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Robert Heyman
Macalester College

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The Soldier and the Growth Machine: An Examination of Fort Bliss, Texas

By Robert Heyman

Introduction

In 2003 Fort Bliss, located in El Paso, Texas, had approximately 10,000 soldiers stationed there, about 6,000 fewer than a decade before, a result of troops lost in the 1995 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process (Caldwell 2005). This outcome in 1995 had a significant impact in shaping the direction the fort would take in the coming decade and a half. In response to the loss of troops El Paso experienced, a coordinated effort emerged between fort officials, local civic and business leaders, and politicians at the state and federal levels to promote, in terms of troops stationed, the growth of the fort (Roberts 2005a). A growth machine, a descriptive term for such an arrangement first coined by Harvey Molotch, had formed. This growth machine aimed to improve the local infrastructure that supported the fort, build greater ties to the surrounding city, and by doing these things, position the fort for growth in the 2005 BRAC round. Indeed, when 2005 came around, the Fort Bliss growth machine achieved exactly what it had set out to do. Through the BRAC process, the fort was assigned an additional 10,500 soldiers, and including other personnel decisions made by the Department of Defense the post was to be home to approximately 37,000 soldiers by the mid-part of the next decade (Roberts 2005b; Kolenc 2009a). Beyond the soldiers themselves, additional tens of thousands of spouses, children, and other family members are also expected to be part of the growth Fort Bliss brings to El Paso (Kolenc 2009a). In these personnel decisions alone, the success of this growth machine looks to have added upwards of 70,000 people to El Paso, about a tenth of the region's current population.

The success of the Fort Bliss growth machine is noteworthy locally for this alone, however, this is not the only reason why this case is significant. BRAC was intended to be a ‘depoliticized’ process, taking these decisions out of the hands of Congress, and so removing them from legislative dealmaking, and instead creating a committee whose criteria emphasize the needs of the military and the value of a base. However, in looking at the Fort Bliss/El Paso case, we can see that while the BRAC process may have been ‘depoliticized’ in that sense, decisions that impacted the considerations of the process were not, effectively circumventing any attempt to call the process depoliticized. Rather, the Fort Bliss growth machine acted skillfully in maneuvering politically to bring bureaucratic governmental institutions onboard the cause of growth, to navigate scales as needed, and to connect and naturalize ideas about militarism and growth. What we see is that the growth of Fort Bliss was driven not by the private sector, but by military and government officials able to capture and guide government bureaucracies to support infrastructure development at the fort. That military and government officials would take the lead in promoting the growth of the fort is a significant difference from how Logan and Molotch describe the composition of growth machines. That we see such relationships, however, indicates that government activity in, and leadership of, the growth machine is an area that needs better understanding, an understanding offered by the Fort Bliss case. Essentially, the Fort Bliss case calls us to see governments as potentially similar to individual actors in the growth machine, and with structuration theory similarly applicable. Moreover, government direction of the growth machine has significant implications for how growth machines interact with issues of scale and cultural depictions of growth.

Going forward then, the paper will begin with a review of literature aimed at assembling a political economy lens that can be applied to the later analysis. This lens will combine

literature around a variety of topics relevant to the Fort Bliss case, allowing a look at issues of who participates in the growth machine, how that growth machine traverses multiple scales, and how it constructs growth in the mind of the public. The paper will then briefly go through the methodology of how this case study was examined before moving on to the analysis. The analysis will begin by listing members of the Fort Bliss growth machine and briefly laying out the role that they played in the development. The analysis will then examine how bureaucracies can act in a framework given by structuration theory, and the impacts this has on Logan and Molotch's envisioning of the growth machine. From here it looks at how this change in actors affects issues of scale, making the activities of the growth machine easier. The analysis concludes with a look at how the growth of the fort was constructed in local media. Finally, the paper will conclude by looking at the implications of the Fort Bliss case for how growth machines are composed, and how militarized growth can be resisted.

Review of Literature

In looking at how the political economy of place operates in a situation such as the expansion of Fort Bliss, there are a variety of different perspectives to choose from. The foremost two are the growth machine perspective of Logan and Molotch, later reapplied by Hayden, and structuration theory developed by Giddens. There are also other elements that need to be paid attention to in looking to develop a model of political economy, particularly the scalar considerations that Cox reminds us of, and the similarities that government agencies can bear to interest groups. None of these points runs contrary to the others, but rather they force a broader set of considerations to be made in applying them, each providing a piece of the puzzle. Combining these perspectives allows an elegant view of political economy. Logan and Molotch establish the basic focus of our endeavor as they set growth as the main topic needing to be

explored in urban geography (Logan and Molotch 1987, 32-34). Hayden emphasizes the role of cultural and ideological influences both leading to growth and born from growth (Hayden 2004, 5-9). Structuration theory adds significant insight into how actors participating in that growth process operate, giving an idea of what makes these actors effective in pushing for growth (Pred 1984, 289-291). Cox reminds us that in the politics around growth, actors can, and often need to, operate effectively at multiple spatial scales (Cox 1998). Finally, the literature about interest groups adds to our understanding of the role of government in the process, challenging the idea that governments are unbiased actors (Niskanen 1971, 38-41; Dunleavy and Hood 1994, 12). Indeed, our understanding of the political economy of place is strongest when we view it through all of these lenses simultaneously, as that allows us to see all facets of the issue at hand.

