

Flying high (in the competitive sky): Conceptualizing the role of airports in global city-regions through “aero-regionalism”

Abstract: Airports are key catalysts for urban growth and economic development in an era of global urbanization. In addition to their global economic functions, the multiscale connectivity and localized impacts of air transport infrastructure place them at the heart of city-regional politics and planning. Yet the relations between global air transport, economic development and city-regionalism remain under-theorized. This paper introduces the concept of *aero-regionalism* to explore the relationality/territoriality dialectic and mechanisms of state territorialization unfolding at the nexus of globalization, air transport, city-regionalism and air transport. I provide a relational geographic comparison of the impact of varying local institutional arrangements and policy frameworks on the political and infrastructural integration of airports in the global city-regions of Chicago and Toronto. The paper analyzes the relative significance of variations in local transportation and planning systems to develop our understanding of the relations between global aviation infrastructures and their surrounding regional spaces, and the connectivity between major global ports and local transportation capillaries in global city-regions. The concept of *aero-regionalism* advances our understanding of the urban political economy of airports by uncovering how competitive economic globalization, state spatiality and the development of large-scale airport infrastructures are mediated through the symbiotic, if contested, co-production of urban and air space. While divergent governance regimes have shaped the development of urban transportation networks in the two case city-regions, the imperatives of globalization and neoliberalization are pressuring the material, political and discursive regionalization of airport space while privileging the logics of premium networked mobility.

Keywords: global city-regions; transportation governance; urban infrastructure;
relationality/territoriality dialectic; comparative urbanization

1. Introduction

Air transportation holds a privileged position in studies of global city formation, development and connectivity. Globalization, Kesselring (2009, p. 41) observes, not only “lands on the runways of the international air hubs – but it also takes off from them”. Airports function as key interfaces through which global networks are moored in place and the metropolises in which they are located are both deeply integrated with, and affected by, the recalibrated propinquity engendered by air travel (Hall, 2009; Urry, 2009). Access to advanced air transportation plays a fundamental role in determining the relative centrality of cities within multiscale urban systems (Alberts, Bowen and Cidell, 2009; Guimerà et al., 2005; Munkala and Tervo, 2013; Witlox and Derudder, 2007). Efficient, cost-effective transportation connections are a prerequisite for companies to employ advanced logistical techniques (Erie, 2004; O’Connor, 2003) and for localities to market themselves as global business hubs (Beaverstock et al., 2009; Jones, 2009; McNeill, 2009). As a result, non-stop flight linkages prominently factor in global city rankings (Foreign Policy, 2010; see Derudder, van Nuffel and Witlox, 2009; Keeling, 1995). A generalized global shift towards the deregulation and privatization of commercial air transportation over the past four decades has only served to deepen the centrality of air infrastructure within a competitive, increasingly urbanized, global economy (Freestone, 2011; Sinha, 1999; Small, 1993; Yang, Tok and Su, 2008). The commercialization of airport management has proceeded apace and airport facilities are now regularly incorporated in private global investment portfolios (Graham, 2013; McNeill, 2010; Torrance, 2008).

City leaders around the world are under mounting pressure to expand air capacity in order to ensure their locality’s position in the world city network. Against this backdrop, an influential policy consensus – employed to varying degrees (and with varying degrees of effectiveness) from Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Phoenix to Cairo, Singapore and Belo Horizonte – has crystallized

around the growth potential of the “airport city” or “aerotropolis” (Appold and Kasarda, 2013; Blanton, 2004; Güller and Güller 2003; Kasarda, 1995; Kasarda and Sullivan, 2006). Cities are advised to embrace their airports by developing advanced, modally integrated facilities that can maximize locational advantages for New Economy industries “with the ultimate aim of bolstering the city’s competitiveness, job creation, and quality of life” (Kasarda and Lindsay, 2011, p. 174).

Investment in airport-enabling urban development, though, is neither a simple nor sustainable panacea for the challenges of economic globalization (Charles et al., 2007). Globalizing airport facilities require extensive and extended capital investment alongside the place-based accumulation of technological knowledge and organizational and geopolitical power (Graham and Marvin, 2001, p. 21). Aviation connectivity exposes urban centers to the threats of terrorism (Graham, 2006) and enhances vulnerability to global pandemics (Ali, 2006; Budd, Bell and Warren, 2011). Geographically uneven economic development, in addition to localized environment impacts, invoke a complex and contested politics of scale surrounding airport infrastructure (Stevens, Baker and Freestone, 2010). McNeill (2014, p. 4) unpacks the territoriality of airport space to disclose a complex geography of political power including: uneasy webs of actors enmeshed within multiscale governance regimes; a reticulated network of global (dis)connectivity; functional corridors for aircraft movement that are often the source of conflict between competing technical and social demands; and surveillance spaces through which personal mobility, identity and affect are constructed and contested. As territorial gateways, airports are spaces of regulation, securitization and Othering as much as interfaces expediting global flows and economic activity (Adey, 2009; Lisle, 2003; Salter, 2008a). Here, Adey (2010, p. 7) suggests extended ‘aeromobility’ facilitates new practices and regimes of post-national citizenship that now “define and undo more traditional concepts of citizen and territory”.

Despite a resurgence of interest in the mobilities, territoriality, and cultural economy of air transport, relations between air infrastructure, globalization and local economic development remain under-theorized (Cidell, 2006a, p. 654; Evans and Hutchins, 2002, p. 429; McNeill, 2011, p. 154). Much global cities and global city networks literature, as well as empirical aerotropolis studies, tends to treat the politics and economics of air transport uncritically, often deploying weak scalar theorizing. By focusing analytical attention on issues of inequality, corporate power and cross-border networks, seminal studies by Abu-Lughod (1999), Massey (2005) and Sassen (1991, 2012) afford only a marginal role to the political economy of international airports in global city formation and politics. For instance, in her otherwise stellar study of America's global cities, Abu-Lughod's (1999, p. 353) limited engagement with O'Hare International Airport renders Chicago's foremost globalizing infrastructure a patronage project for the city's growth machine.¹ Air traffic data are regularly used to demonstrate the relational connectivity of global city networks (Mahutga et al., 2010; Neal, 2010). However, the use of airline flows as a gauge for globalization presents significant methodological and analytical limitations – e.g. the need to distinguish between destination and stopover airports and account for the state-centric nature of many airline networks (Derudder, van Nuffel and Witlox, 2009; Taylor, 2004, p. 38; van de Vijver et al., 2014) – while giving little consideration to how global flows are actually grounded in, and structured by, local sociospatial structures.

Normative assumptions regarding airports' economic, social and political impacts are substantially codified through quantitative metrics and persistent yet unquestioned tropes of global competitiveness (Adey, Budd and Hubbard, 2007). This illustrates, in no small degree, the dominant global imaginary that underpins much political discourse on airport-oriented urban

¹ Erie (2004) provides an exception by foregrounding the trade and infrastructure networks underpinning globalization and urban development in Los Angeles.

development. In examining urban politics in Frankfurt (notably surrounding Frankfurt Airport), Keil (2011) concludes city elites have effectively “internalized” the imperative to globalize within urban governance practices, discourses and institutional frameworks at the expense of alternative spatial imaginaries and modes of development. It is necessary to move beyond purely topological readings of global city connectivity, as well as quantitative measurements of direct flights, passenger numbers and freight movements, to develop a detailed understanding of the interactions between economic imperatives, territorial restructuring and multiscalar politics at the nexus of urban and air space.

