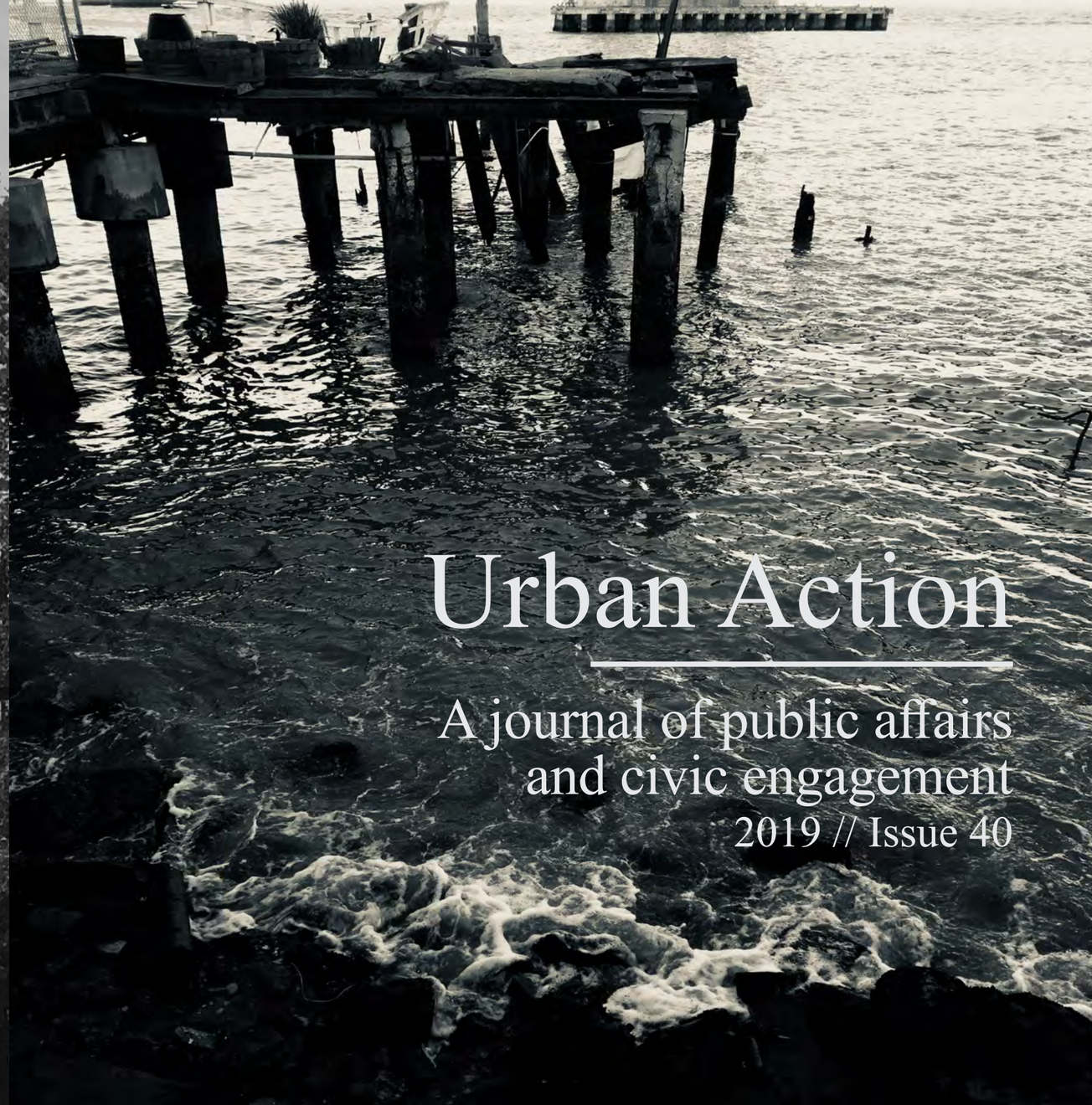

Urban Action

A journal of public affairs and civic engagement

2019 // Issue 40

40th Anniversary Edition

2019

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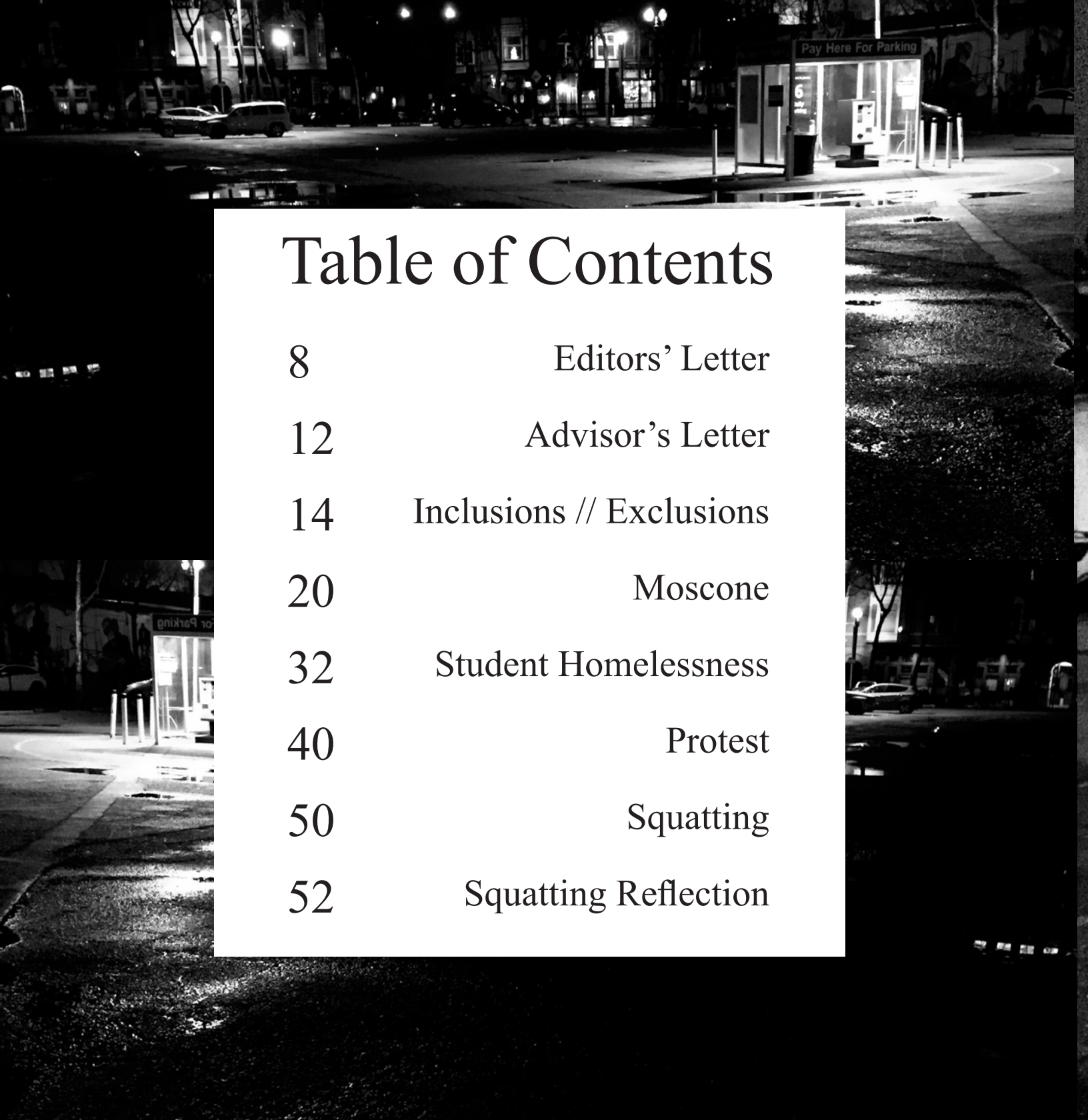

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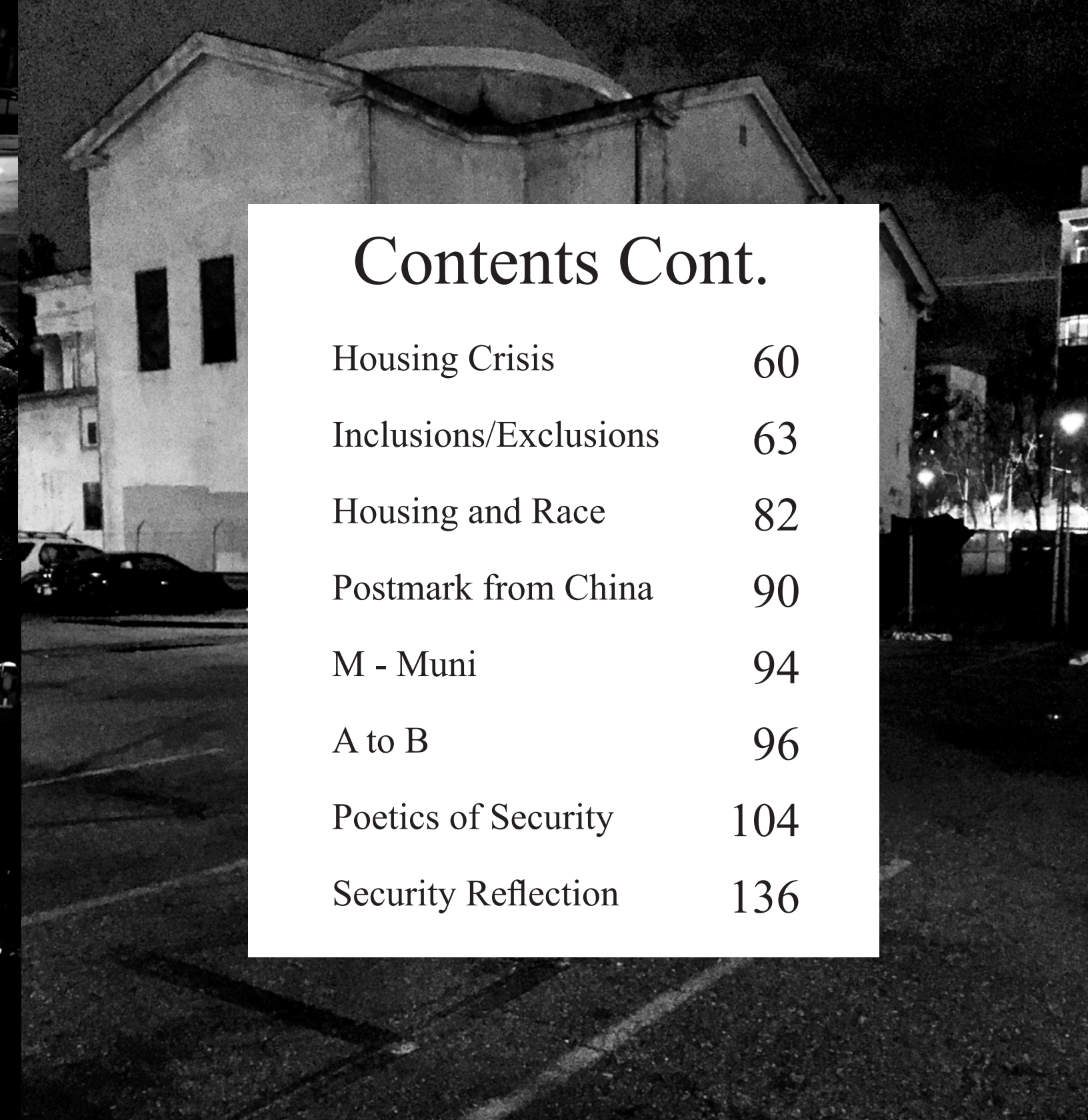

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Marina Chavez
Editor-in-Chief

Greg Schrader
Director of Design

Minyoung Lee
Associate Editor

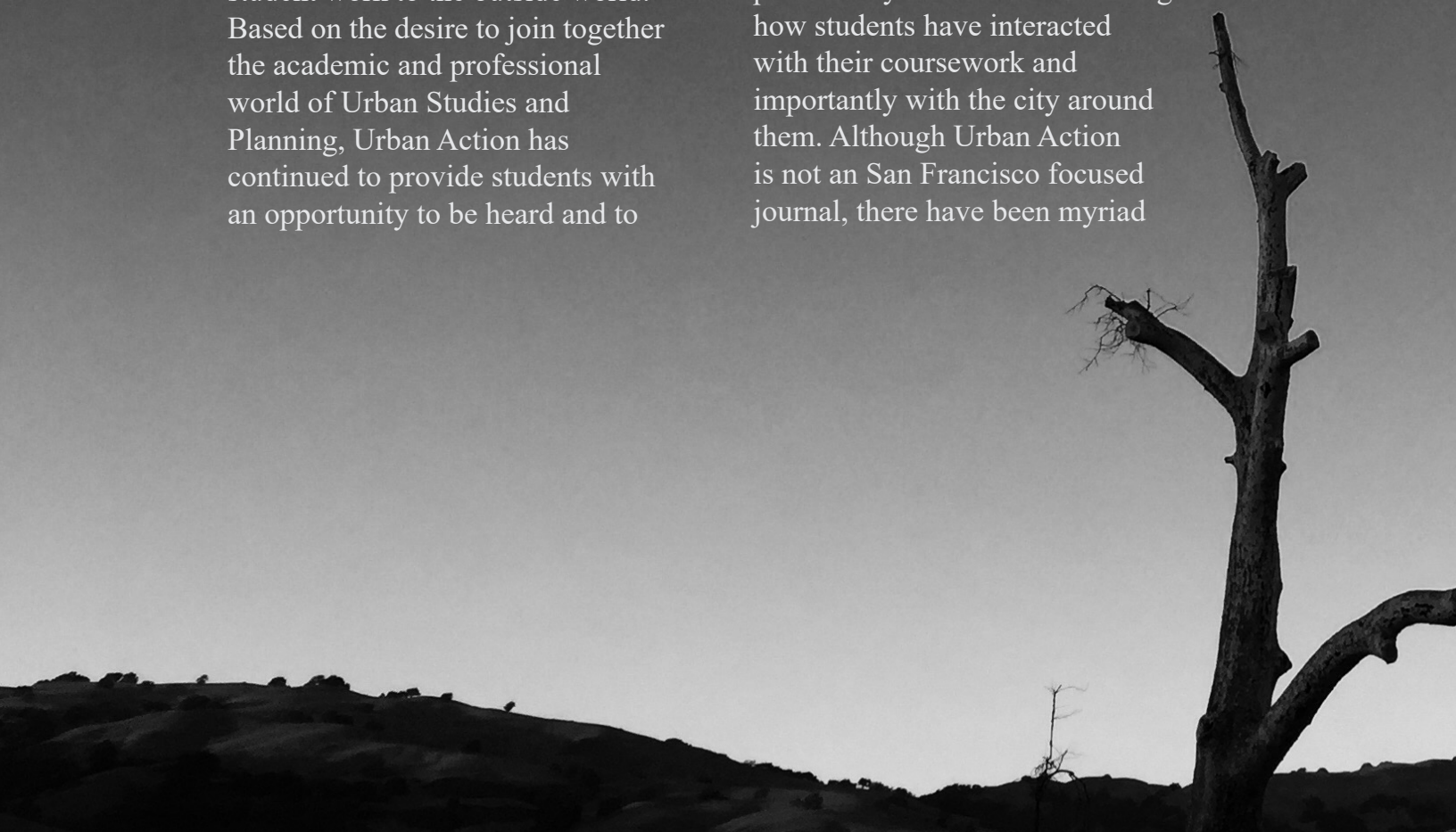
Ashley Carskaddon
Editorial Director

Editors' Letter

Dear reader,

I hope you will join us in wishing Urban Action a happy birthday. It has been 40 years since a band of students and their beloved faculty set out to create a peer-reviewed journal to connect student work to the outside world. Based on the desire to join together the academic and professional world of Urban Studies and Planning, Urban Action has continued to provide students with an opportunity to be heard and to learn from one another.

Since 1979, the goals of Urban Action have remained the same despite the yearly changes in content, style and voice. In this time, we have published poems, photo essays and articles showing how students have interacted with their coursework and importantly with the city around them. Although Urban Action is not an San Francisco focused journal, there have been myriad



articles about San Francisco and the Bay Area as whole. It may be because it is where students are most familiar but I believe it is also because it is the most immediate example of what we study everyday. Urban Action is the result of semesters of studying our own existence in the Bay Area. It is almost a time capsule of 40 years of San Francisco history and our interest in it. What I hope you will find the most compelling in reading Urban Action is how student interests have remained the same in 40 years of publication. Topics such as housing, homelessness, public space will always remain at the forefront of our content because that is what drives many of us as students.

In keeping with the 40th Anniversary, I thought it important to showcase how much as changed in the last 40 years by bringing forward the Vital Statistics for San Francisco from 1979 and 2019, co-written by students, 4 decades apart. Please take a look at the trends and changes of our eventful city and enjoy what Urban Action has to offer in our 40th Edition.

Cheers,
Marina Chavez
Editor-in-Chief,
40th Anniversary Edition

Vital Statistics // 1979

Population Trends

San Francisco's population has been generally declining since shortly after World War II, when it hit a peak of more than 775, 000. The population has dropped every year since 1963, and at the end of 1978 was estimated at 658,100. Projections by the state Department of Finance indicate that San Francisco's population will continue to register gradual declines - the city's mid-1985 population is projected at around 645,000.

About half of the housing stock in the city is in multiple-unit buildings, best suited to single occupants and childless couples. This condition should continue to prevail as the number of dwelling units built in multiple-unit buildings during the last five years was over five times the number of single-family houses built.

Employment

The dominant characteristic of San Francisco's employment picture is the large proportion of the workforce with jobs in the service-producing industries, in contrast to the small percentage of workers in manufacturing and the very small fraction in agriculture. California's Employment Development Department estimates that in 1978 there were 520,000 wage and salary workers employed in San Francisco City and County. Of this number, only 9.2 percent were engaged in manufacturing.

The "service" group of businesses was the category with the largest number of workers in San Francisco in 1978 - an estimated 132,000, or 25.4 % of the county's total wage and salary workers.

The second largest employment category in San Francisco is government (federal, state and local), which recorded an estimated 89,900 workers in 1978 - 17.3%of the total work force in the city.

The San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau estimated that, in 1978, visitors to San Francisco - for business or pleasure - spent $829 million in the city, 8.5% more than in 1977. Discount air fares and favorable currency rates for foreign travelers are responsible, in part, for the continued influx of visitors to the city.

Construction Activity

Downtown San Francisco is still in the midst of the high-rise office building boom that began in the early 1960s. Although the city's population has been dropping, employment has been rising, and the growth in white-collar jobs, especially in the financial group of companies, continues to support the need for office space.

Paralleling the recent slowing in the trend of home building throughout the state, housing units authorized in San Francisco in the first 7 months of 1979 totaled 913, compared with 1,228 in the corresponding period of 1978.

Vital Statistics // 2019

Population Trends

In 1979, San Francisco population appeared to be gradually declining with an estimated 685,000 people residing within city and county limits. This has changed dramatically in the last forty years as San Francisco's population continues to grow. According to the United States Census, in 2010, San Francisco had a population of 805,235 inhabitants. An increase of about 120,184 individuals since 1979. However, based on the United States Population Estimates Program, the population has grown 9.7% since 2010 with a 2019 total of 883,305 inhabitants. The population growth is likely the result of a booming economy, and bustling technological industry. If growth remains consistent it is expected that San Francisco will have a population of 1 million by 2032. However, the rapid growth rate has come with some severe growing pains. A housing shortage has made housing much more expensive, and has pushed many individuals out of the city. In 1979, the black population in San Francisco was 12.7% and in the last forty years, that number has dropped more than half to 5.5%.

Employment

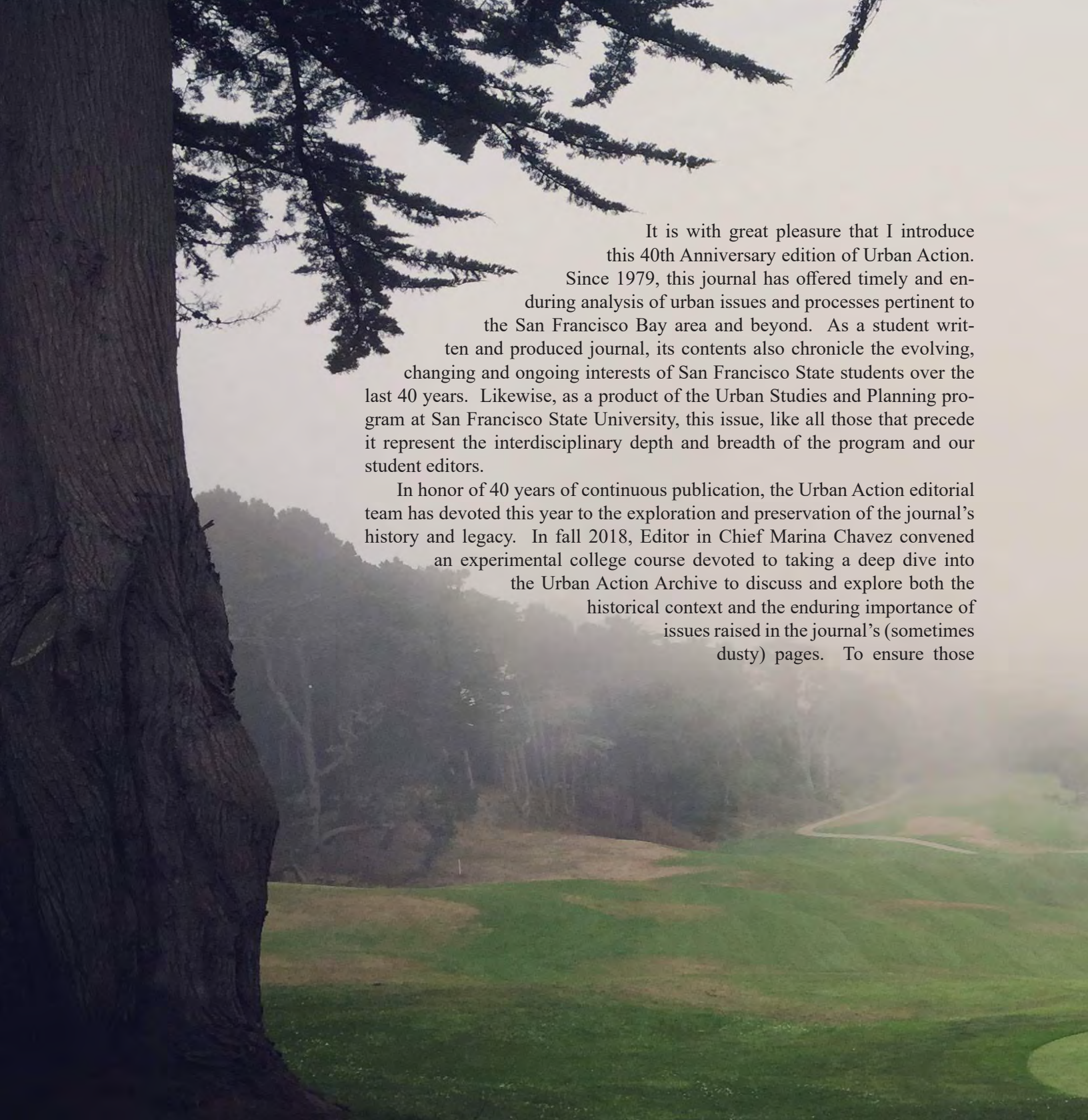
The most unsurprising similarity between 1979 and 2019 is the proportion of the workforce with jobs in "service producing". In total, number of jobs in the "service producing" industry was 302,000 or 25% of the total workforce. This number can then be disaggregated to highlight the largest industry in San Francisco, Professional & Business Services which accounts for 184,600 jobs or 15% of the total workforce. This number is followed by leisure and hospitality with 93,300 (7.9%) jobs and finally by government (local, federal and state) with 91,600 (7.7%) jobs. Manufacturing accounted for 9.2% of the workforce in 1979 and now is less than 1% of San Francisco's overall workforce.