Constructing a Framework of Political Economy

Logan and Molotch—Growth Machines

In composing such a lens to look at political economy, Logan and Molotch provide a good point of departure in their exposition of growth machines that have driven American urban development over the past many decades. Essentially, Logan and Molotch see growth as being a very specific urban agenda that has been promoted by interlocking alliances of developers, businesses, utilities, local media institutions, and often involving local government (Logan and Molotch 1987). Indeed, one of the things that Logan and Molotch emphasize is the number and types of actors that are involved in growth machines, often including institutions that upon first glance would seem to bear little if any interest in the question of growth (Logan and Molotch 1987, 62-85). These alliances maneuver to control the decision making processes, across any number of scales, not only to promote specific plans for growth, but moreover to promote and naturalize this constant growth (Logan and Molotch 1987, 52-62). Growth machines are vital in

couching all the politics that goes into growth and new development in ‘value-free’ terms, where the growth is tied to the ‘normal’ operation of a ‘free’ market, a perspective that naturalizes growth and makes it seem unavoidable (Logan and Molotch 1987, 52-62). By doing this, growth machines help suppress conflicts that can occur between the use values of urban places and their exchange values, the values the members of the growth machine are focused on exploiting (Logan and Molotch 1987, 32-39). The ideological aspect is emphasized by Logan and Molotch as urban areas face a question not of whether they should grow, but rather how they should grow, because of this agenda of growth machines (Logan and Molotch 1987, 52-62).

Hayden—Cultural Constructons of Growth

Building off this, Hayden pays particular attention to the cultural influences on growth that have contributed to the development of growth as an ideology. Hayden importantly calls attention to a number of cultural influences that have intersected the efforts of growth machines, where the influence of Christian themes make single family houses ‘heavenly’, or large lot sizes with prominent landscaping are promoted as ‘picturesque’, influences which have reinforced the effectiveness of growth as an ideology (Hayden 2004, 5-9). These intersections make growth not only seem natural, but also desirable. Hayden holds that such an outcome, because of the specific manner in which it was constructed from these cultural and ideological influences, is hardly inevitable, a comment about the form that also reinforces Logan and Molotch’s point about the active operation of these growth machines (Hayden 2004, 3-9). However, we can certainly see the power that such a construction has in determining how ideas about growth and alternatives to growth are broached. In looking at this, we can draw on ideas of power put forward by Lukes, who notes that not all ideas and issues are treated equally in the public sphere (Lukes 2005, 14-36). Rather, elites often can exercise considerable power over what goes onto

the public's agenda, and what ideas are considered legitimate or illegitimate for consideration (Lukes 2005, 14-36). Combining this with Hayden's analysis allows a look at the forces used to construct and naturalize growth, and what it may take to propose an alternative.

Pred and Giddens—Agency of Actors in Growth

Another addition to the base provided by Logan and Molotch comes from structuration theory, developed originally by Giddens, which provides a perspective on how actors effectively exercise agency in a situation that seems dominated by large institutions and structures. In looking at this, Logan and Molotch take a largely pessimistic view of the ability of individual actors to affect significant changes, much less successfully resist, structures such as growth machines (Logan and Molotch 1987, 43-49). Structuration theory challenges such a limited view of what is possible, proposing instead that actors can act with great intent and success in working to shape activities around them when they are aware of the structures they are operating within (Pred 1984, 290-291). Essentially, it aims to provide a role for individual agency, while recognizing that the potentials of such agency do face significant limitations (Pred 1984, 289-291). Indeed, the point is made that agency is embedded in structure to the degree that it both shapes and is shaped by those structures (Pred 1984, 290). Likewise, individual actions only occur through such structures and those actions result in structure (Pred 1984, 289-291). By describing this role of individuals, structuration theory fills a significant gap in Logan and Molotch, which had recognized potential resistance among communities to the activities of growth machines, but largely avoided describing such resistance (Logan and Molotch 1987, 37-39). It is notable, however, the even though this opens up more space for participation by individual actors, the actors structuration theory discusses are particularly engaged and well informed about the situation and structures they are dealing with (Pred 1984, 290-291). While a

broader space is opened than in Logan and Molotch, it is still a very limited space for individual participation.

Cox—Growth and Scale

Furthermore, structuration theory makes some important points about the role of scale and spatiality in this process, noting that institutions occur in specific times and spaces and both shape and are shaped by those circumstances (Pred 1984, 289-291). This fits well with the discussion of scale that takes place in Logan and Molotch, noting how growth machines, while they operate at multiple scales, have pieces rooted in particular spatial patterns (Logan and Molotch 1987, 32). Also expanding on the role of scale in this view is Cox, who stresses the degree to which actors frequently, and indeed must, make use of multiple scales in order to be effective. Cox stresses the degree to which structures such as growth machines often must act at scales above that of their opposition in order to circumvent such resistance (Cox 1998, 4-7). Likewise, he sees such ability to maneuver between scales as critical to any such resistance succeeding, as he demonstrates in the example of successful resistance to a gravel pit in England (Cox 1998, 4-10). Cox notes, though, that scaling up is not the only form that trans-scalar activity can take, although it is the form that has attracted the most attention in the era of globalization (Cox 1998, 3 and 5-7). Rather, relevant to thinking about growth, he notes that some actors, such as utilities, often must work in a manner that is smaller than the scope of that entity (Cox 1998, 11-12). Using utilities, he shows how in order to facilitate infrastructure spending that utilities try and spread out as much as possible, they often act to try and draw in new users through growth, something they do at scales smaller than those of the entire utility's service area (Cox 1998, 11-12).

Niskanen and Dunleavy—Bureaucracies and Growth

Finally, one last piece of literature contributing to a lens of political economy deals with the way governments act as part of growth machines. Logan and Molotch highlight the potential role for governments in growth machines, and often point to government participation as being critical for the growth machine's success, emphasizing what government can do to promote growth (Logan and Molotch 1987, 34-37). They note that while governments may often be biased or conditioned to support growth, it comes as a result of the influence of outside elites, rather than as a pre-determined outcome of government itself (Logan and Molotch 1987, 66-69). While this understanding of the possible influences of outside actors upon the actions of government is correct, it seems to miss an important part of the role of bureaucracies in government as shaping governmental action from within. Filling this gap, we can call on a school of thought theorizing that governments can have internal politics, as well as external politics, pushing growth. In this, Niskanen considers that bureaucracies can come to act as interest groups in deliberations between different bodies, where they are concerned with maintaining, or expanding, the size, and thereby the status, of that organization (Niskanen 1971, 38-41). Dunleavy further characterizes this in his discussion of 'bureau-shaping', a process where administrators aim to build and expand their own pet projects within the bureaucracy of government (Dunleavy 1994, 12). Such behavior would seem to stress the expansion of government and any supporting entities, and seems particularly helpful in describing the behavior of institutions such as military bases.