This paper advances a theoretical framework that situates the territorialization processes and modalities of urban politics engendered by international airports within on-going debates on the form, function and governance of global city-regions. The argument is organized as follows. The paper begins by establishing the regionalizing dynamics of air transportation as an important yet understudied dimension of contemporary urbanization. It then details the concept of *aero-regionalism* as a means to unpack airports’ territorial and relational position within global city-regions. The paper’s substantive empirical analysis provides a relational urban comparison of airport planning, governance and infrastructural integration in the global city-regions of Chicago and Toronto. Analytically shifting the conceptual lens from the *global city* to *global city-region* represents a moment of strategic rescaling that brings to the fore broad urbanization patterns that are understood to be global in nature. Global city-region analysis highlights questions of infrastructure, political collaboration and metropolitan spatial structure in a manner that global city analysis does not (Hall, 2009; Sassen, 2001). In doing so, it furthers our understanding of the urban political economy of major air hubs and their impact on territorial development. The case studies illustrate the impact and path-dependence of neoliberalization processes (including those triggered by the deregulation of domestic aviation in the United States in 1978 and Canada in

1987) on new political and socio-technical fixes – and contradictions – that are now being framed at the city-regional scale. The paper concludes by detailing aero-regionalism’s contribution to studies of global city-regionalism and practices of airport planning and governance.

The argument presented here draws from semi-structured interviews with key actors in local and regional government, economic development, transportation governance, regional planning and community organizations in the Chicago (18) and Toronto (15) city-regions, conducted between 2008 and 2011. Interviews were chiefly conducted with urban elites who operated as gatekeepers of particular situated knowledges as a result of their political or social positions (Ward and Jones, 1999). Archival and secondary data detailing airport planning, public debates and community opposition were also reviewed, including planning documents, professional reports, community group materials and newspaper articles in both city-regions.²

2. Airports and the challenge of global city-regional urbanization

Spurred by transformations in the political authority and territoriality of the nation-state in an era of intensive globalization, neoliberal approaches to local economic development have galvanized an apparent consensus regarding territorial development at the city-regional scale (Deas, 2013; Jonas and Ward, 2007; Scott, 2001, 2012; Storper, 2013). With the rise of “rescaled competition state regimes”, states operating at a number of scales have prioritized the production and governance of regional transportation infrastructure as a spatial strategy to enhance the territorial competitiveness of major urban economies, superseding older regionalist frameworks premised on a politics of equity and redistribution (Brenner, 2004, pp. 176, 260). A significant strand of

² In Chicago, materials were reviewed at the Chicago Historical Society Research Center, the Government Publications Department of the Harold Washington Library and the Northwestern University Transportation Library. In Toronto, collections at the City of Toronto Archives, the Archives of Ontario, the Urban Affairs Library and the Clara Thomas Special Collections and Archives Center at York University were consulted.

literature points to the geoeconomic role of infrastructure investment within such competitive city-regionalism, but Jonas (2013, p. 295) argues the reconfiguration of internal state space around new forms of city-regionalism further illustrates a “new territorial politics of collective provision”. Here, strategic state investments in transport, housing, utilities etc. are leveraged via territorial fixes aimed at securing the conditions for social reproduction at the city-regional scale. Local transportation and planning agencies lend themselves to regionalization in this context (Addie, 2013; Jonas, Goetz and Bhattacharjee, 2013; MacKinnon and Shaw, 2010). Air transport and airport-oriented development, however – while also subjects of neoliberal restructuring – pose significant challenges for institutional and infrastructural urban integration, especially when considered in relation to the political reterritorialization unfurling via global city-regional urbanization.

The processes through which politically constructed, mobilized and territorialized “spaces of regionalism” are realized and rendered visible from the relational “regional spaces” of the globalizing economy are complex and often overlooked within urban policy frameworks (Jones and MacLeod, 2004). In part, this reflects on-going debates regarding the territorial and relational processes producing city-regional space, and indeed, the ontological foundations of the city-region itself (Amin, 2004; Beaumont and Nicholls, 2007; Harrison, 2010; Jonas and Ward, 2007). The forces shaping city-regions are increasingly transnational (Allen and Cochrane, 2010, Smith, 2003) while experimental neoliberal governance institutionalizes regions as “soft spaces” with “fuzzy boundaries” (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009). Yet even as extra-local actors and institutions shape modalities of urban politics, urban flows remain predominantly channeled through material spaces and are regulated by territorially defined bodies (Cochrane, 2012; Jonas, 2012; Morgan, 2007). Analyses of global city-regional urbanization must therefore adequately

account for the internal processes of territorialization and external global linkages captured by the “relationality/territoriality dialectic” (McCann and Ward, 2010).

This “real existing regionalism” is the contested product of discourses, technologies (material and of power) and territorial relationships (Addie and Keil, in press). In this context, I argue investment in global airport infrastructure provides a key tool for strategic state interventions in a manner that reflects the complexity of urban territoriality and political power in an era of competitive city-regionalism. The airport extends beyond its built form by drawing together a myriad of sociotechnical systems and relations “as an organism of the urban economy” (McNeill, 2010, p. 2861) and functions as a prominent “symbolic marker” discursively legitimizing the processes and practices of neoliberal urbanization (see Dembski, 2013; Pascoe, 2001). Airports are, as such, an interface between the *territorial* (as immobile built environments embodying vast sums of fixed capital) and *topological* (channelling and regulating the movement of people and commodities) processes supporting the development of global city-regions. The effectiveness of airport infrastructure in realizing both their globalizing and localizing functions is dependent upon efficient and accessible integration with local transportation systems that operate under contradictory logics and scales of mobility (Keil and Young, 2008). Consequently, as paradigmatic conflicts in Boston, Frankfurt, San Diego and Tokyo attest, airport redevelopment projects often trigger strong opposition from stakeholders with diverse mobility requirements and contingent knowledges of airport space (Faburel and Levy, 2009; Kesselring, 2009). The challenges of infrastructural integration and scaling governance place airports at the heart of city-regionalization and city-regional politics. The implications of regional context and the relative significance of variations in local governance regimes and policy interventions require both conceptual innovation and detailed empirical examination.

3. Unpacking *aero-regionalism* in the Chicago and Toronto city-regions

In this paper, I depart from normative interpretations of the role and impact of airport-oriented or integrated urban development by embedding the development and governance of major airports within the overarching processes of city-regionalization. Neither airports, nor their developmental logics or urban settings, can be considered as singular, homogenous or uncontested entities in isolation (McNeill, 2014). The spatiality of airports emerge as “the product of numerous interlocking geopolitical, economic, environmental, social, technical and commercial practices that operate at a variety of spatial scales and manifest themselves in different ways in different places through time” (Budd, 2009, p. 132). Rather than appearing as a “messy, random, or antagonistic” *assemblage* as Salter (2008b, p. xiv) argues, I follow Harvey (1996a, p. 262) to forward the multiple and intersecting spatial processes internalized within airport space acquire a “permanence... that assures their character and internal integrity”. Although they remain contested social constructs, these place-specific institutional and infrastructural *permanences* provide a degree of stability that endows their associated regional formations with a “structured coherence” to facilitate localized capital accumulation and the reproduction of social relations while temporally mitigating capitalism’s internal crisis tendencies. This is to say, global airports foster distinct modalities of urban governance located within a neoliberal global political economy. These interrelate with the production of city-regional space in contingent ways that remain conditioned by national and local systems of regulation.

I refer to the processes of urban territorialization unfurling at the nexus of globalization, city-regionalism and air transport as *aero-regionalism*. The concept acknowledges airports as contested and contradictory urban spaces by paying close attention to how global air hubs’: (1) *evolving material infrastructure* (i.e. terminal development, runway and flight path alignments, physical footprint and local transport connections); (2) *dynamic governance regimes* (e.g.

national air regulations, airport and airline management, and transportation and land use planning); and (3) *multifaceted political and symbolic functions* mediate the territorial and relational production of city-regions. Aero-regionalism thus brings together facets of airports' territoriality that have previously been examined in isolation (following McNeill, 2014).

Analytically, the concept focuses on air infrastructures' sociospatial relations to their regional political economic context, opposed to "aeromobilities" and Foucauldian studies that examine the spatiality of airports as sites of ordering, discipline and affect (e.g. Adey, 2010; Knox et al., 2008; McNeill, 2010; Salter, 2008a). Aero-regionalism aims to reveal the context for strategic state selectivity and key mechanisms for scaling state action surrounding global air infrastructure in an era of city-regional urbanization. Since the sociotechnical infrastructures of city-regions are neither territorially fixed nor discursively static (Addie and Keil, in press; Amin, 2004; Graham and Marvin, 2001), I analyze aero-regionalism through a strategic relational framework that: (1) conceives the state, and its constituent forms, as a social relation (Jessop, 2007); and (2) adopts an open understanding of city-regions as an expression of on-going processes of urbanization that are territorialized in place (Harvey, 1996b; Ward, 2010).