In total, San Francisco provides 1,174,829 jobs to individuals across the Bay Area, far more than double the amount of jobs in 1979. In moving to tourism, The San Francisco Travel Association estimates that over 25.8 million visitors came to San Francisco in 2018 and spent a record number of $10 billion dollars.

Construction Activity

In the last 40 years, San Francisco has seen many booms and busts in the economy, most of which have hit construction hard. High-rise office buildings have continued to be built since 1979 with the notable Salesforce tower joining the San Francisco Skyline in 2018.

Most notably is the growth in housing. Since 1990, San Francisco has added on average 1,900 units per year with over 5,000 units built in 2016. The increase in housing is directed at urban infill, transit-oriented sites to promote connectivity and reduce the amount of vehicles on SF streets. The majority of the units built in San Francisco are located in the northeastern portion of the city. The increase in housing units and office space have contributed to high costs of development and competition for skilled construction labor which remains in shortage.



It is with great pleasure that I introduce this 40th Anniversary edition of Urban Action. Since 1979, this journal has offered timely and enduring analysis of urban issues and processes pertinent to the San Francisco Bay area and beyond. As a student written and produced journal, its contents also chronicle the evolving, changing and ongoing interests of San Francisco State students over the last 40 years. Likewise, as a product of the Urban Studies and Planning program at San Francisco State University, this issue, like all those that precede it represent the interdisciplinary depth and breadth of the program and our student editors.

In honor of 40 years of continuous publication, the Urban Action editorial team has devoted this year to the exploration and preservation of the journal's history and legacy. In fall 2018, Editor in Chief Marina Chavez convened an experimental college course devoted to taking a deep dive into the Urban Action Archive to discuss and explore both the historical context and the enduring importance of issues raised in the journal's (sometimes dusty) pages. To ensure those

Advisor's Letter

pages will be readable by all for years to come, Ashley Carskeddon worked tirelessly throughout the year to digitize and archive past issues. Their commitment to Urban Action's legacy continues with this 40th Anniversary issue.

This year's issue, once again beautifully designed and laid out by Greg Schrader, pays homage to the journals enduring legacy by reprinting selected articles from the journals archives with current commentary. These articles are interspersed with articles that represent the breadth and depth of current student voices grappling with contemporary and cutting-edge issues facing our cities.

As always, I am humbled and grateful for the enormous work and dedication of the editorial team. I am also incredibly proud of the thoughtful, rigorous and insightful analysis of this year's contributors. I truly enjoyed reading these articles and seeing this issue come to fruition. If you also value and enjoy the articles found in the pages of Urban Action, I urge you to show your appreciation by making a donation or purchasing a hard copy of this issue Your contribution allows the Urban Studies and Planning program at SFSU to continue to support our 40 year legacy of rigorous and engaged undergraduate scholarship, now and into the future.

Sincerely,
Tony Sparks PhD
Faculty Advisor to Urban Action

Inclusions and Exclusions

the use of parklet space in san francisco

Mark Bowen

Traffic congestion and lack of parking are unfortunate realities of city life. Urban dwellers use sidewalks often combined with public transportation as a more efficient means of getting from point A to B. Whether tourists or locals, most pedestrians are unaware of the laws that regulate the use of public and private space. Specifically, the public use of privately funded space is particularly ambiguous and creates a variety of inclusions and exclusions that are often subtle and covert. This ambiguity is no more apparent than the use of parklet spaces in San Francisco. With the first parklet being constructed in 2010, several additional parklets scattered throughout the city have since been constructed as part of the San Francisco Great Streets Project (Pratt, 2011). With reference to chapter 2 in Blomley's Rights of Passage, Chapter 1 of Valverde's Everyday Law on the Street, and informed data gathered from the participant observation of the Crepe House parklet, this paper will explore the salient and controversial issues surrounding parklet use, and underlying laws that regulate these spaces. It will be argued that despite the intent to encourage interaction and a sense of community among diverse populations, the underlying laws governing these spaces, and the locations in which they are found, actually amplify stratification and segregation that is covertly directed at the homeless population.

In recent years, the booming tech-industry has supported the gradual and growing influx of a young affluent population, resulting in gentrification which has pushed out many existing residents who cannot afford the exorbitant living costs of the city. This has not only resulted in reducing the city's once diverse population but has also caused a rise in homelessness. In the 2017

Homeless Census, it was found that San Francisco's homeless problem is the worst it has ever been, as evinced by homeless-related 311 calls being five times that in 2016, compared to the year before (Spotswood, 2017). In what Valverde refers to as San Francisco's "draconian sidewalk rules" which prohibit sitting or lying on sidewalks (2012), there are fewer places for people experiencing homelessness to dwell. While underpinning this law is the intent to minimize the visible presence of the homeless on sidewalks, there are no laws that prohibit the homeless from using public spaces such as parklets. Since these spaces are privately funded and and maintained, generally located outside local restaurants and other businesses, often what manifests is conflict over inclusion of the public space centering around access to and use of these spaces (Blomley, 2011). As pointed out by Valverde, fueled by aesthetic motivations, municipalities can force residents to repair sidewalks and greenery outside their homes at their own expense even though it is a public space (2012). San Francisco's parklets are a case in point as they are privately funded, managed and maintained -usually by the surrounding local businesses-but as a public space owned by the city, anyone is free to use them. This can create resentment by the organizations that funded the space because while they are responsible for the maintenance of the space, they have no authority on how these spaces are used.

Many of these issues became apparent in the observation study of the parklet funded and managed by Zaytoon and The Crepe House on Valencia street near 22nd. To assess this parklet's use, two field observations were conducted at two different times of day. The first observations were conducted on a weekday morning leading into lunch, and the other took place during "Happy Hour" to see if the usage was any different based on time of day. It is clear that in the case of The Crepe House, the designated use of this space is contentious. While patrons can take their food outside the restaurant to eat in the parklet area, serving tables in Parklets is prohibited but bussing of the tables is permissible. The resentment on the part of The Crepe House is apparent in the sign in the window that read:

"To our valued customers, to our disappointment – by order from S.F Dept of PUBLIC WORK – we can no longer serve you food in the "PARKLET"! Therefore, you will be picking it up yourself in the designated station by the front door but we will be happy to bus

the table for you. [It appears] an unhappy person in the hood keeps complaining to the SFDPW! It's sad that the good of one person overweigh the good of too many!! To better serve please express your dissatisfaction and contact SFDPW."

While the users and pedestrians passing by the space reflect gentrification through the predominantly upper middle-class Caucasians (see graph below), one homeless man was observed using the parklet, and on a later observation, 2 others were seen using the space.

The Caucasian population was surmised to be upper middle-class based on their accompanying attire and accessories such as smartphones, iPads, Luluemon sporting wear, business attire, yoga mats, and dogs wearing fancy sweaters and coats. The individuals were deduced to be experiencing homelessness based on the disheveled nature of their hair and clothing, the accompanying shopping carts full of possessions, the sleeping bags, and noxious body odor.

Blomley argues that "open and inclusive public space is said to be a prerequisite for a collective culture, to the extent that it obliges and encourages citizens to encounter others, many of whom may be very different than themselves" (2011). Further, he elaborates by stating that it is the "unpredictable encounter with others" in public spaces that supports us "to recognize and accommodate other members of a society beyond our immediate networks and norms" (2011). Is this really the case in the parklet locale? When the individuals experiencing homelessness were using the space, they were solitary and patrons tended to avoid the parklet rather choosing to sit inside and thus there was zero interaction with these individuals. Parklets in San Francisco are intended to beautify the neighborhood, promote local business, and attract tourists and other patrons which do not include the homeless. Ironically, Blomley argues that when these public spaces lack interactions among the diverse, we are "simply individuals in the 'lonely crowd', separated from, and even fearful of others" (2011). In the case of the Parklet, this seems to promote the opposite.

The role of the sidewalk is said to encourage "safety, trust and the socialization of the young" (Blomley, 2011). This is simply not the case in the parklet accompanying the sidewalks in San Francisco. While the San Francisco Police Department's website says the homeless have the same legal rights as other citizens, behaviors associated

with the homeless can be reported by dialing 311 (Spotswood, 2017). Some of these include loitering near ATM's, urinating and defecating in public, and the consumption of alcohol (ibid). While none of these actions were observed in the parklet space, it is clear that individuals associate these behaviors with the homeless and thus regard them as a public threat or nuisance. Instead of creating a sense of trust and safety, some parklets are actually doing the opposite. While Blomley argues that we are "citizens first, and consumers second" (2011), the parklet space encourages the opposite. The use of parklet outside The Crepe House was ambiguous in that the chairs and tables directly outside The Crepe House matched the interior space. The large open windows rather than demarcate the boundary between public and private, promote an exclusive atmosphere that would suggest this area was to be used by consumers not citizens. Additionally, The Crepe Houses' sidewalk sign advertising their daily and happy hour specials, is situated on the parklet space which again seems to indicate that the parklet is private. This ambiguity seems to discourage non-patrons from using the space rather than promote a "collective culture." The sign stating that the parklet is public is also very small and one almost has to look for it as it does not stand out.

In the case of San Francisco, the public use of parklet space presents a paradox. Gentrification has pushed out many of the diverse ethnic populations that once comprised the Mission District (see graph). Due to the sidewalk laws in the city, it does seem to encourage the homeless to use these spaces and it was observed that some do. However, this was only seen when Zaytoon and The Crepe House were closed or not busy and in each case, no other users were seen using the space suggesting that the presence of the homeless discourages others from using it and interacting with them. When patrons use the space during busy hours, there seems to be an underlying code of conduct that suggests seating is prioritized for patrons of the business. Despite the law that prevents servers from taking food to the tables in the parklet, during both observations servers were seen taking orders to patrons outside which only reifies the implication that the space is meant for them. Parklets in San Francisco are indicative of gentrification; rather than encouraging community and diversity, they support segregation, homogeneity and privilege.

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The Moscone Convention Center

a history and economic impact analysis

Julie Taylor
Albert Carlson

Introduction

Despite a controversial history checkered with lawsuits, political debates, public protests, and financial constraints, the Moscone Convention Center in San Francisco has emerged as a successful convention facility. Capable of meeting diverse space demands for conventions and trade shows of all sizes, the convention center is a popular location choice for local, regional and national events.

Annually, millions of dollars in revenues are generated by convention sponsors and attendees. A variety of taxes, user fees, and sales revenues are pumped directly and indirectly into the local economy via a demand for services in the hospitality service sector, local municipal services and in retail sales. In addition to generating a constant source of funds for the city's financial coffers, the convention center has created an employment demand for thousands of people with various skills. The center's impact on the local economy has consistently been positive and future expectations for the trend to continue upward are strong.

Historical Background

In the years after World War II, members of the San Francisco business community decided that if the city was "to be increasingly a regional, national, and international service center, its central business district must expand in area" (Hartman, 1974). Concerned with attracting corporate activity, they also recognized that without a first-rate convention center in the downtown area the city would not be able to compete with other cities as a location

choice for corporate headquarters. Dominant West Coast corporations and financial institutions such as Bechtel Corporation, U.S. Steel, Bank of America, Standard Oil of California, Pacific Gas and Electric, and the American Trust Company each pledged $10,000 to found the Bay Area Council. The council was to lobby for an expanded central business district (CBD) and establish San Francisco as the preeminent West Coast financial center.

The physical land use constraints created by the city's peninsula configuration and the social geography of previously established neighborhood centers, such as Chinatown and North Beach, inhibited expansion of the CBD. With available land and office space in the CBD in short supply, the demand for office space prompted the Bay Area Council, the Blyth Zellerbach Committee (a group consisting of corporate leaders), and later the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association (SPUR), to focus their attention and political efforts on securing land designated for urban renewal in the immediate vicinity of downtown San Francisco. In 1953, a site South of Market was approved by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors as a "possible redevelopment project under [the] federal urban renewal program"(Hartman, 1974). Land acquisition in the area South of Market was pursued because it was flat, compared to the city's hilly topography; it was not home to a large ethnic community of established families; and it also met the criteria for proximity to the CBD.

By the late 1950s, there was a consensus among members of the business community "that San Francisco was no longer competitive in the field of convention and sports facilities, and that development of such facilities was critical to the city's future economic health" (Hartman, 1974). At the time, the city had two convention facilities: Brooks Hall and the Civic Auditorium, each located in the civic center area adjacent to the CBD. The size of these facilities limited San Francisco's ability to attract large conventions. The Cow Palace, a relatively spacious facility compared to the other two, was frequently overlooked because of its distance from the downtown area (15-20 minutes by automobile) and lack of nearby visitor hospitality

services. In early 1961, San Francisco Mayor George Christopher, convinced by the arguments that a first class convention center was needed to make San Francisco a leader in attracting corporate headquarters, requested that the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) begin the planning for a mixed use development to encompass new office space, a convention center and a sports facility.

The SFRA released its initial design plans for the mixed use development, in February 1964, for the area South of Market to be called the Yerba Buena Center (a name originally given to an early settlement in San Francisco before the Gold Rush of 1849). Following revision of the plans, the agency submitted a funding request to the Housing and Home Finance Agency (elevated to cabinet status in 1965 as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). Federal funding of $19.6 million was approved to implement the redevelopment project, while subsequent funding for the Moscone Center was raised by increases in the hotel room tax and by a $210 million bond issue (Hartman, 1984).

The 21 acres slated for demolition, defined as the Central Blocks, were comprised of mostly low-rent, furnished residential hotels. Characterized as a skid row community, the area was filled with residents who had strikingly similar demographic profiles. In fact, ninety-four percent of the people for whom these hotels provided homes were “single, elderly, male, and poor” (Hartman, 1974). The redevelopment bulldozer translated into displacement for the area’s residents because during the initial planning stages, “the controversial issue of how to relocate 4,000 low income persons was conveniently side-stepped” (Hartman, 1974). Clearance began in July 1967 in preparation for the Yerba Buena Center while displaced hotel residents searched for alternative housing.

In June1969, structural design plans were released illustrating the new facility’s capacity to house a 350,000 square-foot convention center/exhibition hall; a 14,000 seat sports arena; an 800 room hotel; a 2,200 seat theater; a 4,000 car parking garage; an Italian Cultural and Trade Center, an airline terminal; office buildings; shops; and a pedestrian mall (Hartman, 1974). The sports arena was later deleted from the public facilities portion of the Yerba Buena Center plan in 1974 due to financial constraints.

With demolition plans in hand, work

crews were to begin the task of clearing the land but progress was hindered by a series of public hearings related to resident displacement, difficulty in naming a project developer and lengthy planning commission reviews. To help protect the rights of displaced residents, an advocacy group called Tenants and Owners in Opposition to Redevelopment (TOOR) mobilized during the summer of 1969. With TOOR's assistance, residents protested the unfair displacement practices of the SFRA through a series of public hearings and a lawsuit related to the lack of provision of housing for relocated community members. A stronger, collective community voice was effective over the next four years in delaying further demolition. Finally in1973, a settlement was reached between TOOR and the Redevelopment Agency. The SFRA agreed to build 2,000 low rent replacement housing units within the city beginning with Woolf House, a nine-story, 112-unit building for 250 occupants, located adjacent to the new convention center (Hartman, 1984). However, construction was suspended until the new low-rent housing was available for the relocated; it was not until June 1979 that post-excavation construction work on the project commenced (Hartman, 1984).

Moscone Center: A First-Rate Convention Facility

Named after the assassinated Mayor of San Francisco, George Moscone, the convention center opened its doors for business in December 1981, with Halls A, B, and C, and the Gateway Ballroom completed (Brown), totaling over 500,000 net square feet at a total cost of $126 million. Although critiqued by Pulitzer Prize-winning architecture critic Allen Temko as "one of the finest clear-span spaces ever built" (Temko, 1982), the convention center was still rejected as a location choice by the American Heart Association for being too small. In 1982, city officials recognized that the facility was somewhat limited in size as compared to other competing convention centers such as the Anaheim Convention Center and the Las Vegas Convention Center (Reiterman 1982). It was anticipated that enlarging the Moscone Center would make it competitive with other regional convention centers and attractive to large, national sponsors. Increased business activity in the CBD and employment demand in the local economy were expected to occur because of demand for convention

related services.

Financed by a raise in the hotel room tax, effective January 1, 1987, from 9.75 percent to 11 percent, a new addition to the Moscone Center was completed in the spring of 1992. The Stage Two expansion project created "more than 1.2 million additional square feet of building area on two 11 acre blocks, offering 442,000 square feet of highly finished, flexible meeting space in as many as 60 rooms" (SFCFAR, 1992-1993). The convention center had almost doubled in size and could now hold "conventions of up to 50,000 people" (Abate: 1993), in comparison to the much smaller facilities of Brooks Hall and the Civic Auditorium.

Comparative Advantages

A striking advantage for the Moscone Center over Brooks Hall, the Civic Auditorium, and the Cow Palace is its prime location to the central business district, bordered by Howard and Folsom, between Third and Fourth Streets. The center's proximity to the business district promotes a positive flow of revenue to downtown businesses from the convention center and attendees; the center is within walking distance to over 20,000 hotel rooms as well as many restaurants and retailers. The location is served by both the local light rail and bus system and the Bay Area Rapid Transit system, providing access to San Francisco's recreation areas and tourist attractions.

In the Bay Area, there are also comparable convention centers in San Jose and Oakland. The San Jose Convention Center, with 425,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, had attendance figures in fiscal year 1991-1992 of 409,223, while in 1992-1993, attendance fell to 377,551 (City of San Jose). In Oakland, the convention center has 48,000 square feet of space and attracted 204,566 conventioneers in 1991-1992, while in1992-1993, 157,258attended events, conferences, and conventions (Oakland Convention Center Annual Report, 1991-1992). However, the advantage of the San Francisco location of the Moscone Center is its proximity to a large number of amenities such as restaurants, hotels, retail and other attractions.

Economic Impact

For a convention center to have a significant impact on the local economy, a large number of its conventions must be regional and national, thereby bringing in revenue from outside the local economy. In 1993, 66 percent of conventions held at the Moscone Center were national in origin; 33 percent were either state or regional; and only one percent was local, making

it the center's busiest year to date (SFCFAR:1992-1993). Overall event attendance figures were 611,381 for 1991-1992. Since the completion of the newly enlarged facility in 1992, convention and trade show attendance has risen sharply; in 1992-1993, it totaled 765,202, reflecting an increase of approximately 20 percent (SFCAR, 1991-1992, 1992-1993). Occupancy rates have hovered at or near 90 percent, even with a concurrent doubling of available convention space. Conventions scheduled for 1994 indicate that attendance figures will continue to increase. In fact, nationally "eighteen of the largest conventions, and nine of the largest expositions to be held in 1994 will take place in Moscone Center (Carlsen:1993). Additionally, although Brooks Hall and the Civic Auditorium will be temporarily closed for seismic repairs until January 1996, overall convention attendance in San Francisco is not expected to decline as a result of the Moscone Center's increased ability to host events of all sizes (Brown).

City Revenue

The influx of convention attendees and their propensity for spending money, generates taxes that support the city's annual general operating fund. Visitor and conventioneer spending is divided into six areas: 38 percent is spent on accommodation, 26.5 percent on food and beverage, 20 percent on retail goods, 7 percent on local transportation, 6.5 percent on entertainment, and 2 percent on sightseeing (Bureau Book, 1992). The hotel room tax and retail sales tax revenues that flow into the municipal revenue system are "estimated to be more than 231 million annually" (Bureau Book, 1992) The hotel tax levied on overnight visitors generated $69 million in 1987 (Bureau Book, 1988); by 1992, this revenue had increased to

$88 million (Bureau Book, 1992). Revenue disbursement in 1992 included diverse beneficiaries such as the non-profit arts (12.3%); residents of low income housing (4.6%); the War Memorial Fund (7.25%); and Candlestick Park (4.5%).

Direct and indirect annual revenues generated by conventioneers also includes $56 million in property tax collected from businesses servicing conventioneers and visitors;$35.5 million in sales tax; $32.5 million in airport, port and redevelopment fees; $13 million in business tax;

$4 million in utility users' tax; and $2.5 million listed as other (Survey of S.F.Visitors:1992). Any decline in revenue would impact the limited available monetary resources for local government agencies, resulting in a decrease of support to services for low-income residents, libraries, and city-owned cultural amenities, all of which are supported by the fund.

Impact on Local Business

Conventioneer spending supports a large percentage of local businesses catering to visitors. Hotel capacity has risen 30 percent, from 20,800 rooms in 1982 (Bureau Book, 1988) to 29,750 in 1992 (Bureau Book, 1993). During this period hotel occupancy rates remained steady at the relatively high rate of 70 percent. The difference between economic contributions of convention attendees, as opposed to those of all other overnight visitors to the Bay Area, is the level of daily per capita spending. Unlike overnight visitors that stay with friends or family, convention attendees predominantly utilize the hotel and restaurant hospitality sector. In 1992, convention attendees staying in city hotels spent an average of $188 per day; when convention sponsorship and exhibitor spending were factored in, that amount increased to $206.50 and $310 per day, respectively (Bureau Book, 1992). By comparison, other visitors staying in hotels spent $155 per day, while those staying with friends or relatives spent only $53 per day (Bureau Book, 1992). Conventioneers account for only 18 percent of visitor nights spent in San Francisco hotels and motels, but they account for over $630 million, or 29 percent of total visitor spending.

Employment Impact

Direct and indirect employment attributable to conventions is found in the city's hospitality sector. This sector primarily consists of employment positions within hotels (18,300), restaurants and bars (17,200), and entertainment and sightseeing (9,800). Other positions include retail and air and ground transportation (Bureau Book, 1992). According to a recent report done by a Bay Area economic consulting firm, over two thirds of these jobs are held by San Francisco residents (Economics Research Associates, 1987). Since 1985, the number of jobs supported by direct visitor spending has risen by slightly over 6,000, indicating a growing demand for provision of service. This contrasts with an overall

decrease of 30,000 jobs over the past 10 years in San

Francisco. In 1992, the average number of employed residents was 368,700 and the number of unemployed residents accounted for 27,800 individuals. This results in an annualized average citywide unemployment figure of 7.0 percent (Perron).

San Francisco businesses serving convention sponsors and visitors create employment for management, administration, catering and security positions (Bureau Book, 1992). Eighteen hundred jobs alone are related to the management and maintenance of the Moscone Center. The total number of jobs supported by visitors and conventioneers in the city are estimated at 66,000 with a payroll in excess of $1 billion, exclusive of gratuities (Bureau Book, 1992).

Summary

Since the Moscone Center opened its doors almost fourteen years ago, it has steadily provided the city with many economic advantages. Proving to be an attractive location choice for hundreds of events annually, the convention center has helped San Francisco fulfill the vision that city leaders had for the city over forty years ago. As the foremost convention facility in San Francisco, the Moscone Center has a distinct economic impact on the city's budget and the local market. The tax and fee revenues the convention center generates support local government agency work that provides benefits to local residents and visitors. Direct convention related spending stimulates local business activity and a demand for employment. Indirectly, through business spending and employees spending their salaries, the Moscone Center impacts the local market.

The convention center's success in attracting large conventions and trade shows can be largely attributed to its South of Market location and expansion in1992. The facility has a comparative advantage over other regional convention facilities because of its proximity to the central business district which provides convention attendees with access to hospitality amenities and services. As the Moscone Center continues to experience a growth in attendance figures, an increase in revenue and employment demand can also be anticipated from convention-related activity.