Synthesis—A Political Economy Lens

Separately each of the perspectives mentioned above has significant limitations. Logan and Molotch point us toward the question of growth and first describe the growth machines, the agglomerations of business, real estate, and civic interests, that they see driving that process.

However, their original analysis has shortcomings. It mentions, but underplays, the role of cultural influences in forming hegemonic ideologies of growth, an area where we need to turn instead to Hayden. Additionally, they largely dismiss the ability of individual actors to block growth in meaningful ways, dismissing the power of agency in the face of the growth machine, an overreaction corrected when considering the carefully bounded interplay of structure and agency that structuration theory provides. It gets into a greater discussion of the importance of scale, and urges us to pay attention to multiple scales simultaneously, but does a poor job describing how actors maneuver questions of scale, a gap nicely filled by Cox. Finally, the literature on government bureaucracies acting as interest groups focuses our attention on the role of government as an actor in the growth machine. By piecing these theories together, a better, more thorough lens has been developed through which to view the political economy of urban growth.

Methodology

This project is an exploratory case study aimed at answering questions of how growth machines come to dominate a ‘depoliticized’ process such as BRAC and peripheral questions of how the growth machine addressed issues of individual agency, bureaucracy, scale, and the naturalization of growth. Mostly the work for this project consisted of an investigation of various documents concerning the growth of the fort. Foremost among these were newspaper reports, mostly from the *El Paso Times*, which were used to establish a timeline for the expansion of the fort, a list of actors involved, and descriptions of the sorts of interactions that comprised the growth machine. Additional resources consulted in researching the growth of Fort Bliss include documents from local governments, such as the city or county of El Paso, local public institutions such as schools or utilities, state and federal legislative bodies, and local

business interests. These resources were largely used to expand upon the interactions described in the news reports. Finally, public documents from the BRAC commission were used to try and examine the decision making process at that stage of these events.

Fort Bliss was chosen as the case study site for this project as a result of the extraordinary growth the fort has undergone since 2004. Since that date, the number of troops assigned to the fort over the long-term have increased more than twofold as a result of a series of personnel decisions reached by the Department of Defense and the BRAC commission. Fort Bliss was one of few installations to gain significant numbers of troops as a result of the 2005 BRAC round, and this is a drastic turn around from the 1995 BRAC round when the fort lost a third of the soldiers assigned to it. Between the significant growth of the fort from 2004 onward, and the drastic turnaround from 1995, it seemed that the growth of Fort Bliss was notable to investigate an extreme case. Indeed, it seemed a useful example to study given the extraordinary success of collective efforts oriented at surrounding growth for the fort. While this is not a typical case, and cannot easily be generalized to another military institution, it seems apparent that the Fort Bliss case is worthwhile as it allows a study of a militarized growth machine, with both civilian and military components, that was a highly successful venture. It was successful in influencing the decision of a 'depoliticized' organization, obtaining a drastically different response than 1995, and securing the growth they desired. There is every reason to look at it as a unique case, but one that we must recognize as offering a potentially new model for the operations of some growth machines.

Documents for this study were analyzed using critical discourse analysis, a method of discourse analysis that pays particularly close attention to the power relations conveyed in a document. As a result, this paper pays particularly close attention to the subquestions mentioned

above: how agency and bureaucracy intersect; how scalar issues can be maneuvered by a powerful growth machine; and how growth is naturalized, particularly when it intersects with another powerful institution in the military. The first two subquestions allow the paper to get at how individual actors in a growth machine can move to harness and wield power in pursuit of growth. The third question aims to look at the power of growth machines as an institution, particularly when combined with the powerful institution that the military represents in American society. By looking at these questions, the paper aims to provide a rich look at how growth machines can operate, the implications of these operations on society, and how alternatives to these growth machines potentially can be posed.

Results and Analysis

Fort Bliss, BRAC, and the Growth Machine

One key point we can take from the example of Fort Bliss, is that even with BRAC being a supposedly depoliticized process, designed to allow the military to make the decisions that best fit their strategic and logistical needs, the fort is still the site of a growth machine (www.brac.gov). While the BRAC process itself may be depoliticized, this is not true of any number of ways that the fort is positioned going into and coming out of this decision. Many of the factors that shape how the military considers a base in the BRAC process, such as the presence of infrastructure to support growth, can be shaped by external political economic processes, as was exactly the case with Fort Bliss. This role for the growth machine in a depoliticized process is significant, because the perception of BRAC as an unbiased military assessment of the situation effectively serves to legitimize and obscure the intentional push for growth as it occurs such as at Fort Bliss. This significantly serves as part of how the growth of a military institution such as the fort is naturalized and justified in the mind of the public, a topic

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that will be explored in more depth later. Furthermore, such obfuscation in this particular example curtailed the possibility of broader community discussions about both militarism and growth.

El Paso and Fort Bliss had been viewed negatively by the military in the 1995 round of BRAC as a result of poor local infrastructure to support the fort, combined with local disinterest in improving that infrastructure (Roberts 2005a). Because of this, the 3rd Cavalry was reassigned to Fort Carson, Colorado during that round, a move locally viewed as the Department of Defense rebuking Fort Bliss and its support in El Paso (Roberts 2005a). As a result of this realignment, the Fort Bliss growth machine emerged as a means of working to better position the fort to capture military created growth (Washington Valdez 2004). Notably, we can view the 1995 BRAC round as an example of there not being a growth machine positioned around Fort Bliss, a useful comparison to the 2005 round that allows one to see the significance of the growth machine in this ‘depoliticized’ process. Indeed, the main lesson that local leaders discussed taking in the aftermath of the 1995 BRAC round was the development of highly intentional efforts to promote the fort, first to stabilize it as there were fears the fort would be cut entirely, and culminating in the preparation of the fort for later growth (Roberts 2005a; Washington Valdez 2004).