This paper operationalizes the concept of aero-regionalism via a comparative study of the politics and connectivity issues surrounding global airports in two North American city-regions: Chicago and Toronto. Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and Toronto's Pearson International Airport are primary continental and global air hubs located in, and serving, highly integrated metropolitan regions centered around major global city cores. In this regard they represent a particular modality of global urbanization whose territoriality centers on extended city-regional agglomerations. The dynamics at play contrast, for instance, the state spatial projects of national integration mobilized through newly constructed airport cities emerging

across Asia and the Gulf States (McNeill, 2014).³ As the paper details, both O’Hare and Pearson Airports have been subject to major redevelopment projects over the passed two decades that have raised divergent challenges for city-regional integration [TABLE 1 HERE].⁴

Techniques of city-regional territorialization (including planning, infrastructure construction and regional institutionalization) have taken hold across northeastern Illinois and southern Ontario over the past decade. The imperatives of economic competitiveness and resilience, combined with a desire to curb urban sprawl, are now codified in regional policy and planning frameworks intended to support polycentric, smart and sustainable urbanization (Addie, 2013). In Chicago, the new regionalist vision and vigorous lobby of urban elites through Chicago Metropolis 2020 (Johnson, 2001) prompted the State of Illinois to consolidate transportation and land-use planning in a single institution covering seven counties in northeastern Illinois: the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). CMAP’s explicitly holistic vision for future regional development prioritized the promotion and facilitation of investment at the city-regional scale. The Agency’s comprehensive plan, *Go to 2040*, emphasized integrated, multimodal transportation planning as “the region can no longer afford not to plan effectively” (CMAP, 2010, p. 328). In southern Ontario, the Provincial government has been actively promoting an integrated program of regional land-use, environmental and transportation policies since 2003. Alongside classic modes of governmental regulation, the Province established a regional transportation agency, Metrolinx, as a sectoral instrument shaping urban development in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Metrolinx’s 25-year, C\$50 billion regional transportation plan, *The Big Move* guides the development of transportation infrastructure to

³ The development of air infrastructure in the North America was historically tied to processes of nation building; whether through the federal establishment of airmail service in the United States during the 1920s or Ottawa and Canadian National founding Trans-Canada Airlines in 1937. Postwar spatial Keynesian projects accelerated the integration of national territories, with airports absorbing surplus capital and labor and opening new markets.

⁴ Kasarda and Lindsay (2011, pp. 46-58) flag Chicago as a prime example of contested aerotropolis development.

concentrate intensified regional growth around a network of “mobility hubs”. Chicago and Toronto’s international airports, however, have both been largely removed from institutions producing, rendering visible, and governing city-regional space. This is a significant paradox, especially in city-regions that aspire to be global.

4. Aero-regionalism Chicago-style: Municipal control and the pressure of regionalization

The Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) administers all aspects of airport operations at O’Hare International Airport and Midway International Airport. As a municipal cabinet position, CDA’s Commissioner reports directly to the Mayor’s Office, rendering the Chicago’s chief executive the region’s de facto airport manager. Municipal ownership has two central advantages for the City of Chicago. First, the City controls the economy of the region’s major aviation infrastructure from everyday operations to economic development strategies and long range planning. Given the Airports’ importance as economic drivers, this arrangement places significant power over the regional economy in the hands of the City of Chicago.⁵ Second, by overseeing airports as a municipal concern, the operation and development of O’Hare and Midway are buffered from the conflicting interests of other regional actors. CMAP, for example, defers to the City regarding airport-related planning. According to CDA, functioning as a single entity reporting to the Mayor enables plans to be efficiently developed and implemented:

Being a single entity in the City of Chicago, I don’t think you’ll have a situation where you have a vision and you start to carry it out and you spend hundreds of millions or billions of

⁵ CDA operates on a self-sufficient basis and does not use local or state taxes to finance operations or capital improvements. Federal tax funding is received through grants distributed by the FAA and Federal DOT. As of 2011, CDA (2012a) claims Chicago’s airports generated economic activity in excess of \$45 billion per annum (\$38 billion from O’Hare), and accounted for 540,000 regional jobs (450,000 from O’Hare).

dollars on a plan, and then have paralyzing issues internally to stop what you're doing (Rod, interview, 2009).

Such political autonomy is a double-edged sword. Projects can be developed with limited intra-governmental disruption. Yet planning expediency limits direct democratic involvement by many (mainly suburban) actors in the region while elevating politically mobilized technical knowledge of airport space over that of communities impacted by the negative externalities of airport operations (see Faburel and Levy, 2009).

The City of Chicago's unwillingness to engage in regional conversations on expanding air capacity and CDA's limited involvement with regional governance bodies distances the authority responsible for Chicago's major globalizing infrastructure from the political frameworks of regional development. Institutional relationships are predominantly informal and built on personal networks rather than forged and regulated through formal bodies of regional or transportation governance. CDA's passive regional role and institutional independence reflects the City of Chicago's traditional political dominance over its collar counties (Hamilton, 2002; Lindstrom, 2010) and highlights that the relational economic flows assembled by the globalizing airport have tended to exist outwith politically defined "spaces of regionalism".

However, Chicago's structural capacities as a regional actor relative to its suburban neighbors have enabled the City to pursue inter-governmental collaborations when politically expedient. The Bi-State Compact Agreement signed on August 15, 1995 by the Cities of Chicago and Gary Indiana illustrates the impact of the Chicago city-region's particular jurisdictional arrangements and framework of political power in territorializing the relational flows of air travel. Redistricting 1990 had shifted political power in the Illinois Legislature (in the mid-state capital, Springfield) to State Republicans who favored a developing greenfield airport in south suburban Peotone as the means to break Chicago's aviation dominance and establish a State-

based regional airport authority (Hamilton, 1999, p. 187). In response, then Chicago mayor Richard M. Daley's deft political maneuvering outflanked his opponents in Springfield by brokering the Compact Agreement. This established the Chicago/Gary Airport Authority as a legally separate organization empowered to coordinate operations at O'Hare, Midway and newly renamed Gary/Chicago International Airport. CDA viewed the Compact as an "alliance... where the City of Chicago and the City of Gary have their own interests, but there's the opportunity that is recognized to break down walls of competition" (Rod, interview, 2009). The Compact enabled Gary to finally, if modestly, capitalize on its airport's strategic location 25 miles from Chicago (O'Hara, 2003). More significantly, by blocking both Gary and a new suburban airport from emerging as competitors, the Compact both safeguarded the City of Chicago's continued control over O'Hare and Midway and negated the political rationale for a regional airport authority.

Yet the regional impact of Chicago's airports and persistent purported need to expand air capacity suggest the City's airport governance regime is under pressure. As Chicago's air infrastructure undergoes its latest round of restructuring, suburban actors are looking to enhance their influence at O'Hare through regionalizing (or suburbanizing) the Airport's material infrastructure and economic flows.

4.1 The O'Hare Modernization Program

The 1978 deregulation of domestic air transport in the United States exacerbated calls to expand Chicago's air capacity (see Sinha, 1999). Despite several terminal improvements and the Chicago-Gary Bi-State Compact, congestion continued to be an issue at O'Hare through the 1990s. Moreover, rapid growth at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport threatened

Chicago's established position as America's preeminent global air hub.⁶ Contrary to regionalizing strategies being pursued elsewhere in the United States that sought to 'spread the burden' of metropolitan air traffic across multiple airports (Cidell, 2006b), Mayor Daley refused to allow funds generated at O'Hare and Midway to finance the development of a third airport. Rather, he turned his attention to constructing new runways at O'Hare (with the purported capacity to reduce overall delays by 79%) and opening a new passenger terminal on the western side of the Airport (City of Chicago, 2001). The O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP) presented Daley with an opportunity to cement his legacy on Chicago's landscape, as his father, Mayor Richard J. Daley, had done in opening O'Hare nearly five decades earlier.