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A Worrying Epidemic

student homelessness in the bay area

Ashley Carskaddon

Young adults packing up to live on their own for the first time face many difficulties navigating the world outside of their family home and trying to make ends meet. While efforts to decrease homelessness throughout the Bay Area focus on people who have the least, college students experiencing homelessness must endure the challenges of young adulthood while simultaneously learning how to survive and striving to achieve academic success that will propel them towards a promising future. Policy intervention is needed to ensure these students are able to focus on their education instead of worrying about where they will sleep at night.

Homelessness is defined in various ways depending on what agency is addressing the issue. It can refer to individuals lacking "a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence" and may include people who live in hotels, motels, trailer parks, campgrounds, emergency shelters, transitional homes, and hospitals. They may also live in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, transportation stations, or other places that are not designed for sleeping (Klitzman 2018). Additionally, the spectrum of homelessness includes people who double-up, couch-surf, or live in unstable housing situations for a variety of reasons, but these individuals often go unnoticed and are rarely counted in any official capacity (Pavlakis 2017).

While much has been written about student homelessness, the majority of academic literature has focused on families with students under the age of eighteen. This is in part because of the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act which was enacted by the federal

government in 1987. It became the first legislative act directed at addressing homelessness and included specific provisions for homeless students that enabled individual school districts to provide new services and approaches to problem of homelessness within the K-12 population. Research shows that youth homelessness is an increasing social problem and as of 2014 had reached an all-time high (Sulkowski 2014). One scholar notes a "drastic surge" in homeless families in the US which has translated to a surge in homeless students in public schools, most of which are struggling to meet the needs of students (Abdul Rahman 2015). While counting homeless youth is difficult due to the inherent transience of the population, estimates say they account for 25% of the entirety of the US homeless population (Tierney 2017). Almost 1.2 million K-12 Students students were identified as homeless in the 2011-2012 school year, amounting to a 10 percent increase from the prior year (Pavlakis 2014). Four percent of homeless students are totally unsheltered, 6% live in hotels and motels, 15% in shelters, and 75% live with other people. (Pavlakis 2014). In San Francisco Unified School District, the estimated homeless student count is over 2,000 children (SFUSD 2017).

Though college students experiencing homelessness are under-studied, research suggests 13% of community college students are homeless and 36% of community college and university students experience housing insecurity (Hallet 2018). In 2018, a California State University study found that 10.9% of CSU students reported experiencing homelessness within the last year and 41.6% reported food insecurity, significantly larger than the 12.3% national rate. While many campuses have services available, the study recommends greater institutional and financial support including affordable housing and food options (Crutchfield 2018).

Finding more defined estimates of homeless college students in the San Francisco Bay Area is difficult for many reasons. The City and County of San Francisco developed a biennial Homeless Count & Survey that defines many subgroups of the population including transitional-age youth (ages 18-25) and unaccompanied children. As this is also the age demographic of people going into college for the first time, this data is valuable when looking at student homelessness. The subgroup of Transitional-Age Youth accounted for 18% of the total homeless population. The report reaffirms that there is limited

data when it comes to this age range, explaining that "young people experiencing homelessness have a harder time accessing services, including shelter, medical care, and employment due to the stigma of their housing situation, lack of knowledge of available resources, and a dearth of services targeted to young people". Data on highest educational achievement of the counted youth noted that those with education beyond High School accounted for only 17% of the young adult population, which coincides with other studies that show that low educational attainment increases the risk factor of homelessness in youth by age 25 (Brakenhoff 2015).

The impact of these increasing levels of student homelessness is significant. Homeless youth risk a broad spectrum of negative outcomes in life including school dropout, substance abuse, suicide, early mortality, and mental health issues (Sulkowski 2014). LGBT students in particular already face hardships pertaining to their identities, including bullying, victimization, and other problems relating to peers, staff, and organizations. What's more, LGBT youth experiencing homelessness have issues enrolling into college, applying for financial aid, and securing housing (Tierney 2017). Research shows that homeless youth are not able to build or institute support networks and structures that they need (Abdul Rahman 2015). Housing-insecure students are more likely to be held back, drop out, and be placed in special education programs (Pavlakis 2014). Research further indicates that college student outcomes are impacted by food and housing insecurity. This sort of insecurity is higher among college students than it is for the general public (Broton 2016). Doubled-up students, meaning those who share a room with another friend or relative, are less likely to have knowledge of social services that are available to them and are less likely to be counted when it comes to the homeless population (Pavlakis 2017).

> The burden of higher education should lie within the coursework, not in meeting one's basic needs

The literature emphasizes multiple causes of youth homelessness including economic problems, residential insecurity, and family problems (Tierney 2017). Examining specific cases of student homelessness highlights the challenges facing individual students. In an article exploring housing insecurity, authors identified a college student named "Anne" whose case exemplifies the problems students face maintaining subsidized housing and obtaining a degree. In the end, Anne dropped out of college (Broton 2016). Her case and others offer a human face to accompany the troubling statistics.

A broad set of stakeholders are affected by the issue of student homelessness including the students themselves, the educational institutions, and the cities where the students reside and the family and friends of those experiencing homelessness. Educational institutions are impacted in a variety of ways, often struggling to support the students, experiencing decreased educational outcomes, and enduring a negative financial impact. The families and friends of homeless students are also invested in this issue, but they are often facing similar difficulties.

The issue of student homelessness is ripe for policy intervention. While some causes such as neoliberalism, poverty, low wages, and changing reduction in support of housing as a human right, are fundamental and not adequately addressed by policy alone, some causes can be directly addressed by policy. In particular, affordable and accessible housing and funding for homeless and housing services are purviews of policy at the federal, state, city, and college/university level.

Housing insecurity is a notable issue in the young adult population. A study in Wisconsin showed that 90% of students were worried about affording rent, 78% of students were concerned about paying bills. These students often lack a rental history, sufficient funds for a deposit, or access to a cosigner (Broton 2016). Because homeless youth are unable to build the infrastructure of the supportive networks they require, it is essential that educational institutions develop pathways for them. Structural support is critical to address the issue of homeless students. "Without responsive structural support this vulnerable population is at high risk of failure" (Abdul Rahman 2015).

There are currently multiple federal programs required to help homeless youth meet educational needs, but

scholars suggest these programs should be expanded and should meet the varied needs of homeless students. Some nonprofits such as The Center for Working Families, attempt to help students connect to federal, state, and local benefit programs such as food stamps, health care, and financial aid. Structural issues include not only housing insecurity and funding problems, but also food insecurity. Some observers such as the American Council on Education suggest that the federal government should be doing more to feed students. Others are emphasizing the economic imperative by calling for tuition-free and debt-free college (Broton 2016).

Finally, there is a long precedent of policy regarding homelessness and education. While some policy exists to address the issue of student homelessness, there is much room for improvement. For example, the McKinney Vento Act was unevenly implemented and its effects vary greatly among different urban areas (Pavlakis 2017). At the institutional level, colleges and universities have responded to the problem by creating programs that address housing insecurity, food insecurity, health care coverage, etc. (Klitzman 2018). Scholars further indicate that in order to address the issue of student homelessness with policy, a common language should be developed which includes new studies and approaches, thorough training, collaboration among agencies, and advocacy for the McKinney-Vento act including increased funding and provisions (Pavlakis 2014). At the governmental level, the McKinney-Vento HAA already defines student homelessness, sets guidelines for schools. The HEARTH act aims to house families in permanent arrangements (Pavlakis 2014).

Student homelessness in the San Francisco Bay Area is a particular issue with clear ramifications for various stakeholders including students, colleges, and cities. The burden of higher education should lie within the coursework, not in meeting one's basic needs. Fundamentally, the core issue for student homelessness mirrors that of the homeless population at large: lack of sufficient access to housing.

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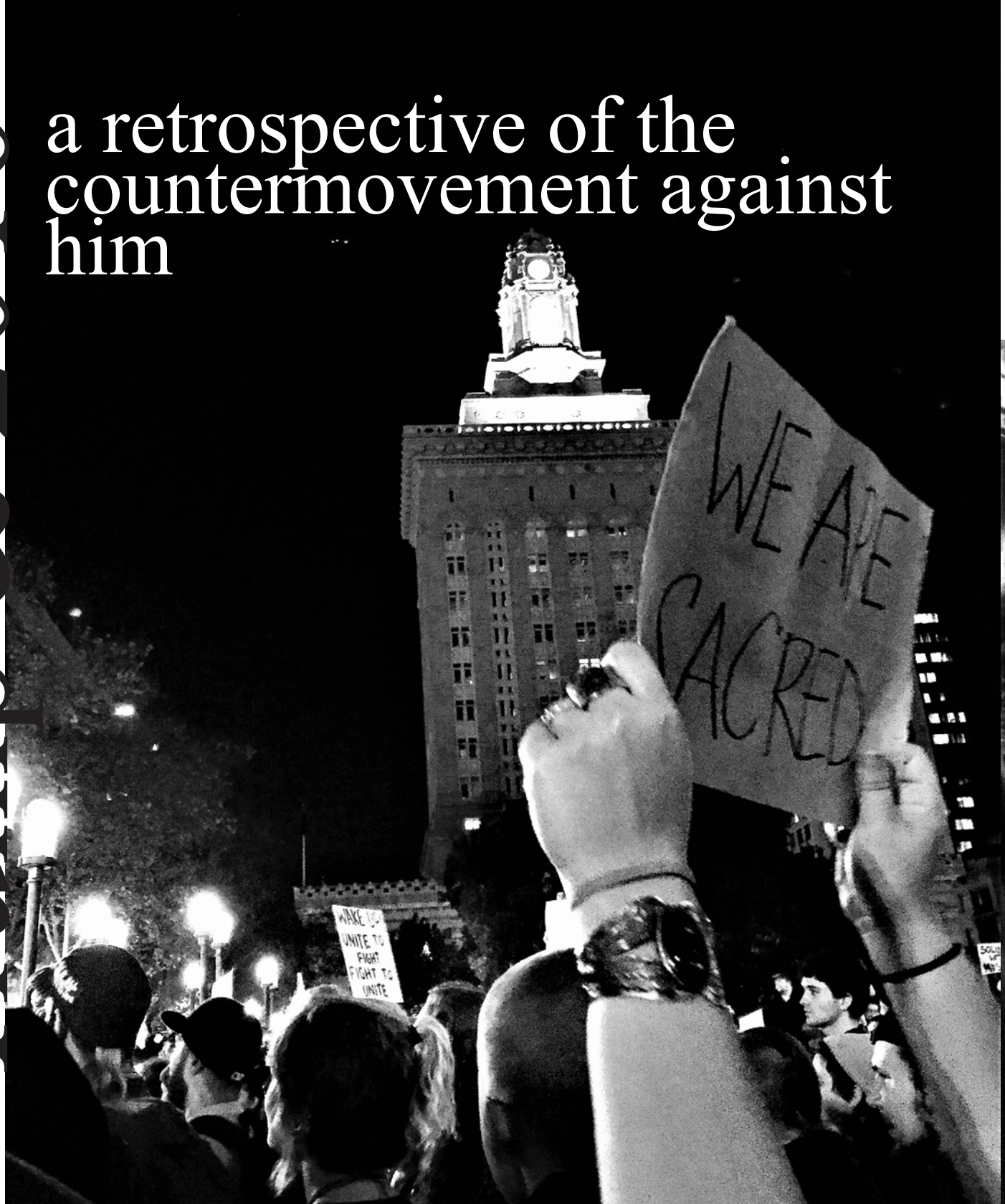
Trump & 2016

a retrospective of the countermovement against him



Mia Taber


GIVE RACIST$ THE
NO ONE IS ILLEGAL
NADIE es ILEGAL
END RAPE CULture


LOVE WILL
WIN AGAIN


DO NOT


Oakland's
Creative Workplace
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From the Archives

the history of squatting in san francisco

Mitzi Waltz

In 1775 a Spanish surveyor began to draw up a map of California's Golden Gate as curious local inhabitants looked on. He was an amusing sight with his poles, string, spyglass and pen. With each stroke of the quill, a few more Indian people became squatters on the land they had used and lived on for centuries. Within a year, the first Spanish fort was erected at San Francisco's Presidio, and the new laws of land ownership began to be enforced for the first time in the city.

Land not claimed by the church or by the missionaries of Mission Dolores was deeded to Spaniards who were owed favors by the crown. These ranchos covered huge areas and proved too large to manage, especially when the new Mexican government of Alta California declared San Francisco open to settlers in 1833. Hopeful squatters threw up shacks wherever possible, while those of more means bought homesteads from the rancho families.

An early California state law upheld the ancient European code of "squatter's rights," stating that individuals could claim up to 160 acres of "vacant" land. The largely undeveloped ranchos appeared to be quite vacant, and areas were frequently appropriated by homesteaders. The owning families were crippled by law and by family squabbles over the division of property, so these squatters often managed to make their homestead claims stick. Still, the sandy hills of San Francisco did not attract a flood of settlers. Not until the discovery of gold.

In 1849 the Gold Rush began and a flood of prospectors descended on San Francisco. There were few lodgings for them. Only two years before, San Francisco had been divided up into lots for sale by the order of Brigadier General S.W. Kearny, the governor of California. Many lots had not yet been sold, and others were held by absentee owners.

The result was widespread squatting. "Where there was a piece of vacant ground

one day, the next saw it covered with half a dozen tents and shanties," one source notes. Another claims that "Gold rush squatters built shacks as far up (Telegraph Hill) as one could crawl." When ships went hopelessly aground in the shallow bay, their wrecks became fair game for housing destitute 49'ers.

If these historical accounts are correct, it seems as though half the city's residents had never heard of such a thing as a legal deed. The problem of land disputes became so bad that in 1865 the city government passed new laws to settle these disputes once and for all. The result was that squatters came into legal possession of over 10,000 acres of San Francisco real estate, including the future site of Golden Gate Park.' The squatters became owners, and the shantytown era ended. Yet many in San Francisco still could not afford housing, especially not with the high rents of a boom city. Not everyone struck it rich in the gold mines. Some doubled up with friends or lived crowded cheek-to-jowl in run-down rooming houses. Others sought an obscure place to live rent-free.

The best-known of San Francisco's squatter settlements was located in a clutch of old streetcars which had been abandoned at Land's End with the advent of the electric trolley. Indigents took up residence in the cars and created a community known as "Carville" or "Carbarn City" in the 1890's. They lived there until the earthquake of 1906 made thousands of "more deserving" citizens homeless - their homes on wheels were then appropriated by the city as emergency housing.

The earthquake made many changes in the living patterns of San Franciscans. For months, the homeless camped out in Golden Gate while awaiting permanent shelter. Others took up residence in the ruins of buildings destroyed by the quake or built shanties wherever they could. Before long, most of the earthquake's victims returned to paying rent, or bought one of the new homes that went up by the dozens every day. But a new breed of squatters was appearing in San Francisco, the product of depression and recession all across America. Around 1915 a city of tar paper shacks began to take shape on the city's outskirts, along islais Creek. Populated by grim faced, cigar-smoking single men, it was a forerunner of the "Hoovervilles" of the coming Great Depression. The nation's farming country was already in the grips of a terrible depression that drove thousands of men to the fields and cities of California in search of work.

In San Francisco, these itinerant

laborers settled in an area
known as “The Dumps,”
fashioning tar paper shacks
from the household refuse piles
that gave the area its name.
This settlement grew as the
refugees from Middle America
arrived in ever-greater numbers
in the twenties and thirties.
It took the New Deal and the
declaration of war on Germany
to destroy this shantytown by
providing munitions-factory
and WPA jobs and wartime
emergency housing programs
for the destitute to its residents.
Although this writer was
unable to find any records
concerning squatting during
the General Strike of 1934,
anecdotal evidence suggests that
it did occur, especially in the
South of Market neighborhood
where the strike was centered.
Hobo villages probably
existed in hidden corners
of the city for long after the
war so isolated individuals
managed to live for free, but
there was no public notice
of squatters until the hippies
came to the Haight-Ashbury

area of the city in the sixties. Most "squatting" was not of the usual variety, because someone generally paid for the place. Often a wealthy kid or organization would rent an apartment and open it to all comers as a free "crash pad." The Diggers, an anarchistic group of former members of the San Francisco Mime Troupe and assorted friends, were probably the most notorious of these groups. Their houses at 1775 Haight St., 898 Clayton St. and 474 Frederick St. were all the sites of major busts for squatting. In one house police rousted over 300 illegal residents. The houses at Haight and Clayton were condemned and boarded up by court order in 1967 Golden Gate Park and Panhandle Park were also appropriated for free sleeping by the runaways and flower children who flocked to the city. Some attempted to build permanent structures in the parks, which were dismantled by park police.

One of the best-known groups of San Francisco squatters in this era was the members of the American Indian Movement who briefly "retook" Alcatraz Island. The seventies brought an organized squatting movement to San Francisco, driven by political convictions, the high cost of housing and the example of squatter's organizations in Amsterdam, London and other European cities. Evictions and displacement put many people on the streets, creating a new underclass known as "the homeless" which was ripe for recruitment by squatting activists. Some of the newly homeless took matters into their own hands, breaking into buildings boarded up in wait for redevelopment or rental. They were joined by the politically-motivated as well as the "starving artists" who now found the traditional garrets were out of their price range. The largest colony of squatters in San Francisco in the seventies was located in an empty brewery building at Florida and Alameda streets, known popularly as "The Vats."

"We can't waive our building codes. We also have to guard against any more people coming here for our welfare and largesse."

The first residents of The Vats paid nominal rent for live/work space in the buildings' former offices and in the cylindrical vats themselves. The buildings' landlord did not notice when friends of the artists began to move in for free, and was overwhelmed when whole floors of the building were occupied by punk rockers. An entire contingent of punk musicians from Texas - the bands

Millions of Dead Cops (MDC), Dirty Rotten Imbeciles (DRI) and The Dicks - moved to San Francisco just because they had heard you could live at The Vats for free. Because some residents of the building were "legal," water and electricity were available. Since the building was not zoned for residential use, the landlord found it difficult to evict the squatters without exposing himself to legal trouble.

"It was first hippies, then the punks sort of drove out the hippies," said Bliss, one of the Vats' long-term residents. "It was always kind of a hazy line - I never knew who was paying rent and who wasn't. It was supposed to be a legitimate pay-to-live there place."

"There were people squatting from the word go. It was such a big open place ... people would just move into tanks and then get kicked out," said Bliss.

The Vats became more than just a crash pad - it was the center of a community of artists and musicians who played a large part in creating the punk/new wave scene in the city, as well as a headquarters for squatters. When an organized group of housing activists took over several abandoned homes in Berkeley in 1980, the issue of squatters hit the news and encouraged like-minded people in San Francisco. Within two years squats were open in the Haight-Ashbury, South of Market and North Beach districts.

One squatter, anarchist poet Peter Plate, said that in February of 1983 at least ten active squats were open, housing about 200 people. By June of 1984 the number of squatters had risen to about a thousand. Another of the first squats - also one of the longest lived was in Polytechnic High School, a large complex of buildings near Kezar Stadium and owned by the city. It was first opened in December of 1982 and was inhabited on and off until demolition began in 1987. "Poly" was an especially prized address because it had running water and lots of space. Squatters became quite canny about police raids on the building, devising hidden rooms and secret ways to get in and out of the building.

"Squatting often provides a refuge for less 'together' people who might otherwise be locked up in repressive institutions like mental hospitals. Think carefully before you exclude anyone," says Ideal Home. a popular "squatter's guidebook" widely used in England (there are at least 30,000 squatters in the Greater London area, according to the local government.) This attitude holds true among squatters in the US. Although many squats have restrictive rules about

drug use, or ask disruptive persons to leave, it is difficult to get rid of people who cause problems because squatters cannot rely on legal eviction. The Vats had problems with drug dealers, thieves and weapons nuts in residence, as well as with a resident firebug who set several small fires in the building. The building's occupants were finally removed when this person set a large fire "out of disgruntlement" over impending eviction, one former resident said, although others have blamed the fire on the landlord or the police. The brewery was demolished to make room for a food service industry showcase and a parking lot

Many ex-"Vat Rats" subsequently moved into an abandoned building in the South of Market area, the Hotel Owners Laundry Company (HOLC, pronounced "hole see"). Opened in April of 1984, HOLC featured a big area for skateboarders to practice and lots of room for residents. Because of its central location and highly politicized atmosphere, it was also a planning center for demonstrators during the 1984 Democratic Convention.

Steve S., a former HOLC resident and veteran squatter, speaks:

I don't think I had a dime at the time. I was living in Buena Vista Park, sleeping in poison oak, working at the soup kitchen, hanging out at Bound Together. I got there on a Sunday and had a free meal... It was one of our first open house/free meal things. So I had the meal and thought, "This is a pretty nice place," so I brought my shit over there and moved in.

The place was a warehouse but the only places we used were the offices and the lounge room because the other areas were too big and cold and the place was covered in asbestos. Initially it was sort of a crash spot. There was electricity in the main room, but we didn't turn it on because We also started having meetings on Wednesday & Sunday nights, we wanted to make it sort of collective like. There were only two rules, pretty much agreed upon no needles, and you had to put something into it. I was like the head scrounger. We were getting all ready for the Democratic Convention and we fixed the place up. We also had meetings with other people in other communities about squatting. Every Wednesday after the meeting - we originally met at Bound Together, then St. Anthony's Coffeehouse, then Hotel Harold, then at our house, we would go and look at other squats. Through that we opened up a couple of new squats. We opened up 2nd & Brannan, where the clock tower is. That was a great place to play handball, a lot of things were working there. Then

later the Women's Squat got squatted.

Steve (a HOLC neighbor) was like 75 years old, an old merchant seaman. He helped us get our electricity going, put in a hot water tank that we got from Ka/if/ower (a commune in the Mission.) He lived in the hotel next door. He knocked on the door and said, "hey, I know you're here and/ don't care as long as you don't torch the place." He taught us a lot about electricity and stuff. There was a black guy who lived next door, knew we were staying there. In the rainy season, I think he wanted to use the building so he called up the owners, who lived in Hong Kong. That' what saved us (from early eviction), was that the owners were in Hong Kong and they didn't have a caretaker. Legally, you have to have the owner sign the eviction notice. Since there wasn't one, they couldn't evict us. Eventually the building's owner was able to serve an eviction notice. Because HOLC had become an open squat, hosting free movies and giving away food, the press picked up the story but was unable to prevent the removal of its tenants. The building remains empty.

From HOLC, the squatters dispersed to a series of smaller buildings. A former coffin factory around the corner and a small house, Women's Squat, opened and closed quickly. Since HOLC, this group of politicized squatters has not successfully attempted another large scale or open effort, although some continue to squat quietly in small groups. One homeless former HOLC squatter died last year. Those who moved to Polytechnic High found themselves displaced by a band of young skinheads, who did not welcome the anarchists and "commies." The Polytech squatters had a well-deserved reputation for violence. Despite - or perhaps because of - their armed internal "security force," Polytech was the site of several severe beatings, many small fires and at least one gang rape. The last of the skinheads were ousted earlier this year by the wrecking ball, after complaints from neighbor hood organizations, Haight Street merchants and Supervisor Bill Maher. The Polytech site has been slated for an "affordable housing" project.

Other groups, not as organized, have also squatted in San Francisco in the 80's. In 1986 the San Francisco Department of Public Health evicted 21 people, including a child, from a hand built shanty town near Seventh and Berry streets. City police had been aware of the hidden community's existence for some years and had been bringing its residents food. Long-term residents had installed propane tanks for cooking, others had added

skylights and battery-operated appliances to their makeshift homes. Mayor Feinstein commented on the shantytown to the S.F. Chronicle, "We can't waive our building codes. We also have to guard against any more people coming here for our welfare and largesse." The shantytown was razed.

