified in previous work by Prosperi (2008). It is well known that contemporary metropolitan areas are spatially describable as a set of polycentric nodes and further that these nodes are specialized in terms of industrial structure and thus different from one another (Bogart, 2006). The South Florida metropolitan area consists of over 5.4 million permanent residents spread out over a linear development pattern of roughly 110 miles long and between 8 and 20 miles wide. It is also known as the prototype for what Lang (2003) has called the “edgeless city.” None of the core cities has a population of over 250,000.

As of 2005, the core of the Cypress Creek employment center – US postal zip code 33309 – had more non-government employees than any other zip code in the South Florida metropolitan region. From the highway, one views major office buildings carrying the names of global firms, such as Microsoft and Citrix, rising up as a major business center. There are major hotels, an executive airport, office parks, several large governmental agencies, and a seemingly endless supply of warehouses and wholesalers.

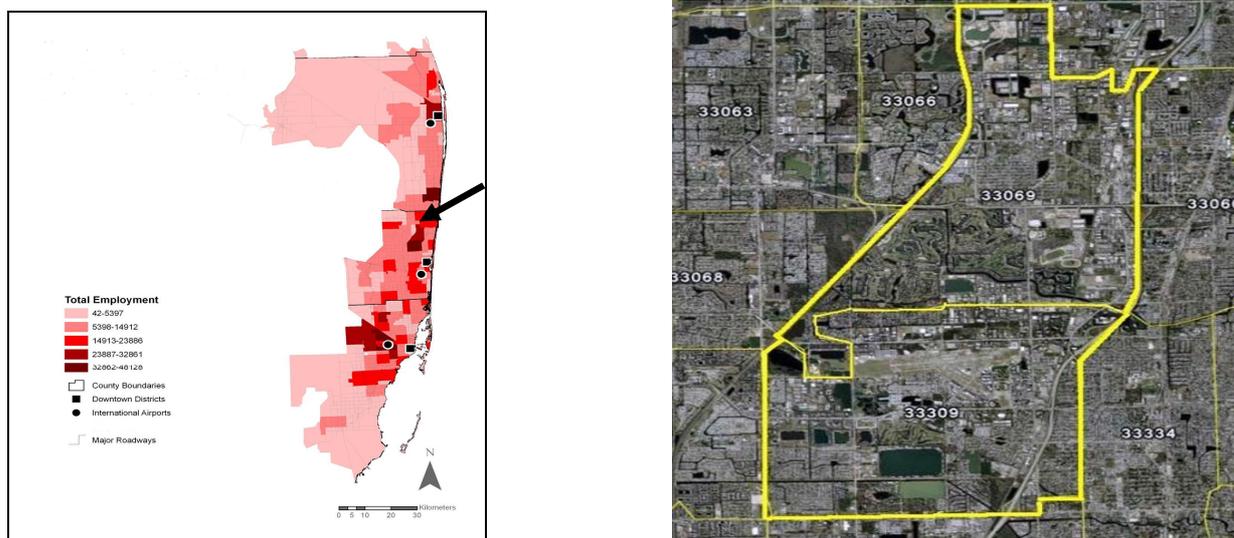


Fig. 1: Regional Context, Gross Area of Cypress Creek

While it is relatively easy to identify metropolitan sub-centers (say, based on employment patterns) from the view of the region, generally less is normally known about their internal dynamics and patterns. The focus of this paper is on identifying the internal physical, economic, social, and organizational structure of the Cypress Creek area.

The paper is structured as follows. The next section describes the research problem and details the methodologies used to formulate the description of the internal structure of the employment node. Then,

results are presented. The final part of the paper draws an overall conclusion and outlines possible next steps for both future academic research and perhaps for the continued development of the employment node.

3 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Problem

The research problem is to analyze the internal structure of the Cypress Creek sub-metropolitan center. The description is based on four attributes: physical, economic, social, and organizational. In essence, the problem is to “zoom in” on the Cypress Creek center in search of identifying its four attribute “DNA.”