While the 9/11 attacks shook the airline industry, both traffic levels and economic activity at Chicago's airports were showing signs of recovery by 2003. Popular and political opinion too was moving in favor of O'Hare expansion. Although the City maintained its tendency to operate unilaterally and guarded the details of airport development, key members of Chicago's growth machine, including the Commercial Club of Chicago, Business Leaders for Transportation, the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and Global Chicago backed OMP (Schwieterman, 2006, p. 288). Andrew McKenna Sr., head of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, declared "O'Hare modernization will be the most important economic development project undertaken in Illinois in our lifetime" (cf. Chicago Tribune, 2003, p. 26). In Springfield, the downfall of Governor George Ryan (who had backed Peotone Airport) and the 2003 election of Rod Blagojevich, a Democrat with strong Chicago connections, brought State backing to the City's airport agenda. Blagojevich signed the O'Hare Modernization Act on August 6, 2003, removing State interference from OMP and granting the City of Chicago eminent domain powers

⁶ Atlanta's International Airport took O'Hare's number one ranking in terms of passengers served in 1998; a title held by Chicago airports since 1931. Atlanta surpassed O'Hare in terms of annual aircraft movements between 1999 and 2000 and has held onto the title of America's busiest airport since 2005.

beyond its borders for the project. Springfield thus acknowledged O'Hare's "essential role" in the national air transportation system and OMP's capacity to "enhance the economic welfare of the State" (Illinois General Assembly, 2003). As Springfield scaled-up the economic territory through which O'Hare's impact would reverberate, CDA discursively adopted a regional spatial imaginary while, in the same instance, retaining the centrality of Chicago's municipal interests.

As an airport planner put it:

If you want the region to grow, there's probably nothing better that you can point to in your economy as a central focal point [than] an airport... That's always been the driving force. If you're going to stay strong and be a world-class leader... you're going to need an airport like the one we're doing (Rod, interview, 2009).

CDA (2012b) estimated OMP would create 195,000 job and \$18 billion in regional economic activity while realizing c.\$370 million in savings for air carriers and c.\$380 million for passengers. These economic rationales reinforced and internalized the discourse of global competitiveness used by the City to lobby for OMP (Cidell, 2006a, p. 661).

4.2 Negotiating local politics in the global city-region

Chicago's aviation governance regime proved extremely effective for the City in marshaling the demands for the collective provision of regional air infrastructure. CDA developed OMP in house and away from potentially prolonged debates on regional air capacity. OMP moved ahead as a project of regional, statewide and national economic significance, but under the guidance, and chiefly serving the interests, of the City of Chicago. After receiving State backing in 2003 and federal approval in 2005, the City commenced work on OMP and by doing so, attempted to foster the view that the project was a *fait accompli*.

OMP, however, faced considerable suburban opposition from two coalitions with political and geographically distinct interests in, and knowledge of, Chicago's air space. The first was constituted by south suburban interests including Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr., Will County and the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA). The mainly lower-income, Democratic and African-American base of the inner south suburbs favored developing Peotone Airport as a means to re-center the depressed industrial south within the city-regional economy.⁷ The second coalition, the Suburban O'Hare Commission (SOC), represented a shifting network of predominantly wealthy, white, Republican northwestern suburbs that had protested expansion at O'Hare since the 1980s. At its height, SOC brought together 17 municipalities concerned with the impacts of congestion, noise and air pollution on their communities. While the south suburban coalition's political connections and desire to bring an airport to Peotone necessitated the maintenance of cordial relations with the City of Chicago, SOC had no interest in conducting a regional dialogue and adopted a bunker mentality (Schwieterman, 2006). SOC's most vocal members were those threatened by annexation of 433 acres for runway extensions: Bensenville and Elk Grove Village to the west, and Des Plaines in the northeast.

As OMP took off and SOC began to ramp up its campaign, the City of Chicago effectively undermined opposition by exploiting political fractures within the anti-OMP movement. The highly fragmented nature of the region's political geography (in notable juxtaposition to Toronto) enabled the City of Chicago to target the benefits of OMP to appeal to the parochial interests of individual communities. Having been hit by the downturn in the aviation economy following 9/11, Des Plaines broke from SOC and welcomed the potential benefits of OMP for the city's industrial base. The restructuring of prospective OMP flight paths

⁷ Most interviewees from the southern Chicago city-region continued to support Peotone Airport. However, capacity increases at Gary will likely result in its indefinite postponement.

proved instrumental in shifting Des Plaines's political allegiances (see Budd, 2009). The Village embraced the freight and cargo development vision proffered for the O'Hare area (Cambridge Systematics, 2010; Chicago Metropolis 2020, 2004), adding c. 1.5 million feet² of logistics space between 2003 and 2008 (Angell, interview, 2008). Other municipalities, including Itasca, Schaumburg and Wood Dale, welcomed the potential to mirror the established conference and business center development in suburbs, notably Rosemont, to the east of O'Hare. Faced with declining support and the apparent inevitability of OMP, SOC's last stalwarts, Elk Grove Village and Bensenville, dropped their resistance as the old guard of municipal leadership was swept from office in 2008-2009 elections.

4.3 Opening O'Hare to the region

The issue of Western Access was a key factor in swaying suburban opinion on OMP, most pointedly in the case of DuPage County. Traditionally, the County's predominantly Republican leadership adopted an isolationist position within the Chicago region and was often at the crux of the city-suburban antagonism (Hamilton, 2002). Fearing the displacement of jobs and residences, DuPage spent millions of dollars fighting the City of Chicago in court to oppose O'Hare expansion and contributed \$14,000 annually to SOC through the 1990s (McCopplin, 2003). The County reversed its stance on O'Hare following a change in leadership on the County Board in 2002. Board Chairman, Bob Schillerstrom, withdrew DuPage's opposition to OMP in January 2003, placing the burden of resistance on the dwindling number of municipalities in SOC. Interviews revealed that Chicago's far western and north-western suburbs and satellite towns already welcomed the possibility to further tap into the O'Hare economy as they could take advantage of the synergies between global air connectivity and local economic development without suffering the negative externalities of airport growth.

The County's shift was, in part, a reaction to the election of the pro-OMP Blagojevich; as DuPage Board member Brien Sheahan argued, "[OMP] is a project that is going to occur... We're either going to have it imposed on us, or we can pull up a chair... and be a part of the shaping of the final plan" (cf. Meyer and Hilkevitch, 2003, p. 1). Yet as Sheahan indicated, it also reflected a change in philosophy as the County began to think in terms of competitive regionalism. The prospect of reorienting the physical space of O'Hare westward presented the opportunity to deepen DuPage's integration within an aviation-based economy [**FIGURE 1 HERE**]. Western Access catalyzed a spatial reimagining of the Airport's position in the region that served to resolve the contradiction between local communities' interests and regional demands for globalizing infrastructure; "the old leadership saw [O'Hare] as an economic engine for Chicago and Cook County. The new leadership sees it as an economic engine for the greater region" (DuPage County, interview, 2008). After signing on to OMP, the County conducted a \$370,000 economic development study – jointly financed with the City of Chicago – projecting the program would add \$3 billion and 12,000 jobs to DuPage County's economy by 2015, increasing to \$10 billion and 40,000 by 2030 (DuPage County, interview, 2008).

DuPage leadership's strategic shift hinged on the "post-political" reasoning that Western Access made OMP a universal benefit to the County (Deas, 2013). Yet Western Access poses a challenge for communities close to O'Hare. A northeast DuPage municipal planner attested:

One could argue that Western Access could benefit [us] by providing more opportunities here to be connected to the region. At the same time, we have to balance that from [our] perspective. How many businesses are you going to be knocking out and how much property are you going to be taking... in order to get these connections? (DuPage County municipality, interview, 2009).