Golden Gate Park has remained a popular home for squatters. A police spokesman at Richmond Station, which has jurisdiction over most of the park, estimated that 25 squatters currently live in the park during this rainy season. It is safe to assume that the number is much higher in the summer, he added A walk through the end of the park near Haight Street by this writer turned up the remains of two impromptu shelters which had been washed out by recent rainstorms.

City housing projects have also been targeted by squatters over the years. According to Arelia Sanders of the San Francisco Housing Authority, squatters break into units "all the time...on a weekly average, I'd say at least five to six (empty) units." "We have no idea who's doing it," she added, al though she pinned some blame on drug dealers and users looking for potential "shooting galleries." A few members of the "political" squatters group occupied a unit in the Hayes Valley project for several months this year, and have been encouraging others to do the same.

In conclusion, squatting has been commonplace in San Francisco since the arrival of the Spaniards. As available empty land was filled in, squatters have increasingly occupied existing structures rather than building shantytowns. As vacancy rates in the city decrease, squatters have found a dearth of available buildings as well as increased police enforcement of property laws. They have responded by using a decentralized approach, occupying smaller buildings in smaller groups or alone and avoiding publicity.

The increased militancy of the homeless may lead to a resurgence of squatting activity in the city. The San Francisco branch of the National Union of the Homeless has also expressed interest in squatting, especially after the successful efforts of Berkeley's Homeless Union, which has occupied several abandoned homes in Berkeley. At present, a "homeless vigil" tent city is in place and has moved from the United Nations Plaza to a city park. Although the vigil is intended to bring attention to the plight of the city's homeless, it also gives them homes. One of the vigil's demands is that the city turn over unused land or buildings to the homeless for their use. San Francisco's squatters have turned this demand into action.

On the History of Squatting
an urban action reflection

Armando Garcia

The 1988 issue of Urban Action is one of my favorite issues in the archives. To me, this issue embodies and represents the spirit, values, and standards of Urban Action at its best. Cover to cover, the written work within approaches a variety of timely topics. What I appreciate most is that students showcase their writing, reasoning, and research skills by exploring these topics while also infusing their writing with their own strong voices.

Though I admit I was only four years old when this issue was published, I feel confident claiming that this issue represents concerns prevalent in academia and counterculture at the time. At the tail-end of the 1980's, cities had been transformed by globalization and the economic policies of the Reagan Administration. The start of the first Bush administration in 1988 sent the message that more neoliberalization was to come. The 1980's saw a large increase in wealth inequality, the decay of federal support for public housing, major shifts in the job market, and the rise of homelessness as an urban crisis. Of the articles in this issue, one explores the community organizing work of a professor at SF State, and three make a case for improved parental leave or health care policies. Five articles, making up half of the ten articles in this issue, are on housing and homelessness topics. One article features local punk culture. Themes of punk culture also surface in Mitzi Waltz's contribution to this issue, "A History of Squatting in San Francisco". This has led to Urban Action editors affectionately nicknaming this issue "The Punk Issue". Punk surfaces here with good reason. As a movement, it represented opposition to privatization, neoliberalization, and the way

of life being prescribed by those trends. Punk concerned itself with the production of informal spaces, and valued the freedom to embrace the messy informality of human life. As globalization pushed traditional industry out of urban areas, as well as jobs, it left behind empty abandoned buildings that counterculture youth or whoever were happy to appropriate as living spaces, especially as job security was not a thing. Mitzi Waltz explores this phenomenon of squatting in her article for “The Punk Issue”. As she leads me through the history of squatting, what stood out to me was the moral flexibility with which the practice was treated. At various times, squatting was tolerated, encouraged, or even legitimized through homesteading laws. At others, it was denounced, reviled, and criminalized. How judgment is passed on squatters seems to depend greatly upon how alike the squatters are to those in power, and whether tolerating them will promote the agenda of the powerful. The squats described in San Francisco of the 1980s are ancient history in 2019, but housing instability isn’t. Where squatters in the 70s and 80s might have found abandoned industrial properties, today they find construction sites and condos. Capital has returned to these wild areas of the city with the goal of taming it. While this sort of redevelopment isn’t brand new, it’s scope is massive, bolstered by a massive concentration of wealth in the tech industry, and consuming more of the city than it has been able to before. The result is a more visible homelessness issue that we see today. Squats were often hazardous places, but living under a roof was worth the risk. There is nowhere left to be but the streets, which are being strictly policed. Policy works fastidiously to prevent informal communities from forming that can meet the social and political needs of those on the margins.


SUMMER ON THE SKIDS
ARE WE DONE YET?

No Place to Call Home
the bay area housing crisis

Carlos Ruiz

From 3 to 5 hours in traffic, Monday through Friday, nearly covering the distance between San Francisco to the Canadian border on a weekly basis, Alberto Ruiz commutes with with two grade school children in tow. His relationships and marriage strained to the brink of collapse from a lack of communication and an inability to maintain a face-to-face connection. Being displaced and left with few affordable housing options in the San Francisco Bay Area is the reality for people like Alberto Ruiz. Moreover, this is reality for the thousands of blue collar workers who have fled the region to bedroom communities on the fringes of the metropolitan area in search of affordable housing. Often lauded as one of the most progressive regions in the United States, the San Francisco Bay Area has experienced unprecedented growth in recent decades, helping the state of California become the 5th largest economy in the world. Innovations in technology, medicine, and communication have inspired countless people from across the country and world to relocate to the area. While this growth has brought fortune and prosperity to the titans of industry and their employees, the most vulnerable among us are faced with a fight or flight situation. Chiefly among these issues is the influx of new residents to the Bay Area's limited housing market. New wealth relocates to often neglected and affordable pockets of the region, giving landlords and real estate speculators a reason to raise rents, force out working people and families, and make the prospect of homeownership an inaccessible dream for the working-class. Despite the region's overwhelming prosperity, many San Francisco Bay Area residents have found themselves with a difficult decision, to remain and struggle to pay the exorbitant cost of living or move to more affordable bedroom communities in the Central Valley

and beyond. In the following paper, I will attempt to answer the question: who or what is responsible the Bay Area housing crisis?

Research Methodology:

In June of 2018, the median rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the City of San Francisco eclipsed $3,490 a month while the median income hovers around $82,000 a year. At the College of San Mateo, roughly half of the night shift custodial team completes the long and arduous journey, often fraught with traffic, from the Central Valley's bedroom communities to their worksite in San Mateo's Highland neighborhood. This new reality has forced countless families to upend their lives and jeopardize their personal relationships, time, and well-being to provide shelter for their families. News outlets like the San Jose Mercury News and The New York Times have written stories about the growing scourge of "super commutes", with the cities of Modesto and Stockton leading the nation in their share of commuters. Through a series of interviews, I attempted to gather the perspectives of those directly affected by the housing affordability crisis in the Bay Area. I utilized existing studies and peer-reviewed literature on the topic for hard data and all personal research (interviews) will be qualitative in nature. After reviewing research about how to structure the interviews, I began to write questions that give me insight into the behaviors, values, feelings, and knowledge on issues of displacement that my subjects have experienced (Valenzuela, D. and Shrivastava, P., 2002). While countless news reports and interviews with experts in the field have provided valuable insight into the matter, my research will attempt to provide context from the people who live with the consequences of the crisis. I will conduct interviews with these very commuters in a bid to understand, in their own words, what motivated them to leave the Bay Area, why they chose their current community, what sacrifices have been made, and who they believe is to blame for the ongoing crisis from their perspective. Interviews will be supplemented by existing research and data from scholarly sources, current affordable housing policy, and news reports on the issue. My goal is to provide a space for people affected by the crisis to tell their stories and to gain perspective on who is at fault for this growing problem in the eyes of the affected.

Thanks in large part to the highway boom of the mid-20th century, Americans have accepted the idea that commuting to work is a normal part of life. However,

this seemingly insignificant daily ritual has become a point of contention for a group of individuals and families who have been forced to move outside of the San Francisco Bay Area. Many of these commuters spend anywhere from three to five hours behind the wheel covering 200 miles a day while missing out on important time with their families. For most, the choice was unavoidable, skyrocketing rents forced these families to make difficult decisions: downsize to a one-bedroom apartment with a family of 4 or head east to a region where housing costs are within the realm of affordability. While my research is not being conducted to find a solution to the housing crisis, I hope to provide a perspective that is often overlooked or taken less seriously.

Housing in America and the Legacy of Discrimination

Known for its liberal policies and the various social movements, the San Francisco Bay Area has been labeled a progressive bastion by the rest of the country. However, the Bay Area has experienced the same discrimination in housing as the rest of the country, and to analyze the regional housing crisis, we must also consider the nation's legacy of discrimination. In the early 1900s as troops returned home from the First World War, the United States was in the midst a housing crisis. An economy facing calamity, home builders and a construction industry found themselves unable to find qualified buyers and an American populous struggling to pay for their homes. This perfect storm was the catalyst that prompted the federal government to act. Responding to an imminent housing disaster and with the backing of both houses of congress, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed a series of executive orders that would immortalized as the New Deal. Of the many programs created during this period came two of the most consequential, the Home Owners Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Authority. The Home Owners Loan Corporation, otherwise known as HOLC, was initially conceived as a governmental agency that would assist distressed homeowners and allow them to stay in their homes by providing new mortgages with more reasonable loan terms. The Federal Housing Authority acted as a sort of insurance backer for these new loans, providing protection for the federal government's large investment into American society. However, despite their noble intentions, these institutions were weaponized and became the perpetrators responsible for the overtly racist policy of 'Redlining', the process

of denying services to certain communities based on racial demographics. The Home Owners Loan Corporation would hire real estate professionals to evaluate and rate neighborhoods throughout the United States. Their reports would highlight the race and ethnicity of neighborhood residents and the quality and age of the current housing stock. Neighborhoods would be graded on a scale from first to fourth, with first (Green) being the safest investment as well as homogenous and white, the second (Blue) representing a neighborhood that has undergone some detrimental changes but that is still desirable, the third (Yellow) marked as definitely on the decline and increasingly risky for investment and the fourth (Red) representing the highest level of investment risk due to declining quality of housing stock or heterogenous ethnic composition of the neighborhood. These color-coded maps were used as a means to deny African American, regardless of their qualifications or income, access to mortgage assistance. This further exacerbated the deteriorating condition of housing as new investment did not exist and corralled residents of color into segregated pockets throughout cities in the United States.

Bad behavior and discriminatory practices didn't end with just the federal government, real estate professionals practiced an even more unethical and overtly racist form of discrimination: 'blockbusting'. Utilized as a tool for real estate agents to push white families to list their homes for sale in favor of the new suburban communities that began to sprout all over the country. Kevin F. Gotham writes that, "…real estate agents attempted to define African-American

movement into white neighborhoods as invariably leading to increased crime, falling property values, and other negative consequences" (Gotham, 2002), creating unproven hostilities in a time marked by racial prejudice. Prompted by warnings of imminent reduction of housing values, homeowners would quickly vacate their homes and their agents would turn around and sell the same home to unsuspecting African American families. As homes were being vacated by white families, often well below what the market rate was at the time, unethical real estate agents would mark up the homes and leave many African American families struggling to cover their mortgage and inevitably doubling-up with other families. Richard Rothstein explains that the same story came to fruition in the city of East Palo Alto. Floyd Lowe, an avaricious real estate agent and President of the California Real Estate Association, would prey on unsuspecting white homeowners. He stoked racial tensions and exacerbated white flight in the communities he practiced in by warning of an impending "negro invasion". With no oversight from the state governing bodies, Lowe's unethical and racist practices would go completely unchallenged. (Rothstein, 2017). Unfortunately, the discriminatory housing practices didn't end with blockbusting, rather than create false racial tensions some real estate agents simply refused to take white buyers to neighborhoods with black residents. Dr. George Galster writes that steering is the process by which "behaviors by a real estate agent vis-a-vis a client that tend to direct the client toward particular neighborhoods and/or away from others" (Galster, 1990). This practice contributed to the segregation of neighborhoods by limiting the number of homes a client is able to view depending on their skin color.

Finally, one of the worst institutionalized discriminatory housing practices, the creation of racially Restrictive Covenants. Spearheaded and supported by the Federal Housing Administration, restrictive covenants would be normalized and even included on their underwriting handbook. The covenants would allow deed restrictions on new housing development that encouraged discrimination against African American and other homebuyers of color. With the threat that developments would not receive any backing from the FHA, developers wholeheartedly accepted the new requirements to keep black and brown people out of homogenous white communities. These covenants were rampant throughout the San Francisco

Bay Area with housing developers like Henry Doelger, famous for developing the Westlake District of Daly City and much of the Sunset District in San Francisco, as well as many other developers wrote them into purchase contracts of homes. Dr. Robert Rycroft writes that the institutionalization of restrictive covenants "…created a multitude of predominantly white neighborhoods in nearly every city and spillover minority concentrated neighborhoods where minorities were forced to live after being denied access to neighborhoods of their choice" (The American Middle Class: an Economic Encyclopedia of Progress and Poverty, p. 593). Failure to follow these covenants came at the risk of a significant fine or forfeiture of the property.

While these issues seem disconnected from the realities of the current Bay Area housing crisis, the mechanisms that were used to discriminate against people of color are at play in similar ways. Similar in ideology and practice to that of blockbusting, NIMBYs, activists who fight the development of housing or other land-uses within their community, are using scare tactics about the potential for declining home values whenever affordable housing development is proposed. While the practice of redlining has been outlawed, the process of denying home loans to working families and lower-income individuals is still evident in the sheer down payment requirements need to purchase a home within the region. Prospective homebuyers of modest means are being ushered out of the Bay Area and into the Central Valley in favor significantly more affordable housing. No matter the situation, parallels exist between the discriminatory housing practices of yore and structural failures and barriers to affordable housing today.

Who does this affect?

She lived out of her car most nights because her housing situation was unstable while he commutes 4 hours a day from his home in the Central Valley because that's the only place he could afford, another couple lost their home of 20 years because real estate speculators bought their building and raised rents exponentially. Their stories are innumerable and not an exaggeration, families throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, and indeed across the entire state, are facing a worsening dilemma: exorbitant housing prices are forcing families out of their homes in search of affordable housing. This issue is pervasive and affects all Bay Area residents, including the prosperous tech workforce that has inundated cities throughout the

region. The following section includes 6 interviews with employees and students at the College of San Mateo. All employees interviewed were former Bay Area residents who have been pushed out of the area by rising housing costs and in pursuit of homeownership. The students interviewed have either struggled with homelessness and eventually left the region for the more affordable Sacramento metro area or have struggled greatly to rent an apartment in a below market rate development.

When asked why interviewees decided to leave the Bay Area, the answers seemed relatively consistent. Luis Carranza, Supervisor of Custodial Operations at the College of San Mateo, explained, "I refused to pay $3000 a month for renting a 2-bedroom apartment, it was like throwing money away", this sentiment was shared among custodians who left the area for more affordable enclaves, the idea of using a significant portion of their monthly salary to just barely get by in the Bay Area was not a reasonable alternative. When asked why they chose their respective cities to purchase a home, Brianne King replied, "We chose Antioch because it was one of the closer cities that we could find within a good price bracket, space, convenience to freeways and transportation, and also because we have family out here". Similar responses were received from Luis, "… it is the closest and most affordable town with great schools", referring to Mountain House. Others pointed to more stark reasoning, Custodian, Alberto Ruiz explained, "We chose Patterson because it was the only place we could afford to buy", whereas Lead Custodian Eduardo Gonzalez pointed towards safety, "We moved to Manteca because Oakland was really unsafe. There was too much gang violence and I didn't want my kids growing up with that". The idea that sacrificing valuable time with their families and loved ones in the pursuit of homeownership led to questions regarding the sacrifices that needed to be made and if it was worth all of the trouble. Brianne recanted, "… I do feel like I'm missing out. I'm missing out on raising my daughter, being home with her when she gets home, helping her with her homework, and just even being able to cook dinner." A similar story can be heard from Luis, "I miss a lot of my girls' volleyball games in the evening, if I was still in the Bay Area I could easily ask for an hour off from work and go to their games". Regardless of the level of sacrifices that were made, the appeal of the American Dream proved to be a significant motivating factor. When asked if they believed they made the right

decision by moving their families out of the Bay Area, all respondents enthusiastically agreed. When asked if he made the right choice, Alberto replied, "Yes, for my family". Luis shared the same sentiment and expressed, "Yes, although I would still come back to the Peninsula if I could afford it." And Brianne explained further, "Yes, I do think we made the right decision, even with hardships it still has more pros and cons. In life we do what we must to accomplish what we need, so we as a family keep pushing." Despite this realization that working families need to leave the region in order to purchase the home of their dream, the pursuit of the American Dream appears to be alive and well, even in this environment of bidding wars and increased real estate speculation.

While the housing crisis remains a pervasive issue affecting the lives of countless working-class families, college students are also feeling a considerable burden in their search for stable and affordable housing. Brianna Ramos was a former student at the College of San Mateo, she graduated in 2016 and transferred to Sacramento State University. Her reasoning for leaving the Bay Area was in large part due to the region's unaffordable housing market. Brianna's story differs from the previous group of interviewees, not only was she a student facing affordable housing issues, she also faced homelessness on most nights during her last year at the college.

While much of her reasoning differed from the workers interviewed before, Brianna's responses seemed to reflect a lot of the same concerns that others shared. When asked why she decided to leave the Bay Area to complete her undergrad, she replied, "Family, personal growth, money, self-reliance, and a change of scenery" and that she chose Sacramento State because "…I knew that if I had to stay at school, my focus would have been on supporting myself and work would have taken over my life". When asked if she would have stayed in the Bay Area if it was more affordable, Brianna replied, "Probably, I would have seriously considered it. All of my friends and professional network was out there and I'm familiar with the area. Affordable housing was a major factor in leaving." But like the previous respondents, Brianna believes she made the right choice. She explained, "I discovered a lot about myself, I focused on more self-care, being at the state capital was good for what I am studying too. Applying things from the real-world to our curriculum, and the sense of community. I haven't regretted it and I have made a lot of new friends."

Similar to all respondents, Gabriela Topete, Student Trustee at the College of San Mateo shared her struggle to find affordable housing in the Bay Area. I asked Gaby if it was difficult to find affordable housing in the Bay Area, she replied, "Yes, I've moved 5 times in three years… first, I lived in the east bay, since it was more affordable. The commute was impossible, so we moved to the peninsula, but had to find roommates to afford it". While her story differs from both Brianna and the custodial team at the College of San Mateo, the mechanisms at play which make housing unaffordable remain the same. Her ordeal didn't end when she finally moved back to the peninsula, she explained, "My apartment in Belmont was really old and everything was broken. We decided to move to another apartment but couldn't find anything affordable. When we finally found a place in San Mateo, and put down a deposit, we realized they had scammed us—the appliances were not what they said they were, there was trash everywhere". What Gaby faced reflects the reality of low-income home renters throughout the Bay Area. I then asked whether she considered leaving the Bay Area in search of more affordable housing and lower cost of living, she lamented, "Yes, just yesterday James [Gaby's husband] was talking about moving to Virginia. The company he's working for is opening an office there. We realized that for far less than what we're paying in rent every month, we could be making mortgage payments for a nice house", this sentiment echoed the reasoning the custodial crew had in leaving the Bay Area. She continued, "Right now, we're not living, we're only working to keep a roof over our heads."

A sense of community, an obligation to one's family to provide the best possible life, or the need to just escape the changing urban landscape of the Bay Area, most interviewees appeared to share similar reasoning for their departures from the area. As everyone has been exposed to the effects of the housing crisis in one way or another, I wanted to gather the perspective of who or what they believe was responsible? When asked this question, Brianna offered this response, "I think it's a little bit of everything, especially on the peninsula, the growth of tech companies has pushed a bunch of working people out. I think those companies should consider their role in displacing people and help with the problem. Politicians should be doing more to protect the people who are vulnerable to rent hikes." Luis offered his own take on what caused the rise in housing prices,

he explained, “I think all of the Silicon Valley giant companies hiring people from out of the area drove the prices up and made the home prices and rent unaffordable for median income families. Unfortunately, we [the Carranza family] make too much money to qualify for low income housing but not enough to afford market rate, we are kind of caught in the middle and median income families are the ones that get affected.” Brianna offered a similar response, “That is a good question, who is responsible, I have to say that possibly the responsibilities would be on some of these tech company employees that are able to come in and buy up multiple homes at a high prices, so that when some of us at lower ends of the financial spectrum try to purchase a home, we are most likely out bid.” Gabriela mentioned a lot of the same reasoning, the rise of the tech sector and the regions poor preparation for an influx of new residents but she also offered this perspective, “I think our government institutions are to blame for the crisis. There’s no rent control. Tenants don’t have any rights. Instead of helping, local governments have engineered plans that hurt the most vulnerable”. Regardless of who is affected, the blame appears to be pointed in number of directions.

The Rise of Tech

Mountain View, Menlo Park, and Cupertino, three California cities with something in common: their largest employers are also some of the world’s largest tech companies, the likes of which have left an unmistakable imprint on their local economy and cityscape. From the rapid expansion of Facebook’s campuses in Menlo Park to their employees’ effect on the local housing market, tech companies have fundamentally altered the way cities operate and deal with development (Cagle, 2015). A fierce resistance has grown out of frustration with the changing nature of long established affordable low-income communities at the behest of gentrification or out of control real estate speculation. Shifting demographics and new wealth threaten vulnerable populations, leaving working families scrambling to find an affordable space to call home. As we have seen with the interviews conducted, the perception of who is to blame seems to be focused on one group of people: workers for tech giants like Google, Apple, and Facebook. Whether it is deserved or not, tech workers appear to be the immediate target of our collective ire, however they may not be the underlying culprit. It is true that the explosion of the technology sector in the Bay Area has fueled a hiring frenzy that seeks to bring highly educated and highly paid workers from across the country and across the world. It would be an injustice if we did not discuss the real-life implications of companies like Facebook moving to and expanding in underserved cities within the Bay Area. Since

Facebook's initial move to Menlo Park in 2011, neighboring communities like East Palo Alto have experienced both the economic benefit as well as the negative implications of having a tech giant becoming your next-door neighbor. While many large companies have created 'Community Benefit Agreements' that see investment from technology firms into the cities they are located in, some critics have called into question their influence over local politics. Susie Cagle of NextCity explains that, "Where cities once ran on tax dollars, selective corporate philanthropy has emerged as a significant driving force of urban policy. Tech companies are reengineering city streets, building city police stations and parks, and even helping cities cover the salaries of the public servants they rely on." However, while this philanthropy is well received by bureaucrats and city agencies, the real-life implications of living near one of these large corporations means rising housing costs and the threat of imminent displacement. Recently completed developments, like the Apple 'Spaceship' in Cupertino or the Frank Gehry designed Facebook campus in Menlo Park are spawning a speculative real estate war with developers hedging bets on luxury apartments and condominiums that few can afford. The most stark example of global forces altering the physical development of cities is the recently proposed and hotly debated expansion of Google into San Jose. The officially proposed scope of development would see a large swath of Downtown San Jose transformed from a mostly light industrial and sparsely developed area into a transit-oriented development centered around San Jose's Diridon Station. A recent article in the San Jose Mercury News explains that Google's planned expansion "… is expected to transform some 50 acres into a mix of offices, shops and restaurants connected by pathways that wind through parks and plazas filled with public art." (Deruy, 2018). This portion of the city has long been neglected and in need of some sort of investment and revitalization.