Composition of the Fort Bliss Growth Machine

The growth machine that emerged around Fort Bliss corresponds well with the growth machines Logan and Molotch laid out. Many elite local actors came together around a consensus of pursuing growth for the fort, and if we use Logan and Molotch as a field guide to growth machines, we see that almost all of the actors they mention are involved. This coalition is particularly broad, including: actors from local government, particularly the City of El Paso,

individual speculators tied to growth as well as business coalitions such as the local chamber of commerce and regional development corporation, local utilities, notably El Paso Water Utilities, other services such as the El Paso Independent School District, politicians at both the state and federal levels, the local newspaper, and people within the fort itself. An overview of these actors and what they brought to the growth machine is helpful for understanding how the fort's growth occurred.

The City of El Paso

City officials played a significant role in promoting the development of a growth machine around Fort Bliss. They provided support for the fort, serving as boosters, particularly interested in combating the local disinterest that was perceived as undermining Fort Bliss in the 2005 BRAC round. Furthermore, they worked to facilitate developments that would position the fort for future growth. In doing this, city officials worked closely with a wide spectrum of actors and particularly closely with other governmental officials in securing new infrastructure investment and with people at the fort in addressing concerns about distance between the fort and the surrounding community (Roberts 2005c; Roberts 2005d; Cruz 2004a).

The Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce & The El Paso Regional Development Corporation (REDCo)

Local business leaders played a significant booster role for Fort Bliss, both leading up to, and in the aftermath of the 2005 BRAC decision. These organizations are particularly important in two ways: 1) by providing a booster role for the fort and working to show community involvement with, and commitment to the fort and its residents; and 2) through work aiming to attract defense contractors to El Paso, as a means of developing an agglomeration economy that supports the presence of the military base (Dayoub 2008; Roberts 2008).

Local Developers

Local developers, particularly residential developers, stand to profit nicely from the expansion of Fort Bliss. City planners have projected a multi-thousand unit shortage as a result of the growth of the fort, and it is further estimated that a majority of the incoming soldiers will be housed off-base (Roberts 2004). This obviously generates considerable demand for housing in the areas around the fort, and possibility for profit off of that real estate. To quote one major local developer, “This is a chance for the Northeast [El Paso] to be a thriving community again”, thriving because of an influx of new opportunities to develop housing (Cruz 2004a).

El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU)

The local water utility played a key role in facilitating the 2005 expansion of Fort Bliss through its efforts to secure stable long-term water supplies for that portion of the city, addressing one of the major concerns that had been raised in the 1995 BRAC round (Roberts 2005d). Doing this, through construction of a desalination plant, saw the utility work very closely with fort leadership, city officials, and various federal officials, and successfully maneuvering scalar issues to do so (Roberts 2007a).

El Paso Independent School District (EPISD)

The school district has had significant interactions with Fort Bliss, operating one high school and several elementary schools on base property (Cruz 2004b). As such, the school district is a key link between the fort and the surrounding community, a role the district meets through special programs such as a Military Family Liaison Program (http://www.episd.org/_schools/team_bliss.php). The success of such endeavors was critical in demonstrating that the community would be able to cope with the growth of the fort.

Politicians Operating Outside El Paso

Elected officials played a significant role in the growth machine, particularly as they allowed the growth machine a means of easily navigating scalar issues that had to be overcome to secure the resources that provided the infrastructure critical to the fort's growth. Congressman Silvestre Reyes was a key early member of the Fort Bliss growth machine (Roberts 2005a). State Senator Eliot Shapleigh, who chaired a sub-committee on Base Realignment and Closure in the Texas Senate, was critical to focusing the attention of state government on providing resources to facilitate the growth of the fort (Roberts 2007c). Similarly, Senator Hutchison played an important role in Washington, bringing resources to El Paso that provided the infrastructure that allowed the fort to be positioned for growth, working closely with EPWU and people in the fort (Roberts 2007a).

The El Paso Times

The local English language newspaper, the *El Paso Times* was an important part of the growth machine as its role as local booster helped publicize, promote, and naturalize the growth of the fort, and the growth machine that operated around it (EPT Editorial 2004; EPT Editorial 2005). While many of the actions of the growth machine happened quietly, the paper was always there to promote those activities as needed.

Fort Bliss Personnel

Officers at the fort played important roles in guiding the actions of these other institutions, working with them to intentionally position the fort to be in a place where it could grow under the 2005 BRAC round (Roberts 2005a). Fort officials worked with institutions such as EPWU and EPISD to secure infrastructure such as a desalination plant or new schools needed to support an influx of soldiers and their families (Roberts 2007a). Base officials have gone back and forth between the fort and the local business community, where they have worked to secure

other defense related investment locally, and thereby strengthen the position of the fort (Roberts 2008). Moreover, base leaders have sought out contact with other local elites to try and strengthen ties between the fort and the larger community (Roberts 2005a).