There is a sense that the imposition of a regional vision through a revanchist NIMBY politics – particularly the concentration of globally-integrated cargo distribution facilities around O’Hare – will lock airport-adjacent municipalities into overwhelming industrial development, fundamentally redefining their character: “We could just accept anything that comes into [the municipality]... [but] we don’t just want truck terminal and warehouses... we don’t want to be one big parking lot on [the west] of the Airport” (DuPage County municipality, interview, 2009). Former SOC members have begun to assert their voices in an attempt to shape the form and function of development around O’Hare. This move is most evident in the Illinois Department of Transportation’s (IDOT) planning process for the extension of the Western Bypass and Elgin-O’Hare expressway, and the development of new transit facilities proposed in CMAP’s GO to 2040 plan (see **Figure 1**).⁸

Western Access would enable the westward flow of economic activity from the Airport, but with this, both DuPage County and municipal leaders have an increasing interest in gaining political influence for suburbs at O’Hare. This is to say, forging a new territorialized political “space of regionalism” that can leverage the “regional spaces” opened by urban-economic infrastructure to the competitive benefit of the County (Jones and MacLeod, 2004). Regionalizing the orientation of O’Hare away from Chicago challenges the existing territorially defined basis of the City’s airport governance regime as other communities and organizations stake their right to a seat at the table. Yet while IDOT has effectively brought together key interest groups and moved ahead with highway planning surrounding the Airport, the City of Chicago continues to set the agenda at O’Hare and oppose the suburbanization of its global infrastructure. This position

⁸ Elk Grove Village dropped their opposition to OMP on the basis of favorable IDOT highway alignments. Further, a municipal planner from northeast DuPage stressed their desire to locate a potential western terminal multi-modal transit within their jurisdiction. By locating a transit terminal beyond airport grounds, the municipality believes they, rather than O’Hare (and subsequently the City of Chicago) could benefit economically from the facility (DuPage County municipality, interview, 2009).

partially supports Cidell's (2006a, pp. 660-661) contention that in putting forward O'Hare expansion as a necessity for Chicago's global economic competitiveness, the City was primarily concerned with maintaining control over *its* airports. It also reveals the volatile nature of the political and economic relationships through which the City governs regional aviation.

While CDA (2012c) sees Western Access providing "a more balanced and efficient airport for the region" and the State views the project as "an essential element... needed to realize the full economic opportunities created by [OMP]" (Illinois General Assembly, 2003), the City of Chicago had not guaranteed the construction of a new western terminal, nor opening western access to O'Hare. This position expressed OMP's contested funding within the tangled dynamics of "glocal infrastructure governance" (Torrance, 2008). Through the terms of American and United Airlines' 1985 lease agreement at O'Hare (set to expire in 2018), the Airlines are obligated to finance capital improvements at the Airport in return for veto power over CDA plans. While a tentative agreement between the City and the airlines had been reached in 2005, the impact of the 2008-2009 Financial Crisis led American and United to file a contract dispute with the City of Chicago in an attempt to scale back OMP. In late 2010, facing a global decline in air travel, CDA and the Airlines agreed to postpone the development of a new western terminal until demand recovers. The particular dynamics of aero-regionalism in the Chicago city-region has therefore deprived suburban communities the central benefits promised in return for backing OMP. Instead, the City of Chicago appears likely to maintain the political and economic orientation of the Airport towards the central core of the city-region for the foreseeable future.

5. Aero-regionalism after devolution: Establishing a city-regional fix in Toronto

Aviation governance in Canada has followed a markedly different trajectory to that of the United States. Prior to 1994, the federal government, through Transport Canada, owned and operated the

nation's major airports but the system Ottawa oversaw had become seriously overbuilt under spatial Keynesian programs pursued by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau (1968-1979, 1980-1984). Many facilities were underutilized economic sinkholes. To redress the financial drain of maintaining the national air system, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced plans to privatize the operation of Canada's airports in 1986. Jean Chrétien's Liberal government continued the process through the 1994 National Airports Policy (NAP). The legislation tried to "move the Canadian transportation system into the 21st century" by rationalizing, and devolving responsibility for, a National Airport System (NAS) constituted by 26 "nationally-significant" airports to local airport authorities (Transport Canada, 1994). The NAP identified Pearson International Airport as southern Ontario's sole NAS facility.

5.1 Governing the regional airport

The national deregulation and privatization of Canadian air transportation prompted a radical restructuring of airport governance in southern Ontario. Broad interest in renovating Pearson Airport motivated key governmental actors across the Toronto region to consider forming of a local airport authority. Indeed (and in contrast to Chicago), Pearson's location in the city of Mississauga rather than the city of Toronto necessitated a regional agreement but political divisions between local governments sparked conflict over the nature and structure of such inter-jurisdictional governance. It would be the interests of regional capital that broke the impasse. At the urging of the Toronto Board of Trade, an agreement was reached to incorporate the Greater Toronto Regional Airports Authority (GTRAA) as a non-profit corporation to run Pearson along business principles on March 3, 1993 (Greater Toronto Airports Authority, 2006, pp. 18-26). The GTRAA was restructured as a not-for-profit corporation overseen by a 15-person board with nominations from a variety of community interests and community liaison established through a

consultative committee in accordance with the NAP.⁹ Ottawa recognized the re-christened Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA) as a Canadian Airports Authority in November 1994. Terms of transfer were finalized in a 60-year Ground Lease, signed in December 1996 with the GTAA assuming responsibility for the operation, management and development of Pearson, including the ability to set airline rates and charges. Ottawa retained ownership of Pearson (along with all NAS airports outside Canada's territories) as well as the ability to set ground rents and regulate flight numbers and hours of operation. The federal government's continuing role marks the Canadian context as distinct from the United States.

The GTAA views its governance structure (which underwent minor adjustments to the nomination and appointment process in 2003 and 2009) providing three key benefits as a model of airport governance. First, the Board of Directors provides representation for governmental and non-governmental bodies that defend the interests of multiple stakeholders. Second, as the Board consists of professionals rather than politicians, the GTAA can draw from a broad pool of technical expertise to guide airport operations and development. Third, as the GTAA is responsible for generating revenues to support its operations and does not rely on tax dollars, it can be more financially flexible than publicly owned facilities (Greater Toronto Airports Authority representative, interview, 2010). Several interviewees viewed the Authority as an exemplar of regional governance and a model that should be applied to other regional and transportation bodies, including Metrolinx. Yet, although the GTAA prides itself on the relations it fosters with other actors in region, it remains buffered from direct processes of local democracy. While the federal and provincial governments have the power to appoint GTAA directors directly, the Board selects directors from a list of nominees provided by the City of

⁹ The GTAA Board consists of Directors appointed by Ottawa (2); the Province (1); the municipalities of Toronto, Durham, Halton, Peel and York (5); members appointed by the Board itself (3); and non-governmental community nominees (4) (Greater Toronto Airports Authority, 2009).

Toronto and the regional municipalities (Greater Toronto Airports Authority, 2009). The GTAA is authorized to operate airports throughout south-central Ontario, yet they have little interest in expanding oversight to other facilities and are instead focused on improving operations at Pearson (Greater Toronto Airports Authority, 2011). Airport governance and management in southern Ontario therefore remain highly fragmented [TABLE 2 HERE].

5.2 Shaping Toronto's aviation future

Transport Canada had initiated master planning at Pearson following the Mulroney government's 1986 privatization announcement but the process proceeded slowly and with limited financial assistance from Ottawa. While the Airport's existing infrastructure was capable of handling 28 million passengers annually, Pearson already welcomed 24.2 million in 1996, with projected annual increases estimated between 1 and 2 million by the 2000s. Rapid growth of passenger numbers at Pearson meant expansion was a pressing issue for the newly formed GTAA. Under its first president and CEO, Louis Turpen, the GTAA rejected Transport Canada's existing strategy of incremental infilling and terminal modification. In order to keep pace with growth and position Pearson as "Canada's gateway to the world" (Turpen, cf. Greater Toronto Airports Authority, 2006, p. 48), the Authority prepared the Airport Development Plan to completely overhaul the airport and construct a new terminal capable of handling 50 million passengers annually. Upon its opening on April 6, 2004, the GTAA (2003, p. 10) proclaimed the new Terminal 1 provided Toronto with an airport befitting an "emerging global metropolis".