This new investment into San Jose's urban core is expected to

have transformative effects on the local economy. Google anticipates that the project would bring 25,000 employees to San Jose, a roughly 65% increase to the current number of jobs in the downtown area. Proponents of the project like Scott Knies, Executive Director of the San Jose Downtown Association, argue that the proposed development would mean, "More jobs, more housing, more hotel rooms, retail, restaurants, more tax revenue. This report makes that clear." (Avalos, 2018). The proposed development could feature up to 8.5 million square feet of new office space, 9,350 that could accommodate 13,700 new residents. The plan also calls on the city of San Jose to raise height limits on developments to 200 feet, nearly twice the height of the existing SAP Center. While the area could see a boon in incentives in the form of a Community Benefits Agreement, residents fear of impending gentrification. While the city is known for having some of the highest earners in the nation, this influx of new wealth threatens the working-class neighborhoods that the development borders. Neighborhood resident Tori Truscheit voiced her opposition at the planning meeting where the Google mega-development project was up for a vote. She explained, "If there is no protection for any of the renters in my neighborhood, many of us, we don't know where else we're going to go." (Bitters, 2018). While the development is sure to bring jobs and new investment into an otherwise underutilized area, the prospect of displacement is all too real for San Jose's most vulnerable residents. The changing neighborhood demographics seen in places like East Palo Alto following Facebook's campus expansion in nearby Menlo Park, and the gentrification experienced in places like San Francisco's Mission District are stark reminders of what an influx of real estate speculation and new wealth could do to neighborhoods (Mi Casa No Es Su Casa, 2014).

NIMBYism, Political Failings, and Opportunities

So, are tech companies to blame? No, at least not entirely. Affordable housing advocates and even some environmental groups have been instrumental in stalling legislation and further complicating the drive to encourage higher density housing developments, developments that would surely provide affordable units. SB 827, the brainchild of California State Senator Scott Wiener, would have incentivized the construction and redevelopment of high density housing along busy transit corridors. While the bill had major backing from the tech elite in the state of California, environmentalist groups like the Sierra Club fought against it. Their opposition was encapsulated in a letter sent to the office of State Senator Weiner, in it, Sierra Club Policy Advocate Kyle Jones argued, "While infill development near transit is the most desirable option, we believe that your bill is a heavy-handed approach to encourage that development that will ultimately lead to less transit being offered and more pollution generated, among other unintended consequences." Despite its intentions of spurring new housing developments along busy traffic corridors, SB 827 stalled in the state legislature. Although this may appear to be a major setback for housing activists, radical proposals meant to overhaul zoning codes and ordinances have been launched throughout the country.

Other proposals have made it to the ballot box in recent months, in November of 2018, California residents had the opportunity to vote on Proposition 10. The proposition called for the repeal of the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act. The original act set limits on municipalities and their ability to set rent control throughout the state of California. Real estate blog, Curbed Los Angeles explains that in Costa Hawkins, "There are three main provisions:

It protects a landlord's right to raise the rent to market rate on a unit once a tenant moves out.

It prevents cities from establishing rent control—or capping rent—on units constructed after February 1995.

It exempts single-family homes and condos from rent control restrictions.

The state bill also prevents cities from updating date of construction provisions in ordinances in place at the time of its passage" (2018). Proponents of Proposition 10 argued that a repeal of Costa-Hawkins would have empowered municipalities to enact new rent control policies that would protect vulnerable populations from being displaced by the

encroachment of real estate speculators. The repeal could have also worked in tandem with affordable housing development to ensure that those most likely to face displacement are protected. Opponents argued that the legislation would have discouraged developers from building new housing and encourage discriminatory housing practices that would enable additional barriers to getting quality housing.

Regionally, the Association of Bay Area Governments has set targets for municipalities to construct a minimum number of housing units in their Regional Housing Needs Allocation. In their most recent report, the San Francisco Bay Area needs to construct a total of 187,990 new housing units (Final Regional Housing Need Allocation, 2015–2023, 2013) to keep up with the demand for affordable housing throughout the region. Unfortunately, as of 2018, 97.6% (Aguilar-Canabal, 2018) of cities in the state of California have failed to meet any or their housing goals. A stronger ABAG with enforcement capabilities could effectively help spur the construction of affordable housing units in a region that is becoming increasingly segregated along the lines of income.

In the immediate term, modifying Costa-Hawkins or its repeal should be considered by politicians, housing activists, disenfranchised communities, and anyone affected by the current housing crisis. Economists and real estate professionals argue that enacting any new form of rent control or any other regulation to housing would lead to an even further reduction of affordable housing units and create less turnover in housing as current residents would be incentivized to stay. Regardless of whether any of the outcomes would be the reality, repealing Costa-Hawkins and altering current rent control regulations to include housing units built after 1995 could have a significant positive impact on the affordable housing stock in the region (Chiland, 2018). Where we stand, vulnerable individuals and families are struggling to find housing at reasonable rental rates, opening up the pool of rent controlled housing units could help alleviate the burden that these families face. Rent control is inherently imperfect, and not all sides reap the same benefits. A reduction in revenues for investors and property owners would surely be seen, and the Legislative Analyst Office argues that the repeal of Costa-Hawkins would have negative impact on state tax revenue that would be collected from these same units at market rate (Chiland, 2018). Regardless of these potential negatives, doing nothing helps no one and continues

the cycle of displacement.

A major move that other municipalities and states have taken in recent months has been the up zoning of traditional neighborhoods. Activists in the city of Minneapolis faced their own housing crisis head on by pushing legislators to completely abandon single family residence zoning and instead adopt a zoning code that would allow up to three dwelling units in every neighborhood. Proponents argue that this initiative levels the playing field for residents who have traditionally been excluded from the housing market from renting in the city. The ambitious master plan, known as Minneapolis 2040, would see a reversal of zoning regulations that segregate communities akin to that of an era of restrictive covenants and redlining. The plan explains,

"Racial disparities persist in all aspects of housing. Until the 1960s, zoning regulations, racially discriminatory housing practices, and federal housing policies worked together to determine who could live in single-family houses in "desirable" neighborhoods. These determinations were based on race and have shaped the opportunities granted to multiple generations of Minneapolis residents." (Minneapolis 2040, 2018)

Modifying zoning codes would allow the city of Minneapolis to reverse some of the damage done during an era of exclusionary housing policies that were widespread throughout the United States in the middle of the 20th century. The process of changing zoning codes to allow for higher density housing in areas that were traditionally zoned for single-families would inevitably create an equitable city with a variety of housing types where the less fortunate, the elderly, and the young could afford. Applying this type of zoning change to cities here in the Bay Area could have major benefits, like those State Senator Weiner was pushing for in SB 827. Additionally, the acceptance and approval of new 'Accessory Dwelling Units' could also help alleviate some aspects of the housing crisis. Property owners and city officials have long clashed over the approval process of these spaces, often leading to demands by local officials to remove such unapproved units, as they had been built without the consent and approval of the city's planning department. It could be viewed as an effective way to provide additional affordable housing to students, the elderly, and other vulnerable populations. Streamlining the process and possibly even providing some form of incentives for property owners to

construct these units appears a reasonable step that has the potential to provide additional affordable housing stock that otherwise doesn't require razing any existing structures or even having to start from scratch.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the prospect of the American Dream hangs in the balance, regardless of who is to blame for the ongoing housing crisis, the San Francisco Bay Area faces a stark future. Working class families with generational ties to the region have become displaced and find themselves in search of somewhere to call home. No single agency, city government, non-profit organization, or community group can solve this calamity on their own. Oversimplified answers do little to resolve the issue and fail to address other structural elements involved. While the crisis appears to be bleak, steps towards progress are being made at all levels. Cities like San Francisco have leveraged developers into including additional affordable housing units in their proposals. Activism is alive and well as disaffected residents have rallied together and formed coalitions that are hellbent on preventing further displacement.

They are providing hope to communities dealing with the worst effects of the Bay Area's prosperity. Organizations like the Mission Economic Development Agency have sprouted throughout the Bay Area with an intended mission of preserving or developing affordable housing to protect our vulnerable residents from imminent displacement. Activists in cities like Minneapolis have effectively lobbied their planning commission to abandon the widespread acceptance of single-family residence zoning in favor of a multifamily zoning scheme thereby opening up more of the city to families and individuals of mixed incomes. All of these positive developments are also taking place in cities throughout the Bay Area. While the problem is still pervasive, and it is unlikely that housing prices are expected to fall, hope still remains that something will be done, it is just that it will take all of us to reach a positive resolution.

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The Relationship Between Housing Cost and Race in the Bay Area

Minyoung Lee

The Purpose and Method

This essay will address data related to Gentrification which refers to original residents being displaced by the influx of new wealthier residents and the resulting increase in housing costs. According to Jackelyn Hwang and Jeffrey Lin (2016) "on the basis of census table decompositions by race, age and education, found that White, prime-age, college-educated households have been more likely to choose downtown neighborhoods since 2000 compared with earlier periods" (p. 14). Though this description is based on downtown area, it can be related to a larger range of location such as counties. Meanwhile, since the Bay Area is known for diversity in terms of culture and race, the focus on this essay will be whether gentrification may result in racial demographic change. If there is a change, the question is which race is the most vulnerable in the Bay Area. Additionally, the possibility of gentrification will be identified by examining housing cost, an indicator of gentrification as explained above. Therefore, this essay will compare two variables, housing cost and race.

Related to the above two variables, the rental housing cost is divided into three levels of price: higher price ($2,000 or more), medium price ($1,000 to $1,999), and lower price ($0 to $999). Meanwhile race is broken down into White, Black or African American, and Asian as the three major races in the Bay Area. Data was collected for the nine counties in the Bay Area and for 2011 and 2016, using ACS.

The Data and Analysis

Table 1 and 2 shows housing cost in 2011 and 2016 respectively. In 2011, the percentage of lower price ranged from 19% to 29%, the percentage of medium price ranged from 31% to

Table1: HOUSING COST (2011)

	less or $999		$1,000 to $1,999		$2,000 or more		total
Alameda	141,495	26%	191,150	36%	196,481	37%	536,160
Contra Costa	84,839	23%	118,117	32%	164,578	44%	370,925
Marin	20,089	20%	31,580	31%	50,021	49%	102,832
Napa	14,243	29%	16,256	33%	18,253	37%	49,640
San Francisco	95,950	28%	114,304	34%	122,193	36%	338,366
San Mateo	49,562	19%	85,871	33%	118,097	46%	256,423
Santa Clara	125,200	21%	200,360	33%	267,632	45%	599,652
Solano	36,664	26%	50,957	37%	49,838	36%	139,312
Sonoma	53,308	29%	65,667	36%	61,670	33%	184,170

37%, and the percentage of higher price ranged from 33% to 49%. On the other hand, in 2016, the percentage of lower price ranged from 17% to 27%, the percentage of medium price was 29% to 45%, and the percentage of higher price was 27% to 52%. Though an increase of higher price housing is acceptable with inflation, the remarkable thing is that the characteristic of each county's housing price was more outstanding in 2016. For example, Solano and Sonoma had higher concentrations of medium price housing, whereas San Mateo and Santa Clara were more concentrated in higher price housing.

Table 3 and 4 show the three major race distributions in 2011 and 2016 separately. In both years and almost all counties, White was a majority, Asian

Table 2: HOUSING COST (2016)

	less or $999		$1,000 to $1,999		$2,000 or more		total
Alameda	130,695	23 %	211,193	37 %	215,529	38 %	564,293
Contra Costa	85,991	22 %	141,279	36 %	156,063	40 %	387,540
Marin	18,655	18 %	30,411	29 %	53,964	52 %	104,400
Napa	13,091	27 %	17,919	36 %	17,422	35 %	49,375
San Francisco	90,506	25 %	105,793	30 %	154,991	43 %	356,797
San Mateo	45,184	17 %	78,162	30 %	134,617	52 %	261,010
Santa Clara	114,096	18 %	191,236	31 %	314,768	50 %	626,579
Solano	38,485	26 %	65,586	45 %	39,338	27 %	145,315
Sonoma	51,542	27 %	76,666	41 %	57,437	30 %	189,043

was the next and Black was a minority. Additionally, when white population percentage decreased, black population percentage didn't change much or decreased while mostly Asian population percentage increased between 2011 and 2016.

Table 5 and 6 show percentage change of housing cost and of race respectively. In table 5, there are 4 types of change: only higher price increased (Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara), both higher and medium price increased (Alameda), only medium increased (Napa, Sonoma) and both medium and lower price increased (Contra Costa, Solano). In table 6, each county shows diverse change among the three racial demographics but the Asian population mostly increased in almost every

Table3: RACE (2011)

	White		Black or African American		Asian		Total
Alameda	690,261	46%	186,326	12%	391,627	26%	1,494,876
Contra Costa	656,311	63%	94,782	9%	147,948	14%	1,037,817
Marin	200,333	80%	7,481	3%	13,992	6%	250,666
Napa	109,997	81%	2,710	2%	9,209	7%	135,377
San Francisco	408,857	51%	49,260	6%	267,289	33%	797,983
San Mateo	424,219	60%	20,507	3%	175,098	25%	711,622
Santa Clara	896,937	51%	45,219	3%	560,362	32%	1,762,754
Solano	214,436	52%	60,130	15%	59,143	14%	411,620
Sonoma	390,474	82%	7,161	1%	19,249	4%	478,551

county. The percentage change between White population and Black population needs to be looked at carefully. In 4 counties (Alameda, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo) black population decreased, whereas in other 4 counties (Contra Costa, Napa, Santa Clara, and Sonoma) black population increased. Then, when black population decreased white population increased and when black population increased white population decreased, except in two counties. Furthermore, when data in tables 5 and 6 are compared to one another where “only higher price” and “both higher and medium price” increased mostly black population decreased. Similarly, where ‘only medium price’ and ‘both medium and lower price’ increased, mostly black population increased.

Table4: RACE (2016)

	White		Black or African American		Asian		Total
Alameda	703,973	44%	182,092	11%	452,582	28%	1,605,217
Contra Costa	661,857	60%	97,032	9%	171,853	16%	1,107,925
Marin	204,928	79%	6,075	2%	14,693	6%	259,358
Napa	103,119	73%	2,943	2%	10,931	8%	140,823
San Francisco	409,355	48%	45,607	5%	287,847	34%	850,282
San Mateo	404,461	54%	18,533	2%	203,926	27%	754,748
Santa Clara	883,775	47%	48,003	3%	648,047	34%	1,885,056
Solano	227,173	53%	60,716	14%	65,444	15%	429,596
Sonoma	378,638	76%	7,848	2%	19,421	4%	497,776

Conclusion

As mentioned in table 1 and 2, it seems that in each county housing price level becomes distinctive. Similarly, in the table 5, it shows there is 4 types of change. On the other hand, though in table 3 and 4 both White population and black population distribution somewhat decreased, table 6 shows that each county experienced different percentage change in both White population and Black population. Above all, as shown in table 5 and 6 it seems like gentrification leads to racial demographic change in Bay Area. In detail, where the higher price housing increased but lower and medium housing decreased, Black population percentage change also decreased. It is assumed that Black population are relatively more

vulnerable than the other two races. Thus, when only higher housing price dramatically increases, the affordable housing which supports race diversity and minority's living area needs to be considered.

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Table 5. PERCENTAGE CHANGE (HOUSING COST)

	less or $999	$1,000 to $1,999	$2,000 or more	Total
Alameda	-8%	10%	10%	5%
Contra Costa	1%	20%	-5%	4%
Marin	-7%	-4%	8%	2%
Napa	-8%	10%	-5%	-1%
San Francisco	-6%	-7%	27%	5%
San Mateo	-9%	-9%	14%	2%
Santa Clara	-9%	-5%	18%	4%
Solano	5%	29%	-21%	4%
Sonoma	-3%	17%	-7%	3%

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Table 6. PERCENTAGE CHANGE (RACE)

	White	Black or African American	Asian	Total
Alameda	2%	-2%	15%	7%
Contra Costa	1%	2%	15%	7%
Marin	2%	-19%	5%	3%
Napa	-6%	9%	19%	4%
San Francisco	0%	-7%	8%	7%
San Mateo	-5%	-10%	15%	6%
Santa Clara	-1%	6%	16%	7%
Solano	6%	1%	11%	4%
Sonoma	-3%	10%	1%	4%

From the Archives

Postmark from China - Beijing: a metropolis growing up or growing lost?

Professor Qian Guo

When I left Beijing for the United States nearly sixteen years ago, I never thought I was actually saying farewell to the city where I was born and grew up during some of the most tumultuous years of Chinese contemporary history.

I have been back to Beijing since then, of course, as frequently as once a year since I started working at full-time college positions. However, the city that I knew, had changed beyond my recollections. Major changes are apparent every time I go back to visit.

The imperial palaces at the center of the city are preserved, and along the central axis all the imperial and quasi-imperial landmarks, such as Tiananmen Square, are still aligned. Going beyond the center of the city, however, reveals a face of Beijing that portrays sharp contrasts with my memories.

The alleyways that characterized the residential areas of the imperial Beijing have mostly given way to new high-rise apartments and shopping centers. No longer could I ride my bicycle through those narrow and aging alleyways, smelling the cooking from the households and feeling the spirits of time hovering over me. Nor could neighbors peek into each other's' private lives and hang out under the eaves to gossip. The towering buildings and busy sidewalks are not at all inviting for neighborly gatherings, and residents are insulating themselves behind closed apartment doors, perhaps enjoying the western virtue of privacy for the first time.

I remember enjoying my strolls in Beijing- it was indeed a "walking city." It was so easy to walk around and gain an intimate sense of the ancient city-the imperial capital for most of the last eight hundred years. I can no longer find such leisure available, for the city has become so busy. Sauntering down the street would block the way of suit-and-tie people who are rushing to work, and one would receive well-deserved dirty looks

When I was a young teen, there were

few buildings that exceeded six stories; and would require the installation of elevators, something the government did not want to provide. I remember standing on our apartment's third floor balcony and watching the lights at Tiananmen Square three miles away. I also remember being inspired by train whistles echoing in the quietude of the night, and felt as if I were being called on a journey. Now my family still lives in the same apartment, but the view has become the oppressive new apartment building. The noise of the motor engines rumbles day and night in a city that no longer sleeps.

I remember being able to look into the night sky and see the Milky Way. Imagine the magnitude of the universe made me feel melancholy as a young teenager wanting to retreat into the safe embrace of the city. Now kids have to go to the planetarium to see what the Milky Way looks like. Should I blame the city lights or the pollution? Perhaps both, but it is the infamous air pollution that gives the city a tired and filthy appearance.

How much Beijing has changed in such a short period of time! Progress! The media in Beijing bursts with enthusiasm. More modern skyscrapers so we can build a world-class CBDI. More freeways so that the white collar types can drive their newly acquired vehicles. In her push for a new identity and the glamour of modernity, Beijing, as the fabled city seems to have lost her character and tradition of humanity. The traditional human scale has been overwhelmed by the glistering skyscrapers and freeway loops, the old patrician lifestyle has been overshadowed by the dire contra.st of excessive consumption of the nouveau riche and the destitution of the scrambling rural migrants.

Beijingers appear to be quite happy with the advent of the new and are oblivious to the loss of the old. Alas, do we really have to learn from our own irreversible losses? I know the move toward the metropolis of an emerging economy is unstoppable. And I may feel greater pain witnessing such changes because I have made the old Beijing a spiritual retreat from the typical American city, a status that Beijing may never have qualified for.

Unknowingly, I bid farewell to the Beijing as I knew it sixteen years ago, because I shall not be able to return. I can now fully appreciate Thomas Wolfe's warning to all of us, "you cannot go home again," because the home is never the same. With profound sadness, I see my beloved hometown, the imperial capital that withstood adversity for a millennia, fading away into history.

Postmark from China

Beijing, Sixteen Years Later

Professor Qian Guo

Back in 2003, I wrote an essay for Urban Action about Beijing's sweeping changes, sixteen years after I bid farewell to the city. Recently, Marina contacted me for an update on Beijing for the 40th edition of Urban Action. I then realized that another sixteen years had lapsed, during which time Beijing's transformation continued in event more dramatic fashions.

Beijing has emerged as the top center of corporate headquarters, R&D activities, business and financial services, and creative cultural industries. The 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics was a highlight of the city's changes with the Olympic Park extending Beijing's historical central axis northward. Driven by the impetus of the Olympics, Beijing Capital International Airport became the second largest in the world. A new airport in the southern suburbs will be completed by late 2019, nearly doubling the capacity of civil aviation in the greater Beijing area. The central business district (CBD) has taken shape on the eastside of the city. It is now home to most of Beijing's skyscrapers led by "China Zun" (528 meters), the sixth tallest in the world after its completion in 2018.

In the 2003 essay, I bemoaned the demise of Beijing's historical landscape and traditional way of life brought on by the onslaught of urban renewal in the name of modernization. Urban renewal has been accompanied by urban sprawl, hollowing out the urban core of traditional neighborhoods and invading far-flung rural areas with new expressway labyrinths, expansive condominium high-rises and suburban mall behemoths. In 2003, the 61-mile 5th Ring Road (beltway) just opened to traffic; in 2016, the 621-mile 7th "Ring Road" became the bypass for through-traffic to avoid suburban congestion in Beijing and nearby Tianjin.

Beijing has been confronted by heightened public health crises with horrific smog and poor water quality. While climate change may be the global-scale forces for Beijing's environmental woes, human factors

exert a more immediate impact, such as unscrupulous consumption, traffic congestion, overcrowding and glaring socioeconomic disparity. Beijing has delineated an ecological conservation zones in its hilly districts (where the Great Walls are). It is improving on urban green space, restoring wetlands, daylighting urban creeks and promoting electric vehicles. The city's efforts in curbing air pollution has had limited success since many pollution sources are outside of the city's jurisdiction. Beijing phased out coal-burning electric generation in late 2017, but had to bring coal-powered generators back on line in late 2018 due to price and supply problems with natural gas. Ironically, some of the innovative coping strategies have been handicapped by investors' greed, mismanagement, and lack of sustainability. By late 2018, the bike-sharing frenzy began to fizzle after peaking in the summer of 2017 when nearly 2.5 million shared bikes clogged Beijing's public space.

Beijing is trying to take on "big city diseases," especially environmental challenges and quality of life issues, with drastic measures. As a major endeavor to decentralize the so-called "non-capital functions," Beijing Municipal Government officially relocated to "Capital Subcenter" on the eastside of the city In January 2019. A more ambitious initiative is the establishment of a special economic and environmental zone to the south of Beijing, Xiongan New Area, which will be the new home of many manufacturing, educational and servicing entities decentralized from Beijing. A more controversial decentralization measure is Beijing's policy of dispersing "low-end population," i.e., rural migrant workers and their families who tend to congregate in slum-like communities along the urban-rural interface. A fire at an overcrowded multiple use building in late 2017 killed 19 and injured many more, mostly rural migrant workers and their families. It became the pretext for the government to carry out large-scale demolition of substandard housing, which has effectively forced rural migrants to leave Beijing. For the first time since reform started in late 1970s, Beijing experienced population decease in the last two years.

As I work on "Beijing: Geography, History and Culture" for ABC-CLIO's Contemporary World City series, my perspective on Beijing has become more nuanced than it was in 2003. Despite all the trials and tribulations, all stakeholders in Beijing's future have come to the consensus that the city must retain a harmony between the old and the new, and no effort should be spared in helping the city achieve the ultimate status for the national capital, "the model of all places." I now feel a reasonable confidence in their success.