All of these actors combined to provide support for projects and infrastructure that would position Fort Bliss for a positive outcome in the 2005 BRAC proceedings, an outcome that itself would entail significantly more growth for the machine to profit from. Government in this example is a distinctly non-neutral ground, acting on all scales to promote the fort's expansion. Businesses involved supported such government activity, serving as boosters, and as means for government to get the resources it needed out of the private sector to support such development. In doing so, government and business worked in unison around a common theme that naturalized and facilitated the growth of the fort, taking advantage of the different resources and forms of access that each actor brought, to allow the machine to navigate around potential obstacles. Furthermore, they showed the power of the growth machine to operate at multiple scales to ensure that growth could be achieved, and also harnessed the ability of individual, knowledgeable actors to work within the broader structures of society to secure this growth. Before looking at the scalar issues, however, it is important to examine the seeming role reversal from what Logan and Molotch propose, where the private sector drives growth, and uses what are effectively puppet governments to carry out such agendas, to the government driven growth we see here. In this case, a turn to Niskanen's look at the workings of bureaucracies, placed in a context of structuration theory would seem to answer the riddle.

Structuration and Agentic Bureaucracies

Niskanen's 1971 work on bureaucracies discussed earlier, points out that government, in addition to being influenced by other portions of the growth machine, is perfectly capable of

serving as its own impetus for growth. Indeed, a significant portion of the initial push for the growth of Fort Bliss can be attributed to the maneuverings of governmental institutions, not the capitalists that are the root cause pointed to by Logan and Molotch. Rather, much of the push for growth can be traced to the base itself, where officers were critical in promoting infrastructure development and cultivating community relations that laid the foundations for growth. This ability of individuals at the base to use the government to promote growth certainly shows the applicability of Niskanen's work. Moreover, it demonstrates the need for a consideration of structuration theory in this analysis, as it shows the role for individual agency in driving structures such as government to act in particular ways. The synthesis of structuration theory and bureaucracies forces the observer to pay closer attention to the role of government as a driver of growth, not just a battleground in the process.

We can see the importance of the fort as a driving force in its own growth in news reports of the activity surrounding the expansion of Fort Bliss. Fort officials are repeatedly described as seeking out infrastructure projects and community connections that would position the base to avoid a repeat of the 1995 BRAC process. One of the most important examples of the fort seeking out the infrastructure it needed to grow was in developing a partnership with EPWU around a desalination facility (Roberts 2007a). News reports described how the project came to be thusly, "Fort Bliss was considering the planning of a 7.5-million-gallon-per-day desalination plant at that time. In discussions with El Paso Water Utilities [considering its own facility], it was agreed that a single, larger facility would be more economical for both parties" (Archuleta 2005). In pursuing first their own facility, and later this partnership with EPWU, it is apparent that fort officials were looking to put infrastructure into place that would address concerns not only about whether the fort could handle growth, but about whether it was sustainable over a

long term (Roberts 2005d). Moreover, in first pursuing their own desalination plant, we can see that fort officials were taking an active role in initiating the process (Archuleta 2005). It was not just that this opportunity to support growth was presented to the fort, but rather that leaders were seeking out such opportunities on their own.

Similar activity on the part of base officials is visible in a number of other infrastructure projects as well. Talking about schools at the fort's annual education fair, Brigadier General Robert Lennox said, "The challenge for all of us is to work together to make education a top priority" (Roberts 2005e). In addition to fort leadership's pursuit of infrastructure development were efforts to strengthen ties between the fort and the surrounding civilian community. To quote a former commander of Fort Bliss, who takes significant credit for starting these efforts, "We reopened new bridges to El Paso so that every colonel at Fort Bliss was asked to find some opportunity in El Paso—join the opera association, the symphony, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts—where we could help enrich the community" (Roberts 2005a). Moreover, we can see the central role of local military leaders, even on projects where the military did not take the lead. This role can be described thusly, "Regular meetings with school representatives, the home builders association, realty companies, elected officials and civic leaders, and members of the chambers of commerce have all been positive and have assured us that they are poised and ready to meet the growth challenge facing Fort Bliss and the El Paso community in the next five years" (Roberts 2007b). This was not a growth process undertaken by the community, but rather was one developed by military leadership and sold to the rest of the local growth machine. The military was an important actor in the decision made about the base, almost always at the center of planning this growth.

All of this seems to be evidence of Niskanen's assertion of bureaucracy as a potential source of growth, as institutions work to maintain their size and status. Indeed, we can see this emphasis on organizational status and prestige in some of the language fort officials used to discuss projects around the growth of the fort. Said one official regarding state funding for an overpass, "We feel we are coming of age...The rest of the world out there is beginning to understand and recognize what a great post, city and state we live in and what it has to offer our country and its national defense" (Cruz 2004c). Another official about the potential uses of the fort, "When people come to visit Fort Bliss who haven't been here before and we show them the tour, their eyes open about the potential" (Roberts 2005f). Base officials have worked for the benefit of their piece of the institution, rather than abiding by Department of Defense views, managing to position the base so that it would be able to grow. By working to raise the stature of the institution they have shaped the internal politics of the military in such a way that the government has come to initiate and drive growth, rather than simply facilitate it. We can see government acting in an agentic manner more often associated with the individual, an agentic bureaucracy.

With this in mind, we understand how bureaucracies come to shape governmental action around growth. Furthermore, structuration theory allows us to see how individuals, such as the officials and officers mentioned above can maneuver institutions into those positions. These were conscious choices undertaken not by one individual, but rather by many individuals acting with the capacity of an entire institution. Moving away from base officials to look at the role of Congress, one sees a situation where individual and institutional forms of agency are inexorably linked. Members of Congress, such as Representative Silvestre Reyes, and Senators Kay Bailey Hutchison and John Cornyn, exercised individual agency, as expert actors, in helping facilitate

the growth of the fort by helping promote the advantages of Fort Bliss in the period leading up to the 2005 BRAC round (Roberts 2005a; Roberts 2009; Roberts 2007c; Roberts 2007d; among others). Additionally, their exercise of individual agency led Congress to exercise institutional agency in funding infrastructure that supported the growth of the fort, both before and after the BRAC process occurred (Roberts 2007c). What we see in looking at Fort Bliss is that when looking closely one sees institutions expressing agency by acting in very specific manners, and moreover that such institutional agency is often prompted by one or several individuals guiding the direction it takes.