Unlike OMP, Pearson's Airport Development Program did not engender widespread public or political opposition: largely as a result of frustrations with antiquated airport facilities and the predominance of flight paths over industrial areas. However, the funding mechanisms utilized for the project drew criticism. The GTAA partially financed redevelopment through the

sale of C\$2.025 billion worth of multi-year capital bonds between 1997 and 2000 but additional costs have been recouped through increased fees. Landing charges for airlines flying into Pearson tripled between 1998 and 2005. Toronto acquired the unwelcome reputation of having the world's highest landing fees which are reflected in the relatively higher cost of airlines doing business at Pearson and higher ticket prices (although a direct causal relationship between the two is difficult to measure). However, the GTAA points to the high costs of operating Pearson and the prohibitively high ground rents charged by Ottawa, in addition to the costs associated with the Airport Development Program (which increased the Airport's economic potential), as key factors contributing to the landing fee calculations. Given Pearson's status as the most lucrative airport in Canada, the federal government has been reluctant to restructure the Airport's rent formula. 2005 projections suggested that the GTAA paid 63% of federal aviation rent revenue while handling 33% of the nation's airport traffic (Toronto Star, 2005, p. A22). The lack of competition to Pearson enables both Ottawa and the GTAA to charge higher fees. Keil and Young (2008, p. 739) point to the potential significance of this intracapitalist contradiction for future regional development, but locally-dependent capital and labor will remain reliant upon Pearson as southern Ontario's major international airport and sole NAS facility.

Louis Turpen stepped down from the GTAA on September 30, 2004 after a controversial and challenging nine-year term, both for the new airport authority and the airline industry, which faced 9/11, SARS and escalating fuel costs. Under his leadership, the GTAA effectively oversaw the redevelopment of Terminal 1 but operated bullishly and with little oversight (Keil and Young, 2008, p. 738). Responding to criticisms, the Authority has attempted to reposition itself as a regionalizing actor with strong ties to local governmental and community organizations. In moving from its initial phase of infrastructure development to focus on improving airport operations and service quality, the GTAA (2010; 2011) has emphasized community engagement

in their governance practices and now views itself as more accountable than in the past. By partnering in programs such as “Partners in Project Green”, a business-led initiative to develop 12,000 hectares surrounding Pearson into an eco-business zone, the GTAA (2012) is emerging as a key stakeholder in urban growth beyond the Airport’s boundary.

5.3 Mobilizing city-regional space: Integrating global and local circuits of mobility

Improving relations with local and regional government has enabled the GTAA to address an over-riding issue for the competitiveness of both Pearson and the wider Toronto region: ground access to the Airport. Prior to GTAA’s takeover, Transport Canada dictated the operation and development of Pearson in a manner that removed Toronto’s international airport from the dynamics of regional growth and governance. A GTAA spokesman (interview, 2010) commented: “it was almost like the Airport was a black hole. Municipalities were doing their own thing all around it, but when it came to the airport boundaries, everything stopped, there was little integration”. Modernization programs coordinated with the Province in the 1960s and 1970s established highway connections to downtown via Highway 401 and the Gardiner Expressway but with these auto-centric links in place, transit connections to Pearson remained weak.

In contrast to the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) whose planners were long concerned with establishing strong transit access to O’Hare and Midway, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) – from its inception in 1954 – did not devote attention to extending rapid transit access to its regional air hub, instead focusing on local mobility between city and suburbs. Pearson developed as an auto-centric facility under the stewardship of the federal government, with the engrained assumption that driving was the principal mode of transport to the Airport. In 2007, less than one per cent of travelers arrived at Pearson via public transit (Metrolinx, 2008, p. 63). Congestion on Highways 401 and 427 is an emerging issue for the Airport, freight haulers and

offices in the Airport Corporate Center (McDonald, interview, 2009). The limited integration of global and local transport marks a significant difference between the Chicago and Toronto city-regions. O'Hare (since 1983) and Midway (since 1993) are connected to the Loop by rapid transit (with plans to develop premium fast rail services), yet transit access from central Toronto to Pearson requires a 16-minute bus connection between the subway and airport terminals. The Province's regional GO Transit network provides bus connections to Pearson from Richmond Hill, Brampton, Yorkdale and York Mills, but no link from downtown.

Pearson's weak transit connections have emerged as a pressing concern for public and private actors in the GTHA. The Toronto Board of Trade (2009) suggested synchronizing connections between the GTHA's major international gateways and ensuring the expansion of transportation infrastructure are vital for Toronto's economic prosperity. Metrolinx (2008, p. 21) has identified "high order transit connectivity to the Pearson Airport district from all directions" – including highway and road access, light rail transit (LRT), bus rapid transit (BRT) and a rail service – as a priority within its regional transportation plan. Connecting Pearson and Union Station, as Toronto's principal international gateways via a new rail link is a central element of The Big Move (ibid, p. 63). However, while such fast rail service between air hubs and downtown materially articulates a particular logic of networked connectivity, it also engenders processes of local bypass by prioritizing the demands of valued global travellers over the needs of local everyday mobility (Graham and Marvin, 2001, p. 368).

From the outset, the GTAA established a working relationship with Metrolinx that embraced the development of Pearson and its surrounding area as a mobility hub and economic center. While the exact nature of Pearson's local connectivity is still uncertain (and contested in the case of a direct diesel rail link to Union Station), GTAA staff engaged in planning with the TTC and Metrolinx to identify potential LRT route alignments to the Airport (as an element of

Toronto's "Transit City" Plan, see Addie, 2013). The rationale for developing such multimodal connections has been discursively framed with specific reference to aerotropolis development in a manner that highlights: (1) the GTAA's aspiration to emulate Frankfurt Airport, Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport and newly-built Asian airport cities; and (2) the desire to utilize mass transit lines to make the airport a destination rather than just an in-transit location that will function as a catalyst for local urban development. The development of Pearson as a regional mobility hub is focused on attracting businesses in high-growth industries to locate corporate offices adjacent to the Airport and supporting the logistical benefits of airport proximity with connections to housing and entertainment. Redressing ground access deficiencies at Pearson has placed the Airport firmly on the city-regional transportation agenda in a manner that strongly contrasts to airport and regional planning frameworks in northeastern Illinois.

6. Developing air infrastructure in, and for, global city-regions

The case studies of aero-regionalism in Chicago and Toronto illustrate the extent to which airports, as economic, political and symbolic spaces, occupy positions of increased centrality in an era of competitive city-regionalism. Airports territorialize globalization in place; shrinking relative space between global hubs and extending the relational linkages producing *global* city-regions through a mosaic of sociotechnical and political networks. They further provide a means to inscribe discourses of modernity and competition on urban space. Yet as Pascoe (2001 p. 135) notes, airports face rapid obsolescence as the pace of technological development outpaces the capacities of the fixed capital sunk into the built environment. Antiquated facilities, congested skies and burgeoning infrastructure deficits present barriers to accumulation for local elites (Erie, 2004). Propelled by the imperatives of deregulated competition and tropes of global competitiveness, international air hubs in northeastern Illinois and southern Ontario have become

loci for substantial expansion and redevelopment programs at the same time as their governance regimes and territoriality become markedly more intricate.

Evidence from Chicago and Toronto indicates that competition between air hubs is being framed at the global level while the discourses and practices of airport governance clearly internalize the logics of globalized economic competitiveness (Keil, 2011). Even as they scale back expansion plans following the Financial Crisis, CDA (2012c) posits, “OMP has truly been our region’s economic stimulus package... putting thousands of people to work, rebuilding our infrastructure and keeping businesses in our City and our state”. The ability to promote global spatial imaginaries has chiefly come from the concentration of power in CDA, backed by aligned elite interests within Chicago’s growth machine. In southern Ontario, the tropes of global competitiveness, the centralization of Toronto within a global air network, and the development of Pearson as a leading air and ground hub continue to hold a comparable position of prominence in the GTAA’s (2009; 2011) strategic planning objectives. The post-politicizing function of these discourses, however, tends to conceal targeted investment in, and the governance of, global airports as expressly benefitting global urban elites (Deas, 2013; MacLeod, 2011).