The M

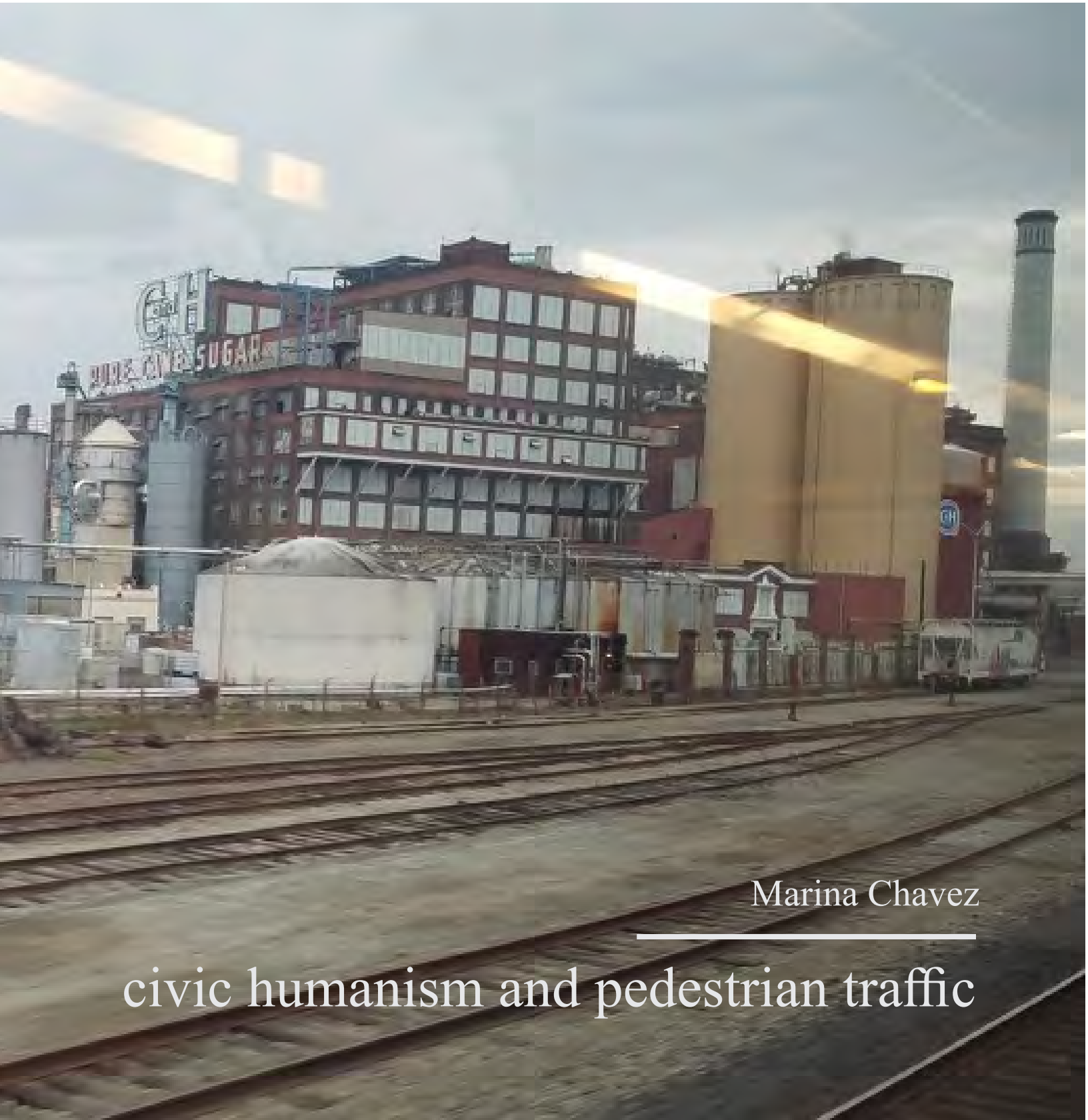
The hub bub and hustle of hurry hurry went
h a y w I r e
the train crashed.
but time went on
so nobody ever stopped moving

apologetic smiles -and-
worker solidarity lines of
- Hey all of us taxpayers are being screwed
-and-
- The goddamedsystem doesn't work since these trains should have been repaired
A long long time ago
But they haven't since the mayor drivers a nice luxury car

After five minutes without motion solidarity faded
As the suits and ties and wool skirts
Along with the flannel and backpacks
Started to lose their calm selves and it got messy with
- my boss is fuckin gonna kill -and-
- and it's my first day of …

and an old woman carrying a meshed sack
of full ripe oranges
said – hey it's 9 am
We're in the foggy Sunset and the skies are blue for once!
And everyone looked at
this woman, judging her insane
to avoid thinking about what would happen
if they were actually free.


point a to point b



Marina Chavez

civic humanism and pedestrian traffic

There are many neighborhoods in San Francisco serviced by different bus and metro train lines. While these bus lines are intended to bring passengers from "point A to point B", many of these transit lines bisect culturally distinct neighborhoods and carry their inhabitants past the boundaries of their own communities. On the 8-Bayshore bus route, the tourists heading into the city from Fisherman's Wharf can interact with citizens from San Francisco's Chinatown who may then come into contact with the residents of San Francisco's housing projects. These experiences, of course, only exist if one pays the fare and continues to ride down the bus line. Without disembarking in an unfamiliar place or continuing to ride past one's destination, the bus continues to be from "Point A to Point B". In a 3-hour observation, I recorded my experiences on 8-Bayshore and in the communities it services. It was in hopes that the observations both on and off the bus would allow me to observe the contact that occur between different communities in public space while commuting. Ultimately, this paper seeks to examine those experiences in the context of Nicholas Blomley's concepts of pedestrianism and civic humanism.

The Sidewalk

In the three opening chapters of Nicholas Blomley's Right of Passage:Sidewalks and the Regulation of Public Flow, each one offers a take on the uses of public space and in particular the sidewalk, which was quickly a focus in my observations. Beginning at Balboa Park Station, I exited the 28R bus onto the above ground plaza that exists for BART passengers to reorient themselves and locate their bus routes. This plaza acted almost as a buffer from the sidewalk, a point of refuge while figuring out where to continue. This buffer falls into line with what Blomley referred to as "pedestrianism". Pedestrianism is what Blomley uses to describe the city governance on pedestrian traffic or "flow". This pedestrian "flow" is one that is not to be impeded. Much like the concept of taking a bus from "point A to point B", good pedestrian flow is based upon the success in which a pedestrian can get from "point A to point B" as quickly as possible. As a result, the creation of a buffer between the sidewalk and the groups of people exiting the train is a good flow because the groups of people exiting the train are given space to figure out where to go without stopping those on the sidewalk. This focus on "good

flows" also denotes that there are such things as "bad flows". A bad flow can be described as the impediment of pedestrian traffic such as when five passengers of the #43 bus disembarked on San Jose in front of the BART plaza and at the same time, four others blocked the sidewalk to enter the bus. The stalemate that occurred blocked traffic from all sides of the bus stop, which prevented people from reaching their destination.

The purpose of regulating these spaces is to prevent problems such as blocked passageways on sidewalks that can inconvenience people trying to reach the grocery stores or see loved ones. However, the governance of public spaces, like sidewalks and plazas, are regulated on a one size fits all model such as the unpermitted flower stand on the plaza for Valentine's Day. While this shop was accessed by many people exiting the trains and buses, including San Francisco Municipal staff, this flower shop would be considered a "bad flow" in the vein of sidewalk governance because it takes up walking space in the plaza and impedes those in route to their destination. The widespread use of the flower stand is where the breakdown occurs between generally considered good flows, bad flows and the people who determine it.

Who Designs the Sidewalk?

In Chapter 3 of Blomley's Right of Passage: Sidewalks and the Regulation of Public Flow, "Think like an Engineer", Blomley discusses the role of government and city engineering in the regulation of the sidewalk. According to Blomley's interview of Rowan Birch, a Vancouver Streets Administration Engineer, Birch's main job concern was "maintenance of a safe passage and a smooth and unobstructed pedestrian traffic flow on the City's sidewalks." This governmental view of what the sidewalk is designed for would categorize the unpermitted Flower shop as a bad flow and yet people were enjoying themselves and utilizing its services. This is the where pedestrianism clashes with civic humanism. According to Blomley, civic humanism is other side of pedestrianism in the binary of sidewalk usage. While pedestrianism is based on the functionality of sidewalks, civic humanism is based upon the sociological and political uses of sidewalk space. Civic Humanism weighs the merits of the popup flower stand and its social value. The flower stand, though unpermitted was a welcomed addition to the over fifteen people I witnessed purchase something, myself included.

However, since the governance of public space is based on efficiency of traffic because it is “non-personal” and “objective”, the merits of civic humanism do not stand, as they are more subjective and considered on a case-by-case basis. This is not to say that civic humanism does not exist. As I continued down the path of the 8-Bayshore through the housing projects and industrial corridor, I disembarked in the community of Portola. I sat on the sidewalk table of a café to observe what was happening with the people around me. I did not expect to be an active participant in my observation but by taking up a portion of the sidewalk, my presence was political.

The Civic Humanism within Pedestrianism.

The community of Portola is located in between the 280 and 101 freeways and separated from much of San Francisco by these freeways and the hills to the west and north of the neighborhood. I exited the 8-Bayshore and found that this community was small though the streets were well used. Only two main bus routes went through the neighborhood as main connections to the rest of the city. I ordered a coffee and sat outside on the sidewalk tables at the Fat Beli Café. It became clear to me that the governance of public space, pedestrianism,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NO STOPPING ANY TIME

does not impede all civic humanism in these right-of-way sidewalks. Perched at my table, I witnessed an elderly hispanic woman stop her cart of laundry in the middle of the street to talk to what appeared to be a stranger. They stood in the middle of the sidewalk leaving little space for anyone to pass on either side. A black woman attempted to pass the women but was unable to. She motioned to them and smiled entering their conversation for a minute before continuing towards her destination. In this moment, while the person being impeded experienced a "bad flow", the interaction with the women ultimately made her smile. All of the parties involved seemed to enjoy the moment of neighborly politeness from the incident.

According to Blomley, public space that allows for interaction helps to expand the definition of the public and shape "public opinion". The moments of interaction in public space, though potentially unpleasant, allow people to understand one another as a collective rather than as something to be feared. In these interactions, we accommodate each other in order to share in the collective uses of a space. The black woman noticed that the other two women were engaged in conversation and acknowledged this as a potentially valid reason to block the sidewalk. The women blocking the sidewalk thus recognize the black woman's inability to walk and the two groups negotiated the us of the space. The accommodation of one another was a recurring theme in my observations. In another instance, an Asian woman pushing a stroller and a black woman pushing a stroller came to an impasse in front of me where they stopped looked at each other, smiled and maneuvered around each other and me. In doing so, each women could potentially recognize their similarities in the context of their actions. Both women had children that appeared to be around the same age, and were pushing similar strollers in the same part of San Francisco. By maneuvering around each other, each woman recognized the other as a member of a collective community. One of the children even waved and smiled at me, and though a small gesture made me feel validated in my existence and testimony of what was happening around us.

Political Space.

In the act of interaction, people, even children, notice and are noticed which is where Blomley highlights the political nature of public space. If a person is seen, then others recognize their existence. Moments before the incident with the women, a black man in his mid-thirties, with a torn backpack, sagging dirty pants

serpentined down the sidewalk towards me. He stopped every couple of feet to set his backpack on the floor and mumbled some words aloud. Behind him, there were several people continuing towards their destination. They were unable to pass him due to his obstruction of the sidewalk. While this man may not have realized it, every single person behind him watched him and examined him in front of them. They had nothing else to do because he had to move before they could leave. This man would not be noticed had he been in the bushes or forced to a different location because of his obstruction. This presence was a political act. This observation can be directly contrasted with a man farther down the 8-Bayshore to Fisherman's Wharf route. I exited the bus at Kearny St & Geary Blvd and walked onto Market St. The roads were 100 ft. wide with every crevice of space filled with walking feet. In the far corner, a white man had his feet up in a windowsill. Much like the black man in Portola, he was dirty, and talking to himself. The main difference between the two was that this man was not seen. Every person went by him quickly towards their destination, from point A to point B. The little space he occupied on the street was not even technically public space, and without walking towards a destination as the other people did, according to the governance of pedestrian traffic, he was not welcomed. This man and all of the other individuals that I observed on this journey highlighted the way Nicholas Blomley analyzed that sidewalk and its governance.

Conclusion.

Nicholas Blomley's discussion of public space, its purpose and governance is easily applied to observations along the 8-Bayshore to Fisherman's Wharf bus line. Each section of public space along the bus route exemplified the ways that individuals interact with one another on the journey from "Point A to Point B". Each interaction had meaning outside of the functionality of sidewalk usage. The man obstructing the sidewalk is acting on his political voice; the women talking on the sidewalk are recognizing the community among them, all while getting to their destinations along the way.

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Poetics of Security

skateboarding, urban design,
and the new public space

by Ocean Howell

Skateboarding is a thorn in the side of landscape architects, planners, and building owners; so much so that there are now design workshops that teach a series of defensive architectural tactics for deterring the activity. The type of skateboarding that plagues these architects and the spaces they create, "street skating," has only existed for about 15 years, and in fact was born out of the barren, defensive spaces created by redevelopment. Thus street skating is not only an impetus for defensive architecture, but also a symptom of defensive architecture. Recognizing that redevelopment spaces fostered pathologies, cities and corporations have begun to build more friendly spaces in the past 15 years. But they have been careful to ensure that the spaces are only friendly to a select subset of the public, namely office workers and consumers. It is not only skateboarding that is excluded, but also any activity it is not directly tied to either production or consumption, including, in many cases, simply laying down on a bench. To create such spaces requires detailed knowledge of the minutest details of undesirable behaviors-a knowledge that can only be gleaned through surveillance. Because the resultant spaces appear open but exclude the vast majority of the citizenry, they are not public spaces at all, but rather sophisticated simulations of public space. Although this essay will argue that the negative effects of skateboarding have been exaggerated, the purpose is not to argue that skateboarding should be permitted in public space. It is by virtue of its status as a misuse of these spaces-and because it is a symptom of defensive design-that skateboarding is exceptionally good at drawing attention to the quietly exclusionary nature of the new public space. Ultimately, skateboarding affords an observer glimpses of the larger processes of surveillance and simulation by which public space, both physical and cultural, is produced.

I began skateboarding in 1984, when I was 11 years old, and immediately became a devotee. When I was 18 I became a professional street skater, earning my living from royalties from sales of skateboards that bore my endorsement. The company that sponsored me, Birdhouse, was a small independent operation owned by longtime pro, Tony Hawk. My job was to appear in magazines, videos, and contests using these Birdhouse brand boards to jump down stairs, slide on benches, and generally abuse street furniture in the most skillful and creative way that I

could; and by example, to encourage others to do so. I did this professionally for six years, until I graduated from college and retired.

I now work as a junior editor at a publishing house in downtown San Francisco. But I also continue to skate and I contribute essays and stories to a skateboarding magazine called Slap. As both a skateboarder and an office worker, my experience of the public space downtown is always split. I unconsciously scan my surroundings for both a place to practice my disruptive sport, and a nice quiet place to have lunch. Of course, when I come downtown to skate, I receive a colder welcome than when I come downtown to work. It is not only police, security guards, tourists, and office workers who treat me differently; but increasingly, I am also treated differently by the design of public space itself. From threatening metal spikes to fortuitously-placed cobblestones, an arsenal of design tactics communicate to me-with varying degrees of subtlety that skateboarding is not a legitimate public use of these spaces. Skateboarding is what planners and architects refer to as an "urban pathology." So, psychologically, I move through the open spaces of downtown as both a public nuisance and as a legitimate member of the public whose right to eat his lunch in peace is to be architecturally defended.

Taken at face value, there is nothing mystifying or objectionable about this tension. An office worker 'contributes something to society': his labor; an office worker is productive. A skateboarder, on the other hand, gets in people's way and chips up benches; a skateboarder is destructive. Given that downtown is zoned for commercial use, it is clear why the design of open space should consider an office worker a member of the public and a skateboarder a nuisance; and the purpose of this essay is not to suggest that skateboarding should be permitted m public space. Rather, I intend to inquire into the processes by which public space is produced. Uses, behaviors, and people are compartmentalized in urban centers in the name of efficiency; but since redevelopment this logic has been used to justify mass exclusions and to manufacture an exclusively upscale public sphere. Through the example of skateboarding, this essay will argue that the determination of which activities are legitimately public and which activities are pathological is nearly indistinguishable from the determination of which activities generate profit and which activities threaten profit.

Michael Fotheringham, the architect who is presently giving San Francisco's Union Square a makeover, explains how good design should focus on the "'needs and comforts"' of the "'prime client"' (Hansen April 2001, 23). Where designers used to talk about "citizens," they now talk about "consumers." Public space is commercial space.

Literature on cities is replete with the metaphor of public space as the site, the physical embodiment, of democracy. Its purpose is to facilitate interaction between all citizens, not just consumers; it exists to foster debate -- even conflict -- among the various competing interests that are represented in the citizenry. To these ends, a public space should be both "physically and psychologically accessible,"(Loukaitou 1998, 301) as Kevin Lynch would put it, to the public, in all of its unmanageable diversity. The work of William H. Whyte alone provides abundant evidence that when this is accomplished, a space will not need to be managed from the outside -- it will regulate itself. Without going too far into all the discussions, I will acknowledge here that many critics argue that there has never been a pace that unequivocally welcomes the public, that constructions of publicness have always entailed exclusions. Certainly Frederic Law Olmsted's Central Park, one of the most beneficent of all public works, represents a paternal and missionary philosophy of public space. The idea was to manufacture a bucolic idyll in the dense urban center in order to divert the potentially revolutionary passions of the workers away from the industrial system that subjugated them. Allowing the workers to mingle with the elites was to have the effect of civilizing the lower classes. Later, City Beautiful plans--which were always sponsored by corporations (Loukaitou 1998, 17)--sought to 'inspire'

good citizenship among the lower classes with grand neoclassical symmetries. Even though these spaces fall short of the ideal democratic space, the fact is that the marginalized were still conceived of as a presence.

While these spaces took it as their duty to gently coerce the dispossessed, thus acknowledging the presence if not the necessity of conflict, the new public spaces have taken up the task of denying the existence of competing viewpoints and the people who advance them. The new spaces take as their ideal not the public space as a site of debate, but the public space as a site of repose for consumers and clients. Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Tridib

Banerjee point out, in their book Urban Design Downtown, how the design metaphors that architects use to describe public spaces have shifted from the ‘plaza’ and the ‘ green’ to the ‘room,’ ‘terrace,’ ‘court,’ ‘garden,” and other soothing, private spaces (1998, 229).

Skateboarding is not terribly important in the grand scheme of things; it is a young counterculture that admirably seeks to challenge power relations and less admirably seeks to escape from them. But it does not provide a unique perspective on the creeping privatization of public space. Homelessness, drug abuse, and prostitution have been around-in various forms and in varying degrees of severity probably as long as cities have; and they are undoubtedly exacerbated by exclusionary design insofar they are isolated and ghettoized. Skateboarding is clearly different from these urban pathologies in that it is a recreational activity, not a sustaining activity. But it is further different in that it is not only an impetus for exclusionary architecture, but also the direct product of exclusionary architecture. Like the Freudian symptom or ‘return of the repressed,’ skateboarding was born out of the defensive, barren plazas of redevelopment-on the sites where street life was forcibly subverted to property values.

Of course, no one defends redevelopment spaces anymore, and there has been a push for a resurgence of the public sphere in cities. The designers of public spaces in Giuliani’s New York, for example, have taken certain of William H. Whyte’s recommendations to heart, creating spaces that people want to inhabit. But they have been careful about selecting which people. The redevelopment spaces succeeded in excluding the marginalized people whose neighborhoods they supplanted, but their hostility also warded off the middle class whose safety the spaces sought to assure. Pleasant spaces have the opposite problem of welcoming everyone. To attract the upscale public while deterring the masses has been a primary urban design goal of the last ten years. This is a complicated task that this essay will argue has only been accomplished with extensive surveillance of undesirable behavior. This information is used to create exclusionary spaces that appear public to the selected users; it is used to simulate a public sphere. Through a discussion of how skateboarding has been appropriated by corporate marketers, this essay will also argue that

the cultural space of advertising and public opinion is produced by the same processes of surveillance and simulation.

If it were made plain that the exigencies of capital quietly determine nearly every aspect of every space that people inhabit, many would not accept it. So the job of private interests is to obscure this fact with sophism, to cover it with an aesthetic gloss, and demonstrate that the interests of private profit are equal to the itnerests of the public at large. Accordingly, private interests study and meticulously document any challenging cultural formation--any activity that draws attention to the commercial nature of public space-- then vilify itt as a threat to the public while simultaneously claiming a sanitized version of the culture's philosophy as its own position. Using the example of skateboarding, this essay will argue that it is according to these joint processes of surveillance and simulation that public space is produced.

Misused Transportation/Misused Space: A Brief History

Skateboarding was invented in the 1950s in Southern Californian beach towns when surfers tore the T-handlebars off of their scooters and skated on the asphalt banks of the local schoolyards as though they were surfing waves. The sport quickly took on a life of its own, and throughout the 70s people could be found riding in empty backyard swimming pools of vacant houses. The basic move was to ride up the transitioned wall of the pool, slide along the edge, and plunge back down the wall. Soon cities and private companies began building pools exclusively for skateboarders. The most commonly accepted story about the origin of street skating starts with a group of skaters being thrown out of the privately owned Skate City park in Whittier, California in the early 1980s. Apparently they didn't have the money to pay the entrance fee, so they snuck in. After being escorted out, a professional skater named John Lucero led the group in a kind of sarcastic protest in the parking lot. In full view of the owners of the park and the skaters inside, they began to do tricks on the edges of the curbs, as though they were the edges of a pool These undesirables came back and did this day after day and soon skaters from inside the park came out to try this new style.

In the early and mid 80s the style expanded out of the suburban parking lot and into the more varied terrain of redeveloped urban centers, primarily Los Angeles and San Francisco. This

happened to coincide with America's explosion of personal liability suits and, although Landscape Architecture magazine reported in March 1998 that there had never been a successful skateboarding liability suit (Thompson, p. 82), nearly every one of the parks was bulldozed--to be replaced by family fun centers. By and large, the only people who could continue to practice the old style were those who could afford to build private ramps. Thus street skating quickly became the most urban and populist version of the sport: it didn't cost anything except the price of the board itself, and it could be done anywhere there was pavement. In 1999 there were an estimated 9.5 million skateboarders in the U.S. alone(Levine July 26, 1999; 70), and by all accounts, skateboarders are now a strong presence in nearly every modern city, from San Francisco to Osaka to Sao Paolo.

For length reasons, this essay cannot undertake a study of the socioeconomic characteristics of skateboarders. But it is important to note that American skaters are typically from lower middle class families: they are economically stable but don't usually continue their education past high school. And while many influential skaters have come from the upscale suburbs of Marin, Orange County, and the San Fernando Valley; at least as many have come from such neighborhoods as East Hollywood, Gardena, and the Mission.

''Skate and Destroy /Skate and Create"

This sarcastic motto from the late 80s and early 90s serves as a good introduction to the philosophy of street skating. It used to appear on bumperstickers, T-shirts, and skateboards--often one of the halves would appear independently, and often the slogan would appear just as it's written in the header above. The message is that while skateboarders consider what they do to be an art form, they also recognize that skating on street furniture is destructive, but don't feel too troubled by that fact. The reasons that they don't feel much reverence for these redevelopment plazas are first of all that they are disused anyway, and second that they understand that these spaces are actually scripted for use only by office workers, tourists, and conventioneers. Absent from this list are not only the usual suspects -- homeless, drug dealers, and prostitutes -- but also children, students, old people, or anyone else who does not directly contribute to a corporation's profitability and

marketability (Loukaitou 1998, 181-188). As Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee note, “the design characteristics commonly present in the plazas-introversion, fragmentation, escapism, orderliness, and rigidity-are consistent with the objectives of control, protection, social filtering, image packaging, and manipulation of user behavior” (1998, 98).