3.2 Methodological Considerations

The study was accomplished in three phrases. First, a team of researchers from Florida Atlantic University developed research protocols for each of the four dimensions of endogenous description. Second, a team of researchers from Florida Atlantic University and the Technical University-Wien conducted a week-long study of the area, both “at the desk” and “in the field.” The final phase involved conceptual and analytical responses, culminating in written profiles.

The physical analysis relies initially on the operational definition of the Cypress Creek sub-metropolitan center, as formulated by Prosperi (2008). Then, captured digital views utilizing Google Earth and Microsoft Virtual Earth as well as analysis of simple maps and other written documents such as comprehensive plans were obtained. In the second phase, ground truthing by visual inspection and documentation refined impressions of internal physical structure.

The economic analysis relies on principles of economic base theory and location quotients. In 2005, there were an estimated 74,650 non-government employees working in this sub-employment center, which represents an increase of 3% over the 1999-2005 time period. Preparatory research based on US Department of Commerce NAICS categorization of industrial structure revealed that the Cypress Creek sub-metropolitan employment node had “comparative economic advantage” in construction, manufacturing, wholesale trade, information, and ‘administrative, support, and waste management’ industrial sectors, and was deficient in retail, health and social services, and accommodation and food services.

Moreover, there are distinct employment patterns across industrial categories between the two zip codes. As of 2005, zip code 33309, which contains the core, had more ‘administrative, support and waste management’ employment while Zip 33609, the periphery, had major employment in construction, manufacturing and wholesale trade. The complete set of proportions are shown in Chart 1.

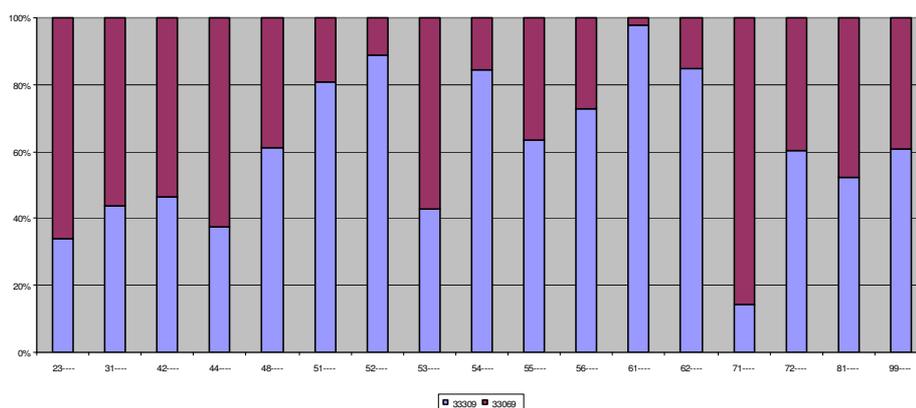


Chart 1: Relative Proportions of Employment in Industrial Sectors

The social analysis aimed at discovering the local distributions of simple socio-economic variables – such as income, race, and age – that contribute to the overall community development dialogue. In the preliminary analysis, these data are mapped using US Census variables and ArcGIS.

The organizational analysis focuses on the issue of territorial or social capital as formulated by Putnam (1993) generally, and by Van den Berg et al. (2001) and Hodtling and Tripple (2005) in regards to economic clusters (cf. Porter, 2002). Together, these constitute what is called “territorial capital” (Camagni, 2007,

2002). How territorial capital relates to sub-metropolitan nodes is the subject of a forthcoming paper by Giffinger and Prosperi (2008). The preparatory work revealed the following possible stakeholders: the City of Fort Lauderdale, the City of Pompano Beach, major land users such as the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, major employers, and various large firms and governments. We also observed, in this pre-discovery stage, that area was known as “Uptown Fort Lauderdale” but that brand and that committee of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce that developed it has disbanded.

4 RESULTS

Based on the “views” from the highway and from the NAICS data, the initial characterization of at least the core area was as a “high technology” center. The results from our field work are explained in detail below.