Still, the ability of individuals to act in a situation is limited, and while much of the growth of Fort Bliss has been driven by a small set of very knowledgeable actors able to command significant institutional resources, not all who wish to participate are able. While many in El Paso are excited about the growth of the fort, there is a definite strain of concern over the ability of local contractors and firms to participate in the work being done as part of its expansion (Kolenc 2008; Kolenc 2009). Stories in the local paper catalogue discontent about most of the construction contracting at Fort Bliss going to companies based outside of El Paso, which has limited the economic impacts the fort's expansion has had (Kolenc 2008; Kolenc 2009). There are calls to have contracts go to local businesses, but the on-base construction allows an interesting example of structuration theory.

In part, the lack of favoritism toward local businesses seems to be a result of the institutions driving the growth machine. The agents and the bureaucracies they have mobilized to expand Fort Bliss are served by anyone doing construction, no matter whether they are local or not. A growth machine more closely tied to the local business community, and not motivated by competitions for prestige within national organizations, may well be more open to

participation by local businesses. This seems to be a perfect illustration of how agency, in this case the ability of local construction firms to participate in the Fort Bliss growth machine is limited by the structures comprised by the regulations determining how the government selects contractors. Even though these people want to participate, and even have the knowledge to be expert actors, they are still bound by the structures within which they must operate. This serves as a reminder that growth is anything but natural, anything but free and open to all. Rather, it is tightly controlled, for specific purposes and serving specific elites.

Maneuvering Scales for Success

Although the driving force behind the Fort Bliss growth machine were individuals able to use their agency to capture entire bureaucracies for their purposes, the growth machine still had to navigate complicated scalar issues to achieve success. Looking at the growth of Fort Bliss through the BRAC process we can see why Logan and Molotch originally stressed the importance of scale, and why Cox felt it so important to reiterate these considerations. In a very limited view, one could say that the decision to expand Fort Bliss was made at the level of the federal government, at the national scale. This was the scale at which the Department of Defense made their recommendations to the BRAC panel, at which that panel made their recommendations to President Bush, at which these recommendations were sent by the President to Congress, and at which Congress enacted them into law (<http://www.brac.gov/Process.html>). Certainly, with all this activity and all of these actors concentrated at the national scale, it is an important level for the analysis of the growth of the fort. However, even in looking at these actors we can see that only paying attention to the national scale is an insufficient analysis, even before we get to all of the actors that were not included in that above description. Applying the lens developed earlier, we should not the particular of Congress as a decision making body

where it acts at the national scale, but is composed of people rooted in very particular places. This alone is an excellent example of the need for scale to be considered in the political economy of growth, as only by considering scalar questions can we get at the fact that this actor, by its nature, bridges scales.

Furthermore, such a view of the BRAC process ignores local actors who were indirectly, but importantly, involved in what was ultimately a national scale decision. Local government and business officials made specific decisions to provide greater support to the fort in the period leading up to the BRAC process, helping improve the situation of Fort Bliss. There were decisions by the local water utility to construct a new desalination plant that helped ensure the water supply necessary for the fort's expansion (Robert 2007a). Notably, this project involved actors at a number of scales as it involved people from the local water utility, the fort, which bridges the local and national scales, and Congress, which likewise bridges the local and national scales (Roberts 2005d). Indeed, the naming of the plant after Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison reflects the importance of this ability to bridge scale as it is a reflection of the ability of an actor operating at one scale to act on behalf of the interests of a different scale (Roberts 2007a). Additionally, given its impact on facilitating the growth of Fort Bliss, we can see that not only is the process of growth multiscale, but the impacts of growth can cross scales in important ways as well.

Not only does the example of Fort Bliss demonstrate how scale broadly plays an important role in shaping how a place develops, but it also demonstrates Cox's point that the ability of actors to operate on multiple scales is not limited to 'scaling up'. Indeed, looking at the development of the fort, one can see actors choose to become more localized as they pursue the interests of growth. A good example of this is the role of Robert Burns who had been garrison

commander at Fort Bliss in 2005 at the time of the BRAC process, but left that position in 2008 to work for REDCo, the El Paso Regional Economic Development Corporation to work on recruiting defense and homeland security businesses (Roberts 2008). His shift from the fort, which straddles local and national scales, to a more purely localized focus with REDCo seems to exemplify the fact that inter-scalar processes can go both ‘up’ and ‘down’. In each role, he was heavily involved in the growth of the fort and the military-industrial complex in El Paso more generally (Roberts 2008). Indeed, it is notable that after he helped secure the growth of the fort, he left to work on growth of peripheral defense sector businesses, in what would seem to be a clear example of the growth machines around the fort changing the scale at which they deploy their resources in order to maximize growth.

Certainly, having this growth driven by agents embedded in different scales was helpful in facilitating the fort’s expansion. The presence of agents able to capture governmental bureaucracies at state and, more importantly, the federal scales, certainly provided natural bases of support for the project. Combined with the cultivation of local businesses and governments, this gives the project the ability to move between scales, showing that there is support for the expansion of Fort Bliss from multiple institutions. This ability to demonstrate support at other scales can be crucial to getting backing for the project, and so working between scales can consolidate support across scales. And, this is exactly what happened, fort officials cultivated connections with local government and business, and with people in Congress. For the former, they got them to become booster for the fort, and later to support some infrastructure projects. In the meantime, they were able to use their federal contacts to secure the resources needed to go through with that infrastructure. This positioned the fort for growth, and once BRAC had added to the base, they were able to bring state government onboard to support more infrastructure. In

the end, it is not just that actors were able to capture bureaucracies to support the growth of the fort, but moreover, that they captured bureaucracies at multiple scales. Still, as we will see, this was not all that the growth machine did to set the expansion of Fort Bliss into motion.