These manipulative, profit-driven spaces make up.the vast majority of new public spaces that are being built, and they are usually publicly subsidized through some combination of floor area bonuses, land write-off or write-down, tax abatement , zoning incentives, tax increment subsidies and any number of carrots (Loukaitou 1998, 84). To spend public money on corporate window dressing-- spaces that exclude the majority of the public-- is simply a bad deal. But the corporations have the upper hand. A member of the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency stated, on the condition of anonymity:

‘Our job is to make development happen, not to chase developers away. Developers are spending millions of dollars on a project. They can say “If you make us build this there is no way we can continue,” or “Public open space may look nice, but it has inherent security problems’” (Loukaitou 1998, 95).

David Martin, the architect of the Willshire plaza in the Bunker Hill redevelopment area, has the solution to this dilemma: you make buildings and plazas in such a way that ‘the corporate edifice and the very expensive building facades ... intimidate homeless”’ and other unintended users (Loukaitou 1998, 146). Like the interior designs of fast food restaurants that use garish colors to ensure that no one will want to linger and tie up seating for other customers, these new spaces are designed to keep commerce (people) moving along. Architect Nathaniel Owings said in support of redevelopment’s public spaces, “the key . . . is not merely a conglomeration of goods. Rather it is good circulation-ease of movement . .. [P]otential shoppers should be occupied in noticing displays of goods, not in watching out for people who might bump into them” (1969, 129). These are literally consumer spaces: they are intended to be passively and briefly consumed, but they invite no participation.

Arguing with cops, security guards, and concerned citizens about what public space is, and should be, is a right of passage for skateboarders. They

understand that public space is precisely about bumping into other people-it is about interacting with the public, not with goods. They understand that the design of this verisimilar public space is a selective discourse that classifies its users, defining as the legitimate public those who consume and pathologizing those who put the space to any other use. Street skating is a counter-discourse, a challenge to that construction of publicness.

Skateboarding is not protest or activism, but is more like what Michel de Certeau described, in The Practice of Everyday Life, as a 'spatial practice.' Skateboarding is "a certain play within a system of defined places" (1984, 106). As the public space of the Central Business District (CBD) becomes more authoritarian, skateboarding "authorizes the production of an area of free play on a checkerboard that analyzes and classifies identities. It makes places habitable" (1984, 106). William H. Whyte provides a good example of a spatial practice, in his film The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces, when he affectionately shows how people can find a place to sit even where they are architecturally discouraged from doing so. In a demonstration of remarkable adaptability and quotidian creativity, people place small blankets over spikes that are meant to intimidate them, balance on intentionally narrow ledges overlooking fountains, and remain perched on canted ledges that are designed to deposit them right back onto the sidewalk

(1998b). Whyte laments the way that open spaces enhance a corporate image while alienating the public that they nominally serve. In one scene he shows an intentionally solitary bench, and announces that "this is a design object, the purpose of which is to punctuate architectural photos" (1988b). But because there are no obstructions (people), these are precisely the types of benches that skateboarders love to inhabit. In spite of the corporate space's disregard for the public, a small, resourceful portion of the public can still find a way to put the space to public use.

An even better comparison can be made between skateboarders and the Situationists, a group of European Avant Garde artists, architects, and theorists who were prominent during the 1960s, and who influenced the thinking de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre. The Situationists hated the mechanized, rationalist urbanism of such figures as Hausmann and Le Corbusier, which sought to "suppress incidents and places that contradict narratives of authority"

(Saddler 1998, 99). Prominent Situationist Guy Debord referred to the products of this brand of capitalist urbanism as 'Spectacle.' It was this urbanism that systematically replaced unselfconscious, anarchic, and deeply human places like the old Les Halles market, with proscriptive, consumerist, and dehumanizing places like the new Les Halles shopping mall and entertainment complex. So in order to create space for humans in this city of spectacle, the Situationists engaged in guerilla resistances: drift and détournement.

The flâneur-inspired drift is an act of wandering the city according to no set route and no set schedule. The Situationists believed that one would discover the truths of the city by immersing oneself in its streets without ever going anywhere, without participating in the production of capital; the slogan was "'Work to Make Ourselves Useless"' (Saddler 1998, 92). The French word détournement can be translated as any one of the following: "'diversion,' 'rerouting,' 'hijacking,' 'embezzlement, ''misappropriation,' and 'corruption,"' (Saddler 1998, 17) and all of these meanings apply. Examples of détournement can be found in the Situationist art forms of graffiti and pastiche, both of which take rigid systems (maps, the new public space, mainstream newspapers) and hijack them, misappropriate them for their own diversion. To go for a skate is to go for a drift, to explore the streets looking for hidden places, opportunities for creative misappropriation; it is to recombine the artifacts of production and reinterpret the city for oneself. Skateboarders have even hijacked the sanitized Les Halles for their own art and diversion. As Situationist thinker Constant Nieuwenhuys put it, "'human beings were born to manifest themselves:(Saddler 1998,97), even in places as lifeless as the new Les Halles.

Redevelopment and the Fruits of Xenophobia

When telling the history of street skating, it is impossible to overemphasize the importance of the Golden Gateway Redevelopment area in downtown San Francisco. Until 1961, it was a 51-acre produce market run by Italian immigrants from North Beach, with streets reminiscent of the old Les Halles. Led by the autocratic and deeply classist Justin Herman, the Redevelopment Agency designated the area as "blighted." (This is a medical term that describes a spreading pathology; and for Redevelopment agencies nationwide, it was all that was needed to invoke eminent domain.)

The type of street skating that was practiced in the suburban parking lot was, by and large, limited to curbs and sidewalks. Street skating as urban pathology-the type that consistently damages planters, handrails, fountains, and anything else that is found in a city street-was born in the Golden Gateway, and the Bunker Hill Redevelopment area in Los Angeles. Were it not for these redevelopment projects, it is possible that skateboarding would have never mutated past its more benign form. As Justin Herman constantly noted, the produce market was crowded and chaotic; it would have been no more possible to skate there than it is in San Francisco's present-day Chinatown. You cannot skate in a fine-grained city, you need the auto-friendly super block (which is why skateboarding was so easily adapted to suburbs). Also, skateboarding is very difficult: it took thousands of hours to develop all of the permutations that exist today. The defensive architecture of redevelopment was a laboratory for skateboarding: vast plazas, full of modernist architecture, that were empty most of the time.

Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) prepared the original plan for the Golden Gateway, and in 1971 the centerpiece became Lawrence Halprin 's Justin Herman Plaza. Popularly known as "EMB," short for Embarcadero, this plaza was "the birthplace of much of what makes up modern street skating" (Carroll June 1999, 72). It was skateboarding's "Holy Land" (Carroll June 1999, 72), as the addresses on the tickets that the police issued attest: Buenos Aires, Argentina; London, England; Naples, Italy; and Saga, Japan. (Costantinou June 14, 1999). They all came for EMB. Its redesign in 1999 prompted an outpouring of somber, indignant eulogies worthy of the old Penn Station.

Another prominent feature of the Golden Gateway is a series of skyways that connect office buildings to apartments to elevated plazas to John Portman's muzak-filled Embarcadero Center. The plazas are eerily pleasant but they present monolithic, two story walls to the street. The urban critic Trevor Boddy notes, in his essay "The Analogous City," that the historical precursor to this formation was the Medici family 's skyways over 16th century Florence (1999, 128). They were built as an escape route during street fighting, and as an elevated point from which the family could safely observe the vitality of the streets without having to participate in them. Right

around the comer from EMB, there is a fortified skyway entrance to the plaza surrounding SOM's Alcoa building. Ironically, this defensive design destroys the self-regulating potential of the space by reducing the number of eyes in the space, and thereby creates a vacuum that can be populated by indigents. This space is known as "Hubba Hideout"--"hubba" is slang for drugs. When skateboarders took the place over, they actually made it safer.

The creative misuses of architecture that were developed here quickly spread all over the world through the skateboard media. If you go to any modern city in the world--whether you speak the language or not--and say "EMB" or "Hubba," the local skaters will take you directly to their city's equivalents: a plaza with deep steps and a tall ledge going down stairs. Although most skaters don't know the full history of redevelopment, the San Francisco skaters do know that Justin Herman was a classist, if not a racist; and they treat him with sarcastic reverence. Slap's eulogy for EMB was titled "Remembering Our Old Pal Justin Herman." There is no doubt that it would have infuriated Herman to learn that he had unwittingly help create a whole new urban pathology, but as William H. Whyte points out in City, "fears proves itself"(1988a,158).

Voyeur-god vs. the Spatial Practitioner: *Transcending Public Space Creating Public Space*

The majority of America's important skatespots are the products of redevelopment. And it appears as though the firm with the most spots to its name is SOM (often in partnership with William Wurster), a firm to which Le Corbusier himself served as consultant. This list includes the Alcoa Building's plaza, the Daley Center and the Sears Tower in Chicago, and--through their redevelopment plans--Justin Herman Plaza and Robert Venturi's Freedom Plaza in Washington DC (though the final plaza is not shaped as SOM envisioned it). SOM's most prominent principal, Nathaniel Owings, felt that "Cities are the measure of our ability to be civilized" (1969, 142); and that the measure of a city, was its public space. This, he argued in his book, The Spaces In Between, is "the ultimate purpose of planning" (1973, 173). Owings was suspicious of the car and the suburbs because they atomized people, eroding the public sphere that he so wanted to foster. But the sincerity of his desire to improve the ground-level space of the city was matched only by the irreconcilability of his removal from

that space.

To get a sense of this removal one can flip through Owing's beautifully illustrated book, The American Aesthetic. About half of the two hundred or so images are unpeopled aerial photos of cities, while the other half are sweeping aerial photos of nature. This visual absence of street life is surprising at first, given that Owing's writing displays an almost activist commitment to urban public space. But this incongruent agglomeration -- an abstract bird's eye city perspective meets street-level social justice meets pristine nature-- is the very heart of Owing's philosophy.

In Spaces, Owings describes how while walking the pahts around his Big Sur cliff house, Wild Bird, an epiphany shows him that "the high souring, wide view of the hawk gives clear judgement, with high perspective, on the Earth and on the Being and on the Everything-Else-But-Me" (1973, 275). Owings believed, with gnostic zeal, that it was this hawk's view that would help him to combat the evils of the mechanized city (1973, 276). For de Certeau this perspective of the "voyeur-god" (1984, 93) -- looking down on the Earth and on the Being and on the Everything-Else-But-Me -- is a theoretical "fiction" which allows the architect to remain "aloof"; it is a "lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more" (1984, 92). The "condition of possibility" of this "solar eye" perspective, "is an oblivion and a misunderstanding of . . . the murky and intertwining daily behaviors" (1984, 93) that de Certeau believed were the true architecture of the city. The difference in perspectives here is between the city as an uninhabited network of rational symmetries and the city as a nearly illegible intermingling of the daily practices of people's daily lives.

Owings's purely 'top-down' approach did cause him to misunderstand urbanites' daily lives. After his hawk's view epiphany, he returned to San Francisco only to learn that "an Afro-haired youth had "emerged from the gloom of the Mission District into the sunlight of Market Street, a street which marks the edge of the business district," and "sprayed bullets indiscriminately" (1973, 278). Shaken by the story of this young man, Owings resolved that he "would try to help the others of his kind to live within a tolerable habitat.. And I returned to the sanctuary of Wild Bird" (1973, 278). There he pondered "calyptte anna" (humming bird) and a yucca plant and another epiphany showed him that he had introduced the openness of nature into the supposedly stifling

density of the city (1973, 278). One would hope that Owings would have responded to the shocking story of the young black man from the "gloom of the Mission," by actually going into the Mission and spending time on its streets. ("Must one finally fall back into the dark space where crowds move back and forth?" [de Certeau 1984, 92]). Instead he went to the sanctuary of Wild Bird to ponder nature and fantasize about what the city should look like from the perspective of God.

From this remote height, Owings could not perceive the contradiction between his desire to improve the environment of the urban dispossessed and his desire to "bring suburban ease to downtown" (1969, 129). From the cliffs of Big Sur, Owings was too far away to see that his altruism was incompatible with his belief that slums were "festering sores" (1973, 117). Had he spent time in people's neighborhoods, it is unlikely that he would have argued that "the high rates of mortality and disease among slum populations stem not only from contagion, poor medical services and malnutrition but also from a kind of body despair. People do take on the quality of their surroundings" (1969, 123). This specious, degeneration theory-inspired logic seems to suggest that it wouldn't make too much difference if these populations were provided urgently needed and long denied social services. The obvious conclusion is "that there are no wise solutions short of tearing it all down and starting over (1984, 99). From the cloistered perspective of the voyeur God, Owings could not see that this program was anathema to his most deeply held belief that "What we do must be done out of love not fear" (1973, 286).

Owings ends his introduction to Spaces by declaring that nonarchitecture --open spaces-- will be the objective, and the buildings will simply frame them. We can use the oldest of all forms, yet one which is considered new today: we can reintroduce into our crowded cities the open space -- the plaza -- where man can dance, celebrate, and experience the joy of living in the downtown" spaces in between (1973,x). It is not clear how he intended to encourage this celebration of life by providing such barren spaces, but he turned out to be successful in spite of himself, as this photo will attest.

This is another of SOM's gifts to skateboarding: the AP Gianini Plaza at the Bank of America building in downtown San Francisco. It is an enormously unpopular corporate space, famous among urbanists for its disregard for sunlight and for being generally

inhospitable; the 1971 Urban Design Plan for San Francisco uses the plaza as cautionary example (p 88). In keeping with Owings's gnostic, aerial perspective, the Japanese artist Masayuki Nagare 's massive black sculpture on the north end of the plaza is named "Transcendence." But from the street level perspective, the perspective of people's everyday lives, this sculpture is didacticand pretentious; San Franciscans have always disdainfully referred to it as the "Banker's Heart."

Skaters sec nothing so high-minded as 'transcendence' in this object; instead they see an opportunity to celebrate the messy vitality of the street, a chance to reaffirm the chaotic daily life that this object seeks to transcend. This space as a whole instructs its users to briefly observe this sculpture commemorating the rejection of street life, and move along. Like Situationist graffiti, skating in such a space amounts to "words of refusal or forbidden gestures" (Raoul Vaneigem quoted in Saddler 1998, 97).

This photo of Keith Hufnagel, taken by Gabe Morford, is one of the culture's best-known images, and served to popularize the Banker's Heart as a spot. But when Ken Kay gave the plaza a makeover in 1996, he obstructed the approach to the sculpture with what he called a Japanese Garden intended to "thwart skateboarders" (Leccese November 1998, 80). Once again the Banker's Heart was condemned to be almost universally unappreciated by the public. In justifying the makeover, Kay stated that the plaza had been "one of the most hostile urban spaces" in the city, "a catalog of the design mistakes of the '60s" (Adams December 3, 1997). And no one argued with him. But in making the space less hostile, he has limited the scope of its use. The design mistake that he has rectified is not that of excluding the public at large, it is that of inadvertently letting the wrong people in. Kay even ran architectural design workshops titled "Banish the Boarders," advertised in the commerce-intensive Downtown Idea Exchange (January 15, 1998; 4).

Like many of SOM's spaces, Giannini Plaza failed because no one wanted to be there--least of all the white, educated office workers whom the design was trying to lure back from the suburbs. And urban critics have been unforgiving, lavishing such spaces with descriptions like paranoid, cruel, wasteland, bunker, citadel, fortress. But how to appeal to the office workers, conventioneers, tourists, and potential business tenants without simultaneously

appealing to the undesirables? And how to deter the protestors, restless young people, drunks, and underemployed without simultaneously deterring the brown baggers?

The Makeover:
New Public Space from Punishment to Discipline, from the Fortress to a Poetics of Security

In his great book, Discipline and Punish, Michel Foucault narrates the history of technologies for maintaining order as an evolution from corporal punishment to internalized discipline. Authority has done away with the scaffold and the yoke because they arouse sympathy for the criminal/victim, and thereby reveal the criminality of authority itself. Order in an industrialized society, then, is maintained on the principles of Jeremy Bentham's prison, the panopticon. This design allows prisoners to be seen from a central tower, but does not allow the prisoners to see who is in the tower, which is at the level of the cells, not elevated, so that there is never any place to hide. Unlike the authority that the prisoner knows is administered from on high, this invisible authority has insinuated itself into every recess of a prisoner's space, and finally into his consciousness. Because they assume that a pervasive and unverifiable authority can watch their every move, the prisoners will behave themselves, internalize discipline. Mike Davis's brilliant Fortress LA analysis is largely Foucault's Panopticism theory applied to the physical space of the Los Angeles CBD.

I had a harrowing experience about six years ago that illustrates the ineffectiveness of corporal punishment, and ultimately, the problem with transparently defensive architecture. A few friends and I were skating with at least 15 other people in Union Square in San Francisco late at night when a squad car tore into the square and sped towards us. My friends and I got away, but I later heard that several people were tackled, arrested, and taken to jail--just another night in a sweep that had been going on for some time. While we were catching our breath, a 30-something couple in expensive evening wear rushed up to us. The man yelled, "They could have run one of you over! You should report that!" I walked away from the scene feeling emboldened, and the couple walked away feeling less secure in their own police. As with dozens of other people who witnessed the scene, I

believe that the couple also left wondering about the nature of public space.

Chasing people with squad cars and tackling people in the street is counterproductive to regulating behavior. In terms of architectural strategies for discouraging skateboarders, the design tactics illustrated here similarly have all the subtlety of tackling someone in the street. An architect at the Department of Public Works told me that they refer to these metal clips as “pig ears.” It becomes difficult for police and planners to assert that skateboarding is a public incivility, when they fill public spaces with deterrents that are only slightly more benign than those that are used to keep pigeons off of ledges. The incivility appears to be less on the side of the skateboarders than on the side of public space itself. One citizen who described herself as “a middle-aged lady with a bad leg” wrote to the Editor of the Examiner to complain that the pig ears “are far uglier and distracting than the skateboard marks,” and are “so mean spirited!” (Fuller December 20, 1999). Regardless of which side of the argument you come down on, these tactics provoke questions about the publicness of public space. For the purposes of maintaining order, it would be better if these questions were never asked at all.

Like the eyes inside the tower in the Panopticon, these disciplinary tactics are only effective if they are pervasive and unverifiable. The redesign of the Philip Burton Federal Building -- the 1996 winner of the prestigious San Francisco Prize -- provides a good example of this logic. The plaza needed to be redesigned because it was a gusty place to have lunch, because skaters misused it, and because a terrorist could drive a bomb up to the front door, as one did in Oklahoma in 1995. The sponsors of the contest, the Government Services Agency and the SF MOMA, knew that the public would not accept too militaristic a design. The GSA project executive said “We didn’t want to make the building a fortress.’ ... The resulting competition brief bore the title ‘The Poetics of Security”’ (Nyren February/ March 1999).

The logic of a Poetics of Security dictates that, in order to be effective, a design must be proscriptive, but appear humanist. In Mike Davis’s terms, a space cannot be transparently militaristic; it must instead deploy ever more refined ruses of discipline. In most respects the resulting design does succeed in being accessible yet

defensible, cozy yet 'surveillable.' The desire to defend federal property against terrorist attack is completely sensible. But looking at the details like those pictured here, it becomes clear that the space also defends against those who might skateboard, or even lay down, on one of the benches.

It is telling that in describing the design, the judges gave none of the standard lines like "it will be a benefit to the entire community." Rather, they said that it "improve[s] not just a little corner of the city but a little corner of our consciousness;" it "tell[s]nus something about who we are and where we are(GSA 1998). This space studies and classifies its users dictates to them whether or not they are a legitimate member of the public, improves their consciousness, tells them who they are.

It so happens that the design doesn't do a good job of telling skateboarders who they are right up front. It leaves a number of possibilities open to them; and the managers were forced to resort to more corporal deterrents. Because there was a lapse in the design, another healthy debate about the publicness of the space ensued. In an editorial local pundits Matier and Ross smugly noted that even though the taxpayers had spent three million dollars to keep the terrorists out, they were unable to keep the local skaters out (November 8, 1999). I'd guess that Matier and Ross believe that the skaters should be kept out. Regardless, skateboarding has instigated the disclosure of a fact that this design is laboring to obscure: people are being kept out.

On the site pictured to the right, skateboarding has stirred a more pointed debate about public space. This is the Ribbon of Light sculpture, a series of cement blocks that run the length of the Embarcadero. The architects originally wanted to build ramps and banks into it, but the city protested that it would attract skateboarders. When it was finally built in 1996, the Ribbon was hailed by the chairman of the San Francisco Arts Commission, Jill Manton, as "art as an environment instead of art as an object" (Gillette April 1996, 83). The opposition that Manton draws between environment and object gets right to the heart of the issue. Is public art to be an environment that people inhabit, or an object that people passively consume? For one of the three architects of the project, Stanley Saitowitz, it is clear that the art is to be an object. In apparent

contradiction with Manton's ideas about the piece, Saitowitz views the line of the ribbon as being like the centerline on a road which "tells cars how to behave. This line, in this version, would tell pedestrians 'how to behave'" (Gillette April 1996, 86). No only is the public not invited to participate in the ribbon, the public is also to take direction from this piece of art.

As for the skateboarders, Saitowitz feels that they "have taken to it in the most unpleasing way. I try to talk to these people. I say, 'Can't you understand you're ruining something that belongs to you, the people?"" (Adams December 20, 1995). For my sensibilities, Saitowitz loses his argument before he even begins by identifying skateboarders as "the people." His didactic tone begs the question: who determines the meaning of public art and public space? Is it the public or the artist? Saitowitz seems to believe that, as the artist, his interpretation of the piece is the legitimate interpretation. But with or without his blessing, "the people" will interpret art in public space-which is as it should be. As de Certeau would put it, Saitowitz 'transmutes the misfortune of his ideologies into ideologies of misfortune' (1984, 96). Saitowitz's case is not helped by the fact that the sympathies of the other designer of the Ribbon, Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, are on the side of the people, on the side of art as environment. "I love it that the skateboarders love it, and Stanley hates it that the skateboarders love it" (Gillette April 1996, 100). In describing why she loves that the skateboarders use it she says, simply: "It's part of the world" (Adams December 20, 1995).

The third artist on the project, Vito Acconci, is an outspoken critic of art-as-object. Because this conception of art promotes the "safety of the panorama," disciplines the body, and reinforces "dominant class" relations, Acconci responds with spaces that encourage chaos (2000a), that "express a minority voice," and act as a "cancer" (pathology) on the dominant space (2000b, 176). "Our goal is to make spaces that free people-to make devices and instruments that people can use to do what they're not supposed to do, to go where they're not supposed to go" (2000a). He is presently building a skateboard park in an old factory in Avignon, France.

Solomon and Acconci could not have been pleased to see the city cover their art-as-environment with pig ears. No one was pleased about it: they make a farce of a work that was intended to

be “expressive of the democratic spirit and the working-class history of the area” (Gillette April 1996, 83). Skateboarding has here stirred a high profile debate about the publicness of public space, a debate taken up architects, citizens, the SF Chronicle and Examiner, and Landscape Architecture Magazine.