Internalized globalization and the topologies of air travel characterize international airports as sites of deterritorialization and points of assemblage within a relational space of flows. Yet, globalization processes by necessity invoke “the production and continual reproduction of fixed socio-territorial infrastructures” (Brenner, 2004, p. 56). This is to say that “the global”, so often the abstract spatial imaginary appealed to in airport discourses, is embedded within a complex, on-going and locally contingent restructuring and negotiation of scale. The game of global competitiveness is played out through the dynamics of place-specific city-regional politics and the struggle to legitimize governance at the interface of state restructuring and reterritorialization (Cochrane, 2012). Indeed, airport governance in the Chicago and Toronto city-

regions has remained a public concern (despite some tentative interest in privatizing Midway). This reflects wider fears that ceding control of global aviation assets may impinge upon the state's capacity to control the political and economic externalities of air travel and lessen the ability of local authorities to influence city-regional growth (May and Hill, 2006). Competitive concerns have prompted the formation of city-regional projects in which the imperatives of economic globalization has tended to subsume local interests, most clearly in SOCs fated opposition to OMP. Here, city-regionalism does not center on securing effective land-use management or managing a politics of collective provision within the internal geography of urban regions (Jonas, 2013; Jonas, While and Gibbs, 2010). Rather, aero-regionalism predominantly pivots on the geoeconomic pressures faced by competition states. Large-scale infrastructure investments, as a state spatial strategy, are codified as a prerequisite for global competitiveness. This conforms to broader trends of "deep neoliberalization" that entrench regional units within supranational circuits of capital accumulation (Brenner et al., 2010).

While the language and normative appeal of the aerotropolis have gained prominence in planning dialogues surrounding O'Hare and Pearson Airports, the global networks territorialized by airport infrastructure have held a decentered, if vital, position within the case city-regions' respective governance frameworks. Yet the aerotropolis is not a singular entity and the city-region is not a collective actor. The imperatives of global city-regionalization, driven by competitive urban regimes, capture the "real existing regionalism" of both cases in a mix of territorial, rhetorical and technological change which internalizes on-going and contested multiscalar urban processes (Addie and Keil, in press). The complex spatial politics mobilized through the relationality/territoriality dialectic (McCann and Ward, 2010) have embroiled O'Hare and Pearson Airports within an unstable geopolitics of city-regional growth and governance.

As infrastructure fixes, investment in global airports has attempted capture geographically restless capital in ways that are conditioned by actors (business elites, politicians at various levels of government, airline executives and local communities) operating with varying structural capacities and differing territorial interests. This is particularly important as although airports are generative nodes of extra-local relations and flows “connections between air transportation and globalization are contingent on the political, economic, and geographical characteristics of place” (Cidell, 2006a, p. 661). The divergent modes of governance underpinning aero-regionalism in the Chicago and Toronto city-regions have resulted in differing pathways to infrastructure improvement and different approaches to territorializing urban and regional development (see **Table 1**). In Chicago, the intertwining of city politics and aviation governance produces a mode of territoriality and discourse of global competitiveness based around the municipality (opposed to city-region) as the strategic mechanisms supporting airport development. Although CDA is investigating increased regional connectivity to O’Hare, the City remains wary of catalyzing globally integrated economic activity through the regionalization processes potentially unleashed by Western Access. The interests of the City of Chicago present a continuing and significant barrier to the regionalization of airport governance. A CTA planner highlighted the challenge that the City faces in regionalizing the governance of O’Hare, noting that while there are intriguing transit and mobility possibilities surrounding a Western Terminal – including opening rapid transit and commuter rail access to employment hubs west of the Airport – the CTA “has a vested interest in making sure that the downtown of Chicago continues to be a vibrant, viable place to do business and that all of the development doesn’t shift to the northwest because we’ve already made significant investments in the downtown” (Busby, interview, 2009).

An established lack of integration between regional land-use, transportation and airport planning perpetuates the problematic political position of O’Hare within the Chicago city-region.

GO to 2040 includes proposals to develop highway and transit infrastructure around O'Hare, but in contrast to Metrolinx's Big Move, CMAP's (2010, pp. 243-322) discussion of regional mobility is detached from CDA's plans and stops short of O'Hare's boundaries. Pearson is integrated in Metrolinx's regional transportation plan as a regional gateway hub and the GTAA has welcomed the prospect of deepening the Airport's institutional and infrastructural embedding in the region through multimodal transportation facilities. During the master planning process, the GTAA resolved to focus access to Pearson at its existing location. Consequently, the Authority has not reoriented Pearson westward towards the economically booming municipalities of Brampton and Mississauga, nor has it engendered inter-jurisdictional conflict over airport-oriented development. The federal NAS provides a regulatory backbone limiting local competition while enabling the GTAA to adopt an aggressive program of local infrastructure and air network expansion; a luxury not afforded to O'Hare in the United States' environment of heightened intra-national competition.

7. Conclusion

This paper has introduced the concept of aero-regionalism to analyze the planning and governance of major airports as they operate within overarching processes of global city-regionalization. Globalization may take off and land on the runways of major airports, but the complex dynamics of present-day state spatiality and global networked flows internalized within global airports resonate well beyond the taxiways and terminals of these territorial gateways. The paper's comparative study of Chicago and Toronto has demonstrated that competitive economic globalization, state spatiality and the political economy of large-scale infrastructure are mediated and territorialized through the symbiotic, production of urban and air space. Viewing airports as contested sociospatial permanences enables the conceptual incorporation of air transport's

mobility and moorings (Urry, 2009) within the relationality/territoriality dialectic underpinning city-regional urbanization (McCann and Ward, 2010).

Aero-regionalism contributes to our understanding of the relationship between global urbanization and air transport, as well as the debated processes of city-regionalism, by demonstrating how international air hubs are not only generative nodes of economic activity located in metropolitan areas, but are fundamentally conditioned by their regional context. The technical and social infrastructures of global airports regionalize in important material, political and symbolic ways, but the numerous multiscale relations and vast fixed capital brought together by air infrastructure make them difficult for territorially defined actors to operate, plan and govern (McNeill, 2011). By embedding the territoriality and modalities of urban politics engendered by airports within broader processes of city-regionalism, aero-regionalism not only reveals the complexity of unstable and evolving regional governance processes unfurling in the Chicago and Toronto city-regions (Addie, 2013), but demonstrates the ways in which the political and morphological dimensions of global city-regions are structured through a contested politics of mobility. Centering the spatial politics unfurling at the nexus of internal city-regional restructuring and global topologies of urban connectivity within studies of “real existing regionalism” (Addie and Keil, in press) offers the opportunity to unpack: (1) the political implications of competition states’ spatial projects; and (2) strategic actions and examine how issues of political territoriality and governance structure the actual production of airport-integrated urbanization.