Naturalizing Militarism, Naturalizing Growth

Hayden focuses on examining how cultural messages have been adapted to promote growth, particularly sprawl; selling and naturalizing the urban forms we see today. We can see similar selling being done by the Fort Bliss growth machine, but this selling combines around two themes, militarism and growth. Militarism is sold in that the military is an unassailable form of service to country, an ever needed form of sacrifice on behalf of the rest of society beyond reproach. Growth is sold as natural and always beneficial. Growth is said to happen because of markets, or other unbiased processes, deciding to reward the merits of a place. Intertwined, these two themes work well to promote and protect the interests of the other. In looking at militarized growth, militarism offers that additional defense against criticism that the critic is either needlessly unrealistic or hurting the troops, neglecting them after the sacrifice they have made for the greater whole. If anything, this leaves the community with an obligation to support militarized growth. Likewise, the ideology of ‘value-free’ growth adds to the defense of militarized growth that the place did not select itself for this purpose, but was selected on its merits because of its strategic value. These are two powerful defenses of militarized growth against criticism; the former marginalizes and tries to quash any opposition, while the latter tries to de-politicize the issue. Essentially, these two defenses are an application of Lukes’ idea of hegemonic power as a regulator of what ideas can and cannot be brought up in public discourse. In this example, we see the growth machine trying to regulate opposition to militarism and growth out of the realm of acceptable discourse.

There are many examples of these arguments being made in the growth of Fort Bliss, not because there was notable opposition to the growth of the base, there was not, but rather because it is part of the modus operandi of growth machines. Here is an example of the use of militarism in trying to marginalize opposition to the expansion, “We also have a moral obligation to fight for our soldiers who fight for our freedom and allow us to own our shops” (Cruz 2003). Again, such thinking can be seen in a quote from an *El Paso Times* editorial,

No one wants more war. But the reality of the world is that threats exist and the United States must be prepared to defend itself from those threats. Fort Bliss, Holloman [Air Force Base] and White Sands Missile Range are inextricably linked to the efforts of the Defense Department as it defends the country and prosecutes conflicts when necessary. Their story must be told. (EPT Editorial 2004)

Neither of these quotes aims to engage with alternatives to militarism in the United States, rather they aim to marginalize them. The first equates soldiers with a militarized economy and the base, their needs are the needs of the base, their needs are the needs of defense contractors, and since it is unreasonable to expect people to attack the needs of common soldiers, this connection serves to prevent attacks against the militarized economy. The second simply trivializes objections equating this base to the entire military, and saying that as long as we are going to have a military it might as well be here, without considering if those resources would provide more benefit to the community elsewhere. Each, in its own right, is a clear example of the regulating potential that the growth machine tries to achieve in exercising hegemonic power.

We can likewise see the growth of the process defended, at least when it works to the benefit of the growth machine. Many examples boast the merits of the fort, without noting the

political efforts that went into their creation, “They have been showing the leadership at the Pentagon that Fort Bliss is one of the crown jewels in the U.S. Army, as far as its location, the training and the community environment” (Cruz 2004a). Likewise, “State Sen. Eliot Shapleigh...described the community’s objective as communicating to the Department of Defense the idea that the post is a ‘crown jewel...Really our challenge was to sell Bliss...It was to let the Department of Defense know what value it had’” (Meritz 2005). Or this example, “It’s shown versatility and adaptability in the past, and it will be highly versatile and adaptive in the future” (Meritz 2005). None of these examples indicate the intense effort that went into preparing the fort for growth, rather they show the growth machine as only doing their best to bring attention to the base on merits, which one is left to assume, it had all along. In making the growth of the fort an entirely meritocratic process it implies that it was not a political process, essentially hiding the intense efforts of the growth machine to ready the base for BRAC.

This depoliticization is important because it feeds into the BRAC process, a process aimed at minimizing political influences on these military decisions. What the growth machine is doing is using the nature of the BRAC process to try and cover over their own activities. Fort Bliss is portrayed as being chosen for growth because the process sees it as the best, while underplaying the highly political maneuvering and preparations that made it so. This depoliticization serves to make the naturalizing process of the growth machine easier, as it provides a framework they can build a narrative from. It should not be surprising to see that while the gains are based on merit, losses of troops are condemned as political decisions. One example, “The catch in the BRAC process, of course, could be politics. Reyes said, ‘In spite of the strong case under the BRAC criteria that shows Fort Bliss is the Number one-rated facility in the country...there’s always the concern that this is a political process’” (EPT Editorial 2005).

While this is an incredibly disingenuous statement given the highly political nature of the growth machine driving the expansion of Fort Bliss before BRAC, such a comment raises an important distinction. Since only decisions that run against the interests of the growth machine are, thanks to statements such as these, implicitly not merit based, such decisions do not call attention to, and thereby do not threaten, the political nature of the growth machine. It also neatly avoids a contradiction with the boundaries of discourse established by the growth machine's use of hegemonic power. Since pro-growth decisions are implicitly merit based and negative decisions the opposite, the message stays in line with the boundaries of the discourse laid out above. While the growth machine may have been defeated about a specific project, its methods go unchallenged and still legitimate and viable for future use.

Conclusion

Looking at Growth Machines

The foremost point that can be drawn out of the Fort Bliss case study is a better understanding of how government can fit into the growth machine, and even be a driving player in the growth machine. While Logan and Molotch discuss government as an often integral part of the growth machine they have it acting at the behest of private interests which are pushing specific projects. What is visible in looking at the case of Fort Bliss is that much of the activity of the growth machine, while involving both the private and public sectors, was pushed by governmental actors looking to reinforce their place within a bureaucracy. The growth of Fort Bliss originated with people at the base, and was pushed hardest by El Paso's political delegation. Government was a key driver of this project, not just a tool for the growth machine to harness. This is significant as it seems to open up the spectrum of what roles one can expect to see government take in the growth machine. While many projects may be driven by the

private sector as Logan and Molotch propose, the possibility that government is leading the charge for growth is something that people should know to watch for going forward. This is particularly important to challenging growth, as government is the realm of the growth machine supposedly most in tune with the needs of the public.