Now we come to a space that has had more success in eliding this debate, the plaza at 50 California St. This is a famous skateboard spot, popularly known as “Brown Marble,” where arrests and scenes like the one I described in Union Square were once common. No longer. The police haven’t had to say a word to a skater in Brown Marble for some time because there isn’t any brown marble there anymore. It’s now a series of rounded, faux-limestone benches with armrest-like cornices strategically placed every couple of feet, so as to discourage the slide of a board across its edge (Kay 1998, 4).

In a classic Foucauldian turn, Ken Kay (the architect who remade the Banker’s Heart Plaza) has built the police force into the design itself. The result of extensive surveillance, the design predicts every potential movement of a skateboarder through the plaza, literally down to the level of individual gestures. The design erases the very potential for the presence of this subset of the public, and thereby has erased the possibility of questions about the publicness of the space. Finally, like the addition of volleyball courts in Berkeley’s People’s Park, a Starbucks was planted in the space to intimidate the undesirables and attract the brown baggers. Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee report that the vast majority of such plazas’ users are white, educated office workers between the ages of twenty and fifty (Loukaitou 1998, 183). It is only this selected public that is permitted to experience this space as psychologically accessible, transparently public.

Still, some of the more alert members of the selected public are aware that the design 50 California is exclusionary. The new Ferry Plaza, however, has no need of inappropriate cornices. The architects, ROMA, had inadvertently built other skatespots: Pier 7, a few hundred yards away in San Francisco; and 3rd St. Promenade in Santa Monica. Determined not to let it happen again, they studied and measured the minutest gestures of skateboarders in order to obviate their behavior. These cobblestones obstruct the approach to the bench, and these axons (the divots) are precisely the

width of the baseplate of a skateboard truck, which means that when someone attempts to slide the edge, they will be locked in place. But unlike pig ears, these design elements could easily be the architect's poetic license. Because the new Ferry Plaza understands its potential pathologies in such microscopic detail, the space appears more public. Though this was also a very expensive project, Matier and Ross will not be writing any sarcastic articles about this space. It's just there.

Public Space: "Right to Pass by Permission, and Subject to Control, of Owner"

Because I was curious about how the designers of some of these details felt about them, I tucked in my shirt and took a trip to the San Francisco Department of Public Works. I spoke to two landscape architects both of whom were very solicitous. One was acutely aware that "San Francisco is the most famous skatespot in the world"--this was the architect in charge of everything-proofing the city: skateproofing, bumproofing, graffitiproofing, and so on. My line of inquiry was 'how do you deter unintended uses of a space without making the space hostile?' The most important element, they told me, was visibility; there can't be any places to hide. At the same time, the space couldn't be so empty that no one would want to use it. So you try to predict the behavior of undesirables and obviate those behaviors with subtle design techniques: bright lights in comers, narrow benches, rigid circulation patterns, and so on.

None of this was news to me, but I was surprised to see the extent to which these tactics were deployed. There is a rounded ledge in the new Justin Herman plaza, for example, that was designed specifically to be unskateable: it doesn't have any edge to slide. The determination of how convex the surface needed to be would have required detailed measurements. Skaters are quick to spot subtle deterrents like the divots in the Ferry Plaza benches, but even skaters are surprised to hear that this ledge is a deterrent. (Incidentally, they eventually figured out how to skate it anyway.) This architect also showed me a design that she was very proud of: the Haight St. entrance to Golden Gate Park. This entrance used to be filled with drug dealers and indigents of every description, so one would expect a defensive design. Still, I was surprised to learn that every detail of every design element was

intended to deter some behavior. The flat handrail is too high to sit on and is buttressed with tight vertical bars so that people can't slip under it to relax on the now completely visible slope, the pillars are constructed out of a textured slate that is unattractive to graffiti artists, the planters are canted and too low to sit on, and so on. The architect pointed out that the real accomplishment here was not only the subtlety of all the deterrents, so much as it was that these deterrents created an airtight network that filtered out unintended users, and controlled the behavior of selected users. It would be something to have this architect lead a walking tour of the city; or better yet, have a skateboarder, drug dealer, homeless, and prostitute lead a walking tour. I believe that people would be surprised to see that this impenetrable network of disciplinary tactics extends over the entire city, with barely visible points surfacing on every block and in every open space.

The other thing that surprised me about my conversation with this architect was the contempt with which she spoke about the undesirables. Speaking specifically about skaters and graffiti artists, she smiled at me conspiratorially and described them as "people of slightly lower mental capacity." (I hadn't identified myself as a skateboarder, only as an editor.) When talking about the whole range of undesirables, she expressed her envy of the tiny "Private Property" plaques--"Right to pass by Permission, and Subject to Control, of Owner"-- that appear in the pavement in many open spaces, and even on a number of sidewalks that are unconnected to open spaces. "That's what we need" she said, security guards "can just ask anyone to leave at any time." The challenge, as this architect sees it, is to design public spaces so that they convey this same sense of private property, so that they communicate to the undesirables that they may be thrown out at any moment. All this to ensure a pleasant space for consumers. That is the logic of a Poetics of Security.

Although he wrote in favor of gentrification and select redevelopment projects, William H. Whyte also believed that the well-behaved drunk at least had a right to be in public spaces. And he loved the leafleter, the surreptitious vendor, the street performer, the disheveled man soaking his feet in the fountain, and the man just standing there talking to himself--as for the pigeon lady: "every square should have one" (1988b). But Whyte

notes how even one of his researchers was asked to leave one of the corporate plazas of New York. The reason that the New York City Department of City Planning can claim Whyte as the primary influence on a resurgence of a public sphere in the new book, Privately Owned Public Space, is not so much because of his intentions, but because his research is a body of comprehensive urban surveillance. This is the most important tool in simulating a public space that will welcome the upscale and deter Whyte's characters.

Public Space and the Enforcement Benefits of Selective Simulation

Viewed in this light, it is clear that there is something of the theme park in these designs. The theme is that of uncontested public space, a unified and pristine public sphere. Certainly there are behaviors that should not be allowed in public space: muggings for example. But what about Whyte's pigeon lady? What about a polite homeless who wants to read on a bench for an hour, then go somewhere else? Different people will have different answers about where the line should be drawn, and these discussions can and should be contentious. These debates are part of what makes a public space public. The presumption that is built into these 'pre-regulated' spaces is that no member of the selected public should even have to consider these questions. The fact that defensive architecture isolates and exacerbates the same problems that it defends against is of little concern (it is in defensive, empty spaces where people are likely be mugged). It's as though the selected public has an inalienable right to be shielded from unsightly social problems, and it is the job of public space to uphold that right. Disneyland's Mainstreet USA simulates a charming turn of the century business district while leaving out the immigrant laborers and TB victims and horse manure, but these new spaces simulate an imaginary present: a glimmering downtown agora, without all of the homeless and without all of the troublesome debate.

While downtown is remade as a themed version of a public sphere, this design aesthetic of selective simulation finds its obverse in the peripheral skatepark. I do not wish to seem ungrateful. These parks are built by cities for public use, often with significant input from the skaters themselves. They provide an opportunity for civic engagement for young skateboarders: many an apathetic

16-year-old has become an effective activist in his local town in pursuit of a skatepark. So my purpose is not to suggest that skaters should stop lobbying and cities should stop building.

Still, it is impossible not to notice that skateparks are theme parks. Here in the outskirts, there are spaces full of handrails, stairs, and benches that are not intended to be held onto, walked down, or sat upon. While the downtowns are being Disnified with spaces like the private-public plaza, the redeveloped "Japan Town," and the merchandise-intensive historic wharf; the peripheries of cities are now the sites of a Lilliputian downtown, a themed post-redevelopment city, there for the destroying. Here angry young skateboarders can have all of the fun of contesting the commercialized city, with none of the fuss of social conflict. Skateparks are Olmstedian safety valves. But instead of defusing the urban-born passions of the masses by returning them to bucolic nature, these spaces offer just the opposite: a return to the idyll of the modem urban center.

The purpose of this simulation is enforcement. George Kelling's and James Wilson's theory of 'broken windows' provides a good way to frame this issue. The idea is that small signs of disorder, like broken windows, encourage more disorder that eventually leads to petty crime that eventually leads to serious crime. So to prevent serious crime, you must crack down on small-scale disorder. This influential enforcement program is widely credited with cleaning up the subways and streets of New York; and it was applied in San Francisco as Operation Matrix under Mayor Frank Jordan. (I believe that my experience with the police sweep in Union Square was part of Operation Matrix.) It is also used as a justification for the types of microscopic exclusionary architectural designs that I have been describing. Though this is not the place to take up an argument with the theory of broken windows, it is worth noting that it is ill-applied to skateboarding. Far from encouraging seriious crime, skateboarders are the best possible 'mayors.' Recognizing this fact, the Parisian suburb of Créteil actually replaced the worn out benches in their plazas in order to keep the skaters from abandoning the plazas to the real criminals. An integral part of the broken windows program is to be prepared to win court challenges to what can seem like draconian police tactics. A city that can demonstrate that it has

made good faith attempts to accommodate a targeted group has a stronger moral and legal position in court (Kelling 1996, 228). The chips and scuffs that skateboarders leave are, like broken windows, small signs of disorder. Thus stepped up street enforcement and even sweeps often accompany the creation of a skatepark in a city.

Thankfully there have been no outright sweeps in San Francisco since the opening of the Willie Brown skatepark last year. Still, the fact that the park's main champion was former supervisor Amos Brown should suggest that this was not strictly a beneficent act. Amos Brown was a great proponent of the sweep, and he had a distaste for homelessness which baffled many San Franciscans. But he was perhaps even more outspoken on the subject of skateboarding: "'It's wrong for skateboarders to violate the public's safety in the same way that it is wrong for a drug pusher to do so" he said."I see these two crimes as equal. I don't see one being more severe than the other"' (Layne January 19, 1997). Given that Brown consistently pathologized skateboard in the most histrionic terms, it's no mystery why this (poorly designed) theme park is located far from transportation in the recesses of the Crocker Amazon district, miles from downtown.

X-treme Sports, X-treme Investing, X-treme Space

To fully appreciate the profit motive in these simulations, it is necessary to take a trip back to the Ribbon of Light on the Embarcadero. Skateboarding has been sanctioned and in fact welcomed with fanfare and city sponsorship on this exact site for the last three summers when the X Games was in town. The X Games is a festival put on by ESPN to showcase what they term "Extreme Sports," and skateboarding has always been the flagship event. Directly behind this pig ear-covered public art, there was a "street course," complete with handrails over empty gaps, benches on top of steep banks, and staircases that led to nowhere. The real public space here --the Ribbon-- is militarized and exclusionary, but the contrived public space welcomes the excluded behavior. This is because the X Games boasts sponsorship from every corporation, and brand thereof, that might want to target a young, rebellious market including not only Mountain Dew, Sprite, and MTV, but also AT&T and the Marines.

Skateboarding is a spatial practice, an everyday activity that challenges

commercial space; but the X Games elides this unmarketable fact, representing skateboarding as paroxysmal, macho thrill seeking --like 'skysurfing': jumping out of an airplane with a snowboard attached to your feet: As pro street skater Jason Dill put it, the X Games is to skateboarding as Kenny G is to jazz. No skateboarder has ever used the word "Extreme" to describe what he does. That word is purely an advertising strategy --a strategy has been wildly successful. There is "Extreme Pizza" in my neighborhood; Nissan has an SUV called the X-terra; there are firms that offer "Extreme Consulting"; one can read about "Extreme Investing" in online publications; there is even a fund called "Synergy Extreme Canadian Equity Fund."

There is a New Yorker article about skateboarding that is authored by a writing teacher in Iowa who had no experience of the sport, and even he was quick to discern that the X Games was like "a dog show for the skateboard illiterates at large" (Levine July 26, 1999; 74) . Although the author shows a great deal of admiration for skateboarding --making a protracted and earnest comparison between skateboarding and ballet-- there is no respite here from the commodification. He compulsively justifies skateboarding's presence in the high brow, advertising driven space of the New Yorker with impressive sales figures -- $838 million in 1999! (July 26, 1999; 70). The subtitle of the article tells the whole story: "a multimillion-dollar industry that still can't shake its outlaw image." The assumption here is that to be a multimillion-dollar industry should mean integration and cultural acceptance. The fact that skateboarding is literally illegal draws attention to the choice of the word "outlaw"; it's almost as if skateboarding is illegal because it doesn't make enough money. In any case, the premise is clear: to be profitable is to be a legitimate member of the public.

Looking back through newspaper and magazine articles about skateboarding, it begins to seem that skateboarding was in fact illegal by virtue of being unprofitable. The first successful X Games was in 1995 and the pre-95 articles were typically discussions about why skateboarding needed to be banned; namely because the skaters were obstreperous punks, gang members, or petty criminals who got in people's way in the commercial districts. After '95 even such sage publications as the Christian Science Monitor began advancing the

misunderstood-good-kid perspective, skateboarding as a healthy alternative for 'at risk' youth (Sappenfield August 15, 1995). As the LA times observed last year, "skateboarding once seen as an outlaw sport of hooligans and underachievers, is becoming downright legitimate" (Husted December 4, 2000). Like the New Yorker essay, all of these articles go on to discuss X Games and sales figures. These articles--before and after-- were discussing the same group of people, maintaining the same culture; skateboarding was the same illegitimate, pathological activity that it had always been. The only difference was that corporations had devised a way to profit from it.

Another major turning point in the popular perceptron of the sport was a 1998 Nike ad campaign that showed metal bars obstructing home plate on a baseball diamond, a golfer being chased off of the green by a cop. ''What if all athletes were treated like skateboarders?" the copy challenges. Why are golf and baseball considered legitimate public activities while skateboarding is considered a pathology? The same images could have been accompanied by the question 'what if everyone was treated like homeless?' were it not for the fact that homeless don't usually have disposable income.

Nike ran this campaign because of a skater demographic bulge and because skateboarders only bought shoes from companies owned by other skateboarders. In fact, in the early 90s, skateboarders bought their equipment, shoes, and clothes almost exclusively from a handful of small, skater owned and operated companies. Their loyalty was fierce and Nike was not welcome. Even more troubling, these skate shoes--like Etnies--were quickly becoming a casual wear staple in the general public. Nike was losing market share and understood that they had to penetrate the skateboarder's world if they wanted to remain competitive.

They accomplished this by hiring Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, the 'Got Milk?' ad firm. The cultural critic Thomas Frank went to a convention and heard a best practices presentation on this campaign. He reports in Harper's that the advertisers did not set out to decide whether skaters' "hostility" towards Nike "was justified or warranted but to liquidate it" (July 1999, 78). This "grass-roots" campaign -- like most young, hip campaigns-- was crafted by a group of anthropology PhDs who studied and surveyed skateboarders using ethnographies and

other anthropological research methods (July 1999, 78).

There are now successful market research firms that are exclusively devoted to providing information, research, news, trends, and photos of global youth ages 14-30." The man with the paternal voice who counseled us to buy Ovaltine has lost his job to people who describe themselves as 'cool hunters' and 'guerilla marketers' (the job of a hunter and a guerilla is to inhabit a space with their target without being seen). They have descended from the Madison Ave. office into the street to provide corporations "24/7 coverage" of countercultures.

These quotes are taken from the website of a firm that is appropriately named "Look Look." I know a graphic designer who left a skateboarding magazine to work for Old Navy, a company that was also frantically trying to target the skateboarder demographic. He has told me that the design rooms of Old Navy are filled with surveillance-style, long lens, "sniper photos" of skateboarders drifting through the city, walking down the street, living their daily lives.

This combination of surveillance and simulation reaches its creepy, Foulcaldian zenith in the new skateboard video games: Tony Hawk Pro Skater and Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2. To make the Tony Hawk games, Activision paid pros to skate in full-body sensor suits that digitally mapped every microscopic gesture of a skater's style. How far down does this skater crouch before doing a trick, is her elbow bent or straight at the peak of the trick how close together are his feet when he lands? Using these surrogate spatial practitioners, you can 'detourne' all of the famous redevelopment spaces, including Justin Herman Plaza, the Alcoa Building Plaza's skyway, Philadelphia's JFK Plaza, and many more. In the background you hear an angry cry of "...truth devoured/A silent play on the shadow of power/ A spectacle monopolized/The camera's eye on choice disguised." These overwrought, but sincere, lyrics are by the anarchist band Rage Against the Machine; the song, "Guerilla Radio," is the video game's theme music. Here you don't even have to go to the trouble of traveling to the themed skatepark; for that matter, you don't have to go to the trouble of learning how to skate. You can contest the exclusionary design of the city from anywhere-- from a sofa inside a gated community. Thanks to the metonymical slight of hand you can

misappropriate the artifacts of capitalist production by immersing yourself into an even purer simulation: a nowhere space, populated only by consumerism. These games have sold over 5 million units.

One could spend a lifetime cataloging these appropriations, and some of them are much more audacious than the skateboarding examples-like the Gandhi 'Think Different' Apple ads which seem to suggest that buying a computer is somehow akin to civil disobedience against violent imperialism, an heroic and revolutionary act. But my purpose is not simply to point out this sleazy sophism; it is to illustrate the process by which cultural space is produced. The process is one of surveillance and simulation, a Poetics of Security. Like exclusionary architectural details, these appropriations proliferate into a tightly knit network, \ vith points surfacing on every block in every city, penetrating nearly every space that people inhabit.

Conclusion:
Urban Pathology as Surreptitious Creativity

If skateboarding ever did have the potential to disrupt the cultural space of media representation, that potential is long since spent. But its capacity to challenge the commercial spaces of the city is untouched. The microscopic networks of surveillance continue to insinuate themselves into the smallest recesses of public space. But skateboarding continues to insinuate itself further into the networks of surveillance, seeking out and exploiting even smaller fissures. San Francisco skaters know, for example, that you can continue to skate the ledge at Giannini plaza, provided you don't skate north of the third pillar of the Bank of America building, where you will once again become visible to cameras and guards. Skateboarders know when the security guards work, they know where the cameras are, they know from which direction to enter a space, and they know how slip out of it undetected. Simulations of public space are becoming more sophisticated, but so are the skater's tactics for 'detourning' those spaces, reintroducing into them the debate that has been elided.

The question of whether or not a destructive activity like skateboarding should be allowed in public space proceeds from an assumption that what we have is public space to begin with. In this sense skateboarding is not destructive to public space at

all, but rather, productive and creative; it creates public space, if only for a moment. In downtown San Francisco the network of exclusionary designs has been quite successful in filtering out everyone except the select public. Most homeless are first of all concerned with sustaining themselves, not in challenging exclusionary architecture, so they have taken the hint and left. Skateboarding, on the other hand, was born out of such architecture, and it is in its nature to challenge defensive design --skaters only stop to think about this fact occasionally, in the same way that a person only occasionally notices that they breathe. In Jaques Lacan's terms, skateboarding is like the protean Real in its relationship to the Symbolic Order of the downtown.

Skateboarding is the obverse of defensive design; it is not an attack on exclusionary architecture but in fact, a symptom: an irreducible component of such architecture. This is now a symbiotic and irreversible relationship: skateboarding cannot exist without defensive design any more than defensive design can exist without skateboarding.

Though it is just a young urban counterculture, with all of the attendant solipsism, skateboarding is also an ineliminable residue of the public that persists in spaces that increasingly enforce privateness. When I have lunch downtown I see how for some of my professional colleagues, the skateboarders are simply something interesting to look at. Here skateboarding is what William H. Whyte would describe as "triangulation," one of the seven elements of successful public space, a focus of conversation and a testament to the cultural diversity and vitality of the city (1988b). Others of my fellow downtown workers feel that skateboarding is an irritant, even a menace. Skateboarding challenges these people to examine their reasons for feeling entitled to such comfort: the comfort of a simulated public space, produced by surveillance, directed toward profit, and enforced by spikes and guards. If nothing else skateboarding makes these folks feel uncomfortable, it gives lie to the simulation and reintroduces debate. As the saying goes, it reminds people that they are in a city, which is, after all, the greatest measure of our ability to be civilized.

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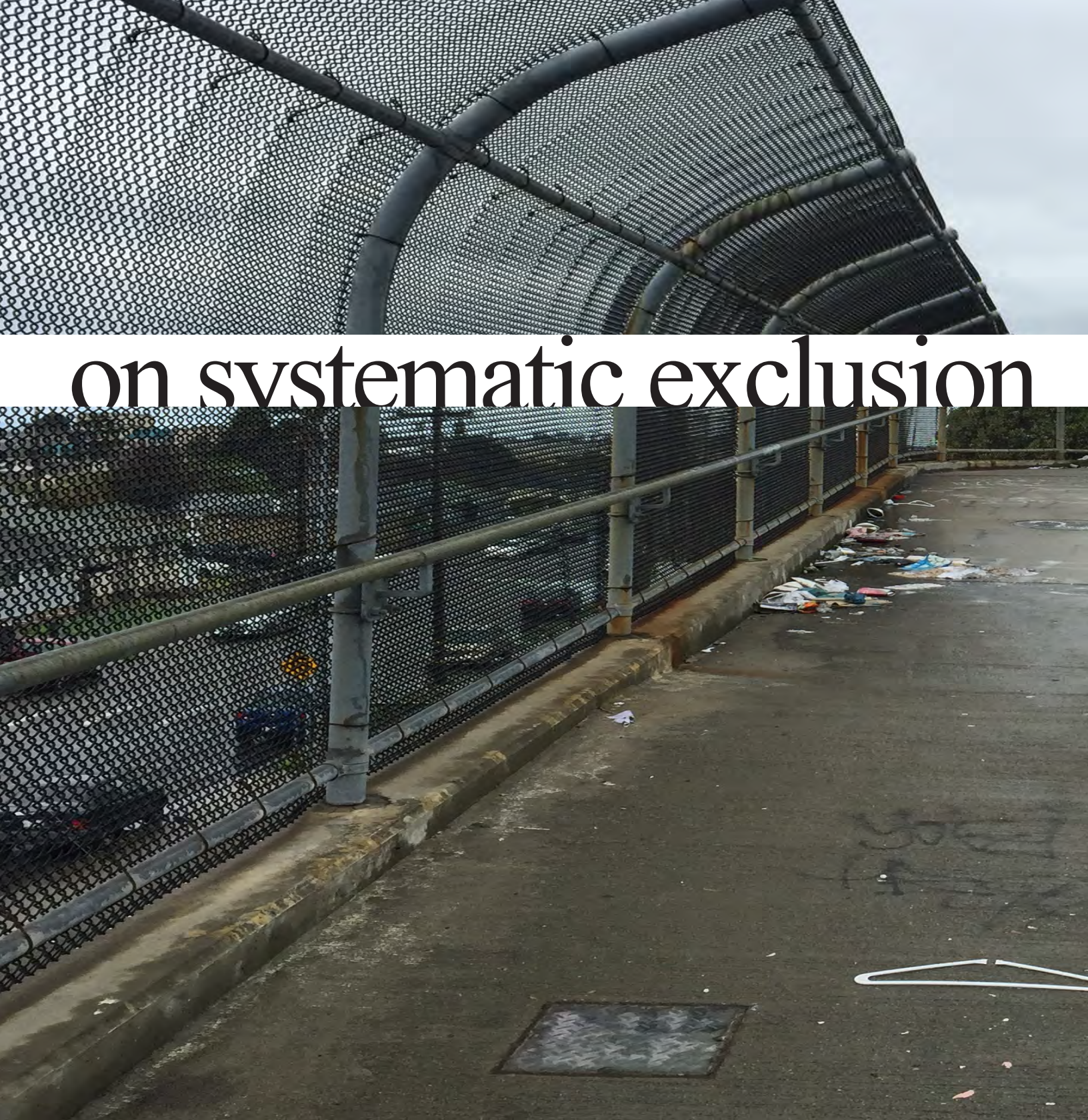