The struggle to control and scale city-regional mobility evident within the dynamics of aero-regionalism tests the boundaries of territorial governance and representation. Processes of airport planning, as advocates of “airport city” development contend, must extend beyond established technical practices to incorporate wider aspects of urban development (Güller and

Güller, 2003; Kasarda and Lindsay, 2011). However, the on-going political contestation and governance restructuring detailed in the cases of Chicago and Toronto is evidence that incorporating globalizing infrastructure into local planning regimes interpolates a dynamic scalar politics. The importance of Chicago's O'Hare Airport within national and international air networks has led issues of local competitiveness, mobilized through spatial politics defined by the interests of the City of Chicago and buffered by the institutional position of CDA, to bypass opposition to OMP and calls to expand air capacity on a regional basis. As SOC's members discovered, strategic investment in global airport infrastructure continues to prioritize capital mobility and the material and symbolic processes of globalization while engendering profound, path-dependent, development trajectories in surrounding urban-regional space. Vast industrial, warehousing and distribution facilities extend along the highways adjacent to both Chicago's and Toronto's international airports, locking surrounding communities into specific economic growth trajectories despite local objections. While the regionalization strategies employed in the Toronto city-region have opened avenues of inclusion for "different knowledge traditions" in airport management, it is important to note that this does not necessarily equate to more democratic or socially just governance. The politics of mobility produced through the elevation of "premium network spaces" engenders distinct challenges for the social and material spaces cleaved from city-regional networks by processes of global bypass (Graham and Marvin, 2001; Young and Keil, 2010). The privileging of advanced regional connectivity and globally integrated gateways is likely to be internalized as a defining characteristic of global city-regions. Planners, policy-makers and community activists must therefore engage a complex set of economic, political and sociotechnical interests in order to effectively manage globally-integrated, economically-viable and socially just air hubs.

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Table 1: Regionalism and airport development in the Chicago and Toronto city-regions

Regional system	Chicago city-region	Toronto city-region
Regional jurisdictions and political dynamics	Six county area (Cook, DuPage, Kane, McHenry and Will counties) contains 267 municipalities with significant home rule powers; high levels of jurisdictional fragmentation and antagonism between the City of Chicago and surrounding suburbs; city-region extends into Indiana and Wisconsin	Greater Toronto Area (GTA) consists of the City of Toronto and four municipal-regions (Durham, Halton, Peel, York) containing a total of 24 municipalities. History of regional governance and spatial Keynesian programs directed by the Province of Ontario
Regional transportation and planning agencies	<i>Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)</i> : integrates land-use and transportation planning in the six-county area and Kendall county	<i>Metrolinx</i> : manages and coordinate transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA)
Regional plans	<i>Go to 2040</i> (2010): premised upon: (1) smart urbanization; effective investment in human capital; (3) transparent governance reform; (4) integrated multimodal transportation planning	<i>The Big Move</i> (2008): regional transportation plan guiding infrastructure investments to direct growth in accordance with provincial Places to Grow and Greenbelt Acts
Airport system		
Primary airport authority	<i>Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA)</i> : municipal department of the City of Chicago reporting to the Mayor's Office	<i>Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA)</i> : regional not-for-profit corporation overseen by a 15-member board
Primary int'l airport	<i>Chicago O'Hare International Airport</i> , Chicago, IL (CDA)	<i>Toronto Pearson International Airport</i> , Mississauga, ON (GTAA)
Secondary airports	<i>Chicago Midway International Airport</i> , Chicago, IL (CDA) <i>Gary/Chicago International Airport</i> , Gary, IN (Chicago/Gary Airport Authority)	<i>Billy Bishop Toronto City (Island) Airport</i> , Toronto, ON (Transport Canada, City of Toronto, Toronto Port Authority) <i>John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport</i> , Hamilton, ON (City of Hamilton and TradePort International Corporation)
Proposed airports	<i>Peotone Airport</i> , Peotone, IL (State of Illinois)	<i>Pickering Airport</i> , Pickering, ON (Transport Canada)
Airport authority's regional role	Little formal engagement; separate from local and regional transportation and land-use planning; some informal connections	Moderate regional engagement; working with Metrolinx on ground access integration; developing ties with local business and community groups
Major airport redevelopment projects	<i>O'Hare Modernization Program</i> , \$6.6 billion, 2003-on-going: (1) restructure runways into six parallel and two crosswind strips; (2) develop public road access, parking facilities and a new passenger terminal (Western Access)	<i>Pearson Airport Redevelopment Program</i> , C\$4.4 billion, 1997-2007: (1) expand infield cargo and maintenance facilities; (2) construct new dual runways and taxiways; (3) develop a new Terminal 1 to replace existing Terminals 1 and 2
Regional response to airport redevelopment	Strong backing from urban growth regime, Concerted, but fractured, opposition from local municipalities and south suburban actors backing Peotone Airport	Broad regional consensus around needs to update outmoded facilities, little public opposition due to Pearson's location, flight paths over industrial areas; some resentment surrounding transferred costs

Table 2: Regional airport governance in southern Ontario

Airport	Governing authority	Role in the regional air system	Prospects for regionalizing airport governance
<i>Toronto Pearson International Airport</i>	GTAA	International hub and gateway airport; significant cargo operations	Operated by the GTAA
<i>Billy Bishop Toronto City (Island) Airport</i>	Tripartite Agreement between the federal government, City of Toronto, Toronto Port Authority (succeeded the Toronto Harbour Commission in 1999)	Turboprop regional service to Canadian and American cities; contested expansion proposals would accommodate jet aircraft and longer distance flights	Number of actors involved and complexity of the Island Airport's governance regime are difficult to untangle and present a major impediment to regional integration; political issues continue to surround the Airport and future development plans ^a
<i>John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport</i>	Public-private partnership between the City of Hamilton and TradePort International Corporation (with operational guidance from Vancouver Airport Authority)	Limited seasonal and charter flights to Canadian cities and tourist destinations in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean; significant cargo operations	Lower taxes and fees and no restrictions on night operations make Hamilton Airport a regional competitor for air cargo, but Hamilton lacks a critical mass of cargo facilities and proximity to key markets, transport routes and warehousing centers; ^b GTAA views Hamilton Airport as too far from Toronto to serve as a major passenger hub, but it does act as a relief airport for Pearson
<i>Pickering Airport (proposed)</i>	18,600 hectare site owned by the federal government and the decision to build the Airport lies with Transport Canada; GTAA has the right to operate Pickering Airport should it be developed and has conducted preliminary planning for Transport Canada	Pickering could relieve passenger and cargo congestion at Pearson and stimulate economic and urban development in eastern GTA; plans first announced in 1972 and postponed in 1975; prospect of developing Pickering Airport often used for political leverage by actors interested in expanding capacity at other Toronto area airports	Transport Canada asserts Pickering Airport would be a prime location for a new regional airport and is supported by several local governments, but faces strong local opposition; GTAA has conducted interim planning at Pickering for Transport Canada, but stresses capacity for further expansion at Pearson Airport can accommodate regional air traffic demands for the foreseeable future; distance from existing concentrations are problematic for freight movement

^a That expansion plans continue apace at the Island Airport – despite strident opposition from former Mayor David Miller and a coalition of central city activists – starkly illustrates the divergent structural capacities of Chicago and Toronto's mayors. While Miller could not realize his desired closure of the Island Airport, Chicago's Mayor Daley sent a fleet of privately contracted bulldozers in the middle of the night of March 31, 2003 to carve up the runway of Meigs Field, Chicago's small lakefront airport. Chicago subsequently developed a lakefront park while Toronto hosts a burgeoning downtown commuter airport with flights arriving and departing next to residential towers.

^b In 2005, landing a Boeing 747 at Pearson would cost an airline an estimate C\$16,500 compared to C\$5,000 at Hamilton, while Boeing 737s would cost C\$3,800 at Toronto and C\$1,000 at Hamilton (Macleod, 2005). The GTAA has developed fee incentive initiatives which offer airlines already flying into Pearson reduced costs in return for more flights. Federal bilateral agreements, however, limit how often airlines can fly into Pearson while federal quotas restrict flights between 12:30am and 6am.

Figure 1: Opening O’Hare to the region. Proposed highway and transit improvements will significantly reshape O’Hare International Airport’s connectivity to northeastern Illinois’s west and northwestern suburbs. The Elgin-O’Hare Expressway extension (with the option to integrate CTA El service and DuPage County’s J-Line BRT network), and the O’Hare Western Bypass will increase regional highway and transit capacity and relieve congestion to the east. However, regionalizing access to global flows does not necessarily engender the parallel creation of politically defined “spaces of regionalism” through which airport expansion could be operationalized and contested. This is problematic since the Western Bypass requires the annexation of lands from either Bensenville or Franklin Park. Adapted from DuPage County (2006).

[2-column fitting]