4.1 Physical Results

The Cypress Creek sub-metropolitan area, in terms of its original operational definition, consists of two US postal codes: 33309 and 33609. As expected, this is not a homogeneous area in terms of function or use, yet it turns out to be almost perfectly understandable in terms of economic and political considerations. There are two basic findings: *first*, it is probably appropriate to use a CORE/PERIPHERY conceptualization of the economic structure of the area; and *second*; that the periphery is organized as two distinct economic clusters separated by a sharp dividing line within this area that separates the City of Fort Lauderdale portion of the area from the City of Pompano Beach portion (and, coincidentally consistent with the US postal zip code boundaries). Based on the pre-analysis above, and ground truthing, it is useful to describe the Cypress Creek area as made of up of six sub-areas, defined as follows: the CORE; two southern peripheries – one focused on the Executive Airport and the other on a string of “edgeless city” office parks; two northern peripheries – one focused on warehousing and distribution and the other on various industrial parks associated with construction and manufacturing; and the “rest” of the area, see Figure 2. Underlaid is a well understood grid system of both east-west and north-south major arterials. Each is described more fully below.



Figure 2: Internal Structure of Cypress Creek Sub-Metropolitan Center

The CORE is focused on the intersection of I95 and Cypress Creek Road. As is quite common in urban areas, points of intersection between major highways and major arterials are often the location of major economic activity. Here is also a transit stop on the regional rail system; perhaps the only stop on the Tri-Rail system that works in terms of being near a major office cluster. The Cypress Creek CORE consists of fourteen major buildings creating an estimated total of over 4M sq ft of space. In and around the core, there are a number of hotels and other accommodation enterprises.

The Executive Airport area proper includes the airport (FXE), an industrial park, and City of Fort Lauderdale’s foreign trade zone (#241). The airport occupies 1200 acres overall, of which 900 is the airfield itself. The 200 acre industrial airpark has over 1.5M sq ft of office, warehouse and manufacturing space. Moreover, the industrial airpark is part of the City’s foreign trade zone.

South and west of the Executive Airport we find Lang's edgeless city. There is a series of either free standing office buildings (several associated with independent trade-oriented educational institutions) or office or industrial parks. In addition to these uses, there are also several major governmental buildings in this immediate area, one of the largest being a district office of the State of Florida's Department of Transportation.

To the north of the CORE, there are two distinct sub-areas. Stretched out along I95 and focused on the Andrews corridor are a series of very large wholesaling and distribution enterprises. A large portion of these firms are involved in the distribution of either food products and home construction related materials for the entire South Florida metropolitan region.

Further inland, we find a number of industrial parks as well as some residential and entertainment sites. The entertainment site is a former racetrack that now has gambling. Many of the residences in this region are associated with a large development called Palm Aire, one of the original age-restricted communities in the South Florida region.

The final development pattern is one of a routine grid system, with several major east-west roads that have interchanges with I95: (from north to south): Sample Road, Copans Road, Atlantic Boulevard, Cypress Creek Road, and Commercial Boulevard. Each has its own character. Four major north-south arterials also criss-cross the area (from east to west): Andrews Avenue, Powerline Avenue, Lyons Road/NW 31ST Avenue, and U.S. Highway 441/State Road 7. Few of the intersections are distinguishable sites. In fact, several of them have vacant gas stations and ordinary strip malls, which add to the sense of placelessness.

4.2 Economic Results

Van den Berg et al. (2001) emphasize the role of "large firms that act as economic engines." Focusing on those industrial sectors which are "competitive" in terms of location quotients, we found that, in the CORE (zip code 33309) that there was one very large (>1000 employees) software publisher and one large (>500 employees) cellular and wireless company; and in the 'administrative, support, and waste management' sector, two large temporary help agencies and an additional large security firm.

In the northern peripheral zones (zip code 33069), there is a large roofing contractor (construction sector) that does not appear to be a catalyst for a number of construction supply stores in the area, a large surgical appliances and supplies manufacturer, and warehouse 'club' and supercenter. Moreover, there are over a dozen wholesale and/or warehousing /transportation firms with over 100 employees. One, Associated Grocers, occupies a facility of over 800,000 square feet.