Looking at the activity of the growth machine there are certainly other patterns that we can draw from this study, particularly as we look at the impact of a government-led growth machine on other issues such as structuration, scale, and use of cultural representations. The ability of the growth machine to capture bureaucracies proves strongly tied to its ability to maneuver between scales. While there is nothing that guarantees that the growth machine would be able to draw bureaucracies in at multiple scales, when this does occur, it appears to make the operations of the growth machine easier. This is for two reasons: 1) it becomes much easier for the growth machine to obtain the resources it needs to move forward with its project, and 2) having support from multiple scales creates a veneer of inevitability that makes growth harder to challenge. This second point further interacts with Logan and Molotch and Hayden's focus on how growth is naturalized. If growth is inevitable, if all these other institutions say it is a good thing and are supporting it, why would an individual community member think anything else? This also feeds into one of Cox's points. If opposition did emerge to a growth project at one scale, this provides the machine with the ability to outmaneuver that opposition through the ability to call on support from multiple other scales.

These points allow us to make several generalizable observations about the growth machine and its relationship to government. Place-based or rooted officials in government need to be considered as potential actors as much as any other interested party Logan and Molotch lay out. Their ability to engage place rooted bureaucracies means that even after such people have

left, the bureaucracy can remain as an actor in its own right, pursuing a previously set agenda simply through a sort of inertial force. In this case, even with a change of individuals in government, turning away from a pursued policy of growth may require that specific changes be made. Additionally, the fact that bureaucracies often exist in governmental structures that span multiple scales, something particularly true of militarized growth, can make acting across scales a much easier proposition, greatly facilitating the cause of the growth machine. The ease of operations that this allows serves to help naturalize growth, and make it appear impenetrable. In considering government-led growth machines one sees a growth machine that does not fit current typologies, and is a mutation that offers particular advantages to its members. In looking at this formation of the growth machine, it seems apparent that the role government plays is, if anything, more important to facilitating growth than previously thought.

Challenging the Intersection of Militarism and Growth

El Paso is a poor place, with unemployment rates consistently higher than the rest of the state and median household incomes significantly below the nation's. As a result, it is hard to ask El Paso to be the place to resist the economic impact that a military base can bring. Certainly, the growth of the fort will provide jobs to people building significant housing for new soldiers, working in the expanded base, or businesses whose clientele have now significantly expanded. And, this is an argument that can be made for many communities, not only El Paso. However, in choosing growth through the military, which has not just been done in El Paso, but as a matter of national policy since the end of World War II, other opportunities for growth may be boxed out. American society has dedicated significant resources to the military, in part, because of operations such as the growth machine around Fort Bliss. However, as Jane Jacobs discusses, resources given to the military are resources that cannot be put to productive use over

the long term (Jacobs 1985 182-203). While a city such as El Paso may benefit itself in the short term by working for the growth of Fort Bliss, those efforts are drawing resources away from other possible investments that may benefit the community more over the long term than does the fort. Spending on the military crowds out spending on education, health care, and other infrastructure; all of which offer more long term economic benefit. Choosing these then will mean turning away from militarism as a means of economic growth.

This paper documented how the Fort Bliss growth machine was able to capture bureaucracies, maneuver scales, and intertwine militarism and growth in order to achieve their desired expansion of the fort. Moving away from militarism as an economic engine in American society will mean taking action that limits the effectiveness of such tactics. Foremost will have to be separating militarism from growth; showing that they are not allowed to reinforce each other, but are contradictory. Jacobs outlines how militarism impinges on growth in the long term, a helpful proposition, but one that many people consider, that militarism crowds out more productive forms of economic growth. This is an idea that is not allowed to be considered by the institutions currently wielding hegemonic power in American society. Being able to think about growth opportunities not centered around the military, that growth provided by the military is not necessarily the best course of action, is going to need to gain traction in the minds of local elites in order for a shift away from militarism in American society to occur. Such a shift could have the potential to hamper efforts to have growth through militarism, after all the 1995 BRAC example serves as a reminder that public reactions against, or even apathy towards, militarism can significantly deter a military presence in a community.

Moreover, allowing these ideas to be publicly discussed opens the potential to block some of the mechanisms we saw the growth machine use in the Fort Bliss case. It is likely to

prove more difficult to have individuals capture bureaucracies across scales as happened in this example if those bureaucracies are also given socially acceptable alternatives. Additionally, making it more difficult to capture a bureaucracy behind this cause of militarized growth looks to complicate the ability of these growth machines to maneuver between scales. To the extent that the ability of these growth machines to maneuver scales is based on their having established allies at multiple scales, complicating the ability to capture bureaucracies acts to complicate the other. Weakening the ability of these growth machines to operate would only serve to further undermine the intertwining of militarism and growth, allowing additional space for alternatives to be elaborated and acted upon. The rise of the American military is a relatively recent historical occurrence, and one that it is not beyond the realm of our collective imagination to turn away from.

It seems quite possible that by looking to separate militarism from growth, a pushback is possible, not only against militarism, but also against the concept of ‘value-free’ growth. In making an argument that militarism is not an avenue of growth that a place or society should pursue, a value judgment is implied about what growth is good or not good. Being able to consider these alternatives further implies that a place can make choices about the growth that occurs there, and that those choices are inherently value laden. If these inherencies can be realized in one case, then they can be generalized to other cases, and the door is open to having a community making informed choices about growth and the future in a way that the growth machine has aimed to avoid. By challenging growth tied to militarism, it is suddenly possible to give any growth the careful look needed to tell if it is actually in the best interests of a community, and not just the best interests of a growth machine. In the end, we can hope that this

leads to communities more centered around addressing their own needs, rather than the needs of the growth machine.

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