

DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF
PARSONS, KANSAS

by

HAJI JALAL DARVISH

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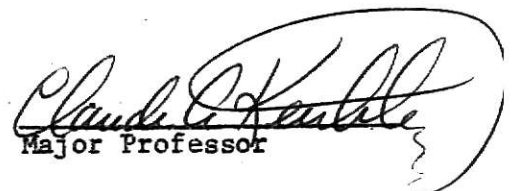
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INTRODUCTION

The urban areas of today are a new form of human settlements which have never existed before in history. Through five thousand years of civilization, man has lived in two main forms of settlement, opposed and supplementary to each other, the city and the country village. The process of urbanization is not a recent phenomena but the magnitude of such intense urban living and sprawl is unprecedented. Diffusion and centralization of human activity can be seen manifesting itself in the form of towns and cities geared towards production/consumption efficiencies. The concept of continual growth as the pathway to betterment and progress still remains an element of our value construct. The 'malling of America' is yet another trend in that direction.

The phenomenon being studied is an aspect of the larger process of urban decentralization and the resulting reorganization of structural and functional patterns of the urban community brought about largely by technological developments in transportation and communication. Suburbanization and its concomitant increase in suburban shopping centres around nearly all major American cities has given the consumer a choice as to where he can buy goods and services, and has stirred considerable apprehension in the minds of all whose quality of life and well being depend upon the integrity of the central business district.

Though the process of suburbanization started during the 1920's, it was not until the 1950's that the politics and problems of dispersion