Finally, there is the Executive Airport. The airport is used mostly by executives using private jets (no commercial flights are allowed). Aside from the economic impact of the foreign trade zone, the airport area serves as a storage place for public service equipment. Airport authorities suggest that most of its revenues are obtained from land leases to agencies such as the Army Reserves, the Fort Lauderdale Police Department, and the Broward County Sheriff's Office, all of whom have hangers on the property.

Social Results

The overall resident population of the Cypress Creek sub-metropolitan center in 2005 is estimated to be 65,875, a growth of some 14% over the past five years. Most of this population growth has occurred in zip 33069. Population densities within the two zip code area are well above state-wide averages and close to 4K per square mile in the core region and 3K per share mile in the periphery region.

There are both similarities and differences between the two zip codes in regards to a range of socio-economic variables. Similarities (i.e., no significant differences) are observed in regard to % African-American, % Hispanic, % below poverty, median HH income, and average housing values (the latter two are below state averages, which is below the South Florida metropolitan region averages). Differences are noted in terms of % over 65, % with bachelor's degrees, % housing vacancies, % renters, and average age (higher in 33069) as well as household size and % foreign born (higher in 33309).

Another "cut" at the socio-economic status of residents is to look at the occupations of people who live in this zip code. Using Florida's (2002) classification of occupations, it is relatively easy to observe that this area has more than expected (viz. The South Florida metropolitan region) service and production workers, and less than expected proportions of creative workers, see Chart 2.

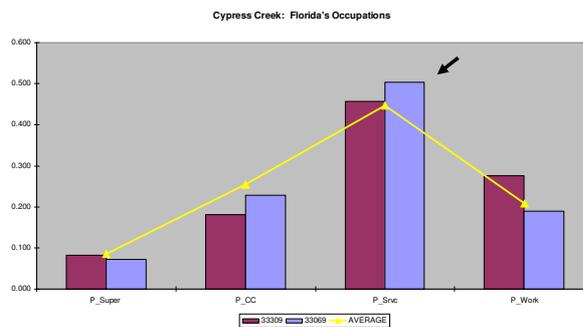


Chart 2: Distribution of Occupations, Cypress Creek Area

4.3 Organizational Results

The Cypress Creek sub-metropolitan center is a political and jurisdictional mess, the mess created over several dimensions. From the air, Cypress Creek is one place; on the ground, it is composed of a swath of land that is governed by six local jurisdictions. There is a clear difference between the portion that belongs to the city of Fort Lauderdale and the portion that belongs to the City of Pompano Beach. Driving north on any of the north-south arterials, there is a visible difference as soon as one passes over the boundaries.

The Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce *had* a working committee titled “Uptown Development Improvement Group (UDIG).” The committee has disbanded, although we were not able to find out why (a renewed emphasis on the traditional “downtown” may have had something to do with it). When it was operative, the committee had no staff – this is akin to an overall chamber with no staff – the committee was simply incapable of action. This is simply perilous disregard.

The situation does not improve in the City of Pompano Beach. There is over 28M sq ft of industrial space within the city limits (which equals ¼ of all such space in Broward County) and the City is proud of its role as a “blue-collar” working community. The only economic development incentive program is a micro business loan program. On the other hand, it dreams of creating a “center” (similar in focus to Cypress Creek) two miles away from the existing center.

In the absence of any coordinated effort (governmental, public-private, whatever), the area is left undervalued and reliant, in the words of many we interviewed, on the “free market” potentials of the “free (read unregulated) trade zone.” The area has no identity, no sense of place, no strategic plan, and perhaps a future that reflects such a dystopia.

5 CONCLUSION

The subtitle of this paper – “in search of its territorial capital” – says it all. The I-95/Cypress Creek intersection or “Uptown” of the Cypress Creek sub-metropolitan center is still viable but perhaps undervalued, underappreciated, and underutilized. There is some evidence that it is losing its primacy as a business center within the metropolitan region to other locations, even within Broward County. The area has everything needed (high quality office space, an airport, a stop of the regional transit system, global firms, etc) but it does not have a business/social capital catalyzer. And, the possibilities of such an acquiring such an emergent agent are hindered by a politically intractable mess created through the vagaries of jurisdictional boundaries.

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