

Edge City: Life on the New Frontier (Anchor Books)

By Joel Garreau

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First there was downtown. Then there were suburbs. Then there were malls. Then Americans launched the most sweeping change in 100 years in how they live, work, and play. The Edge City.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A thought-provoking account of the new urban centers that are developing on the edges of major metropolitan areas in the U.S.

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From Library Journal

Garreau's rather indifferently written tome, originally produced as a series of Washington Post articles, describes the phenomenon of Edge Cities that have sprung up in various areas of the nation, usually in close proximity to intersecting highways and urban areas. These entities are found in former rural or residential areas and contain office and retail space, a population that increases at 9 a.m. on working days, and a local perception of the Edge City as the final destination for mixed-use shopping, jobs, and entertainment. Garreau describes how developers, planners, politicians, and others have combined in such areas as Northern and Central New Jersey, Boston, Detroit, Atlanta, Phoenix, Southern California, and the San Francisco Bay region to erect these new entities. He also discusses such interesting trends as the newly emergent black upper middle class in the Atlanta environs and the neo-Civil War battle to preserve the Manassas battlefield site in Virginia from developers. For general collections. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 5/15/91.

-Norman Lederer, *Thaddeus Stevens State Sch. of Technology, Lancaster, Pa.*

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From Kirkus Reviews

After the suburbanization of America in the 50's, when people followed new highways out to new one-family homes, came the malling of America in the 60's and 70's and then, in the 80's, the high-rise office buildings that brought the jobs suburb-ward and added critical mass to dozens of "urban" clumps now bigger than many of the major old cities they surround. Today more people commute to work along the edge than into the old downtowns. Garreau (*The Nine Nations of North America*, 1981) devotes separate chapters to different "Edge City" regions, using them as springboards to tackle several issues. Among these are the restriction of civil liberties where the village center, as in New Jersey's Bridgewater township, is a privately owned mall; the enforced conformity in residential communities like those near Phoenix that are run by a corporation rather than a municipal government; the complications of race and class around Atlanta; the conflicts between developers' ideas of highest and best use and preservationists' devotion to sacred sites, as in the newest battle at Bull Run in Virginia. In general, Garreau approves the Edge City trend, which he justifies with a simplistic market-capitalist assumption that if that's where people are, then that's what people want. He pretty much ignores, to name just two major counterarguments, the effects of federal spending policies that favor highways over inner cities, and the wants of the people left behind or deliberately excluded from the Edge facilities. Even on issues he does consider, such as quality of life and culture on the Edge or developers' motives for building, he avoids much hard evidence and harder questions. Still, a provocative work that brings to popular attention a major restructuring that is, as Garreau says, all around us but largely ignored by professional architects and planners. -- Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Betty Casas:

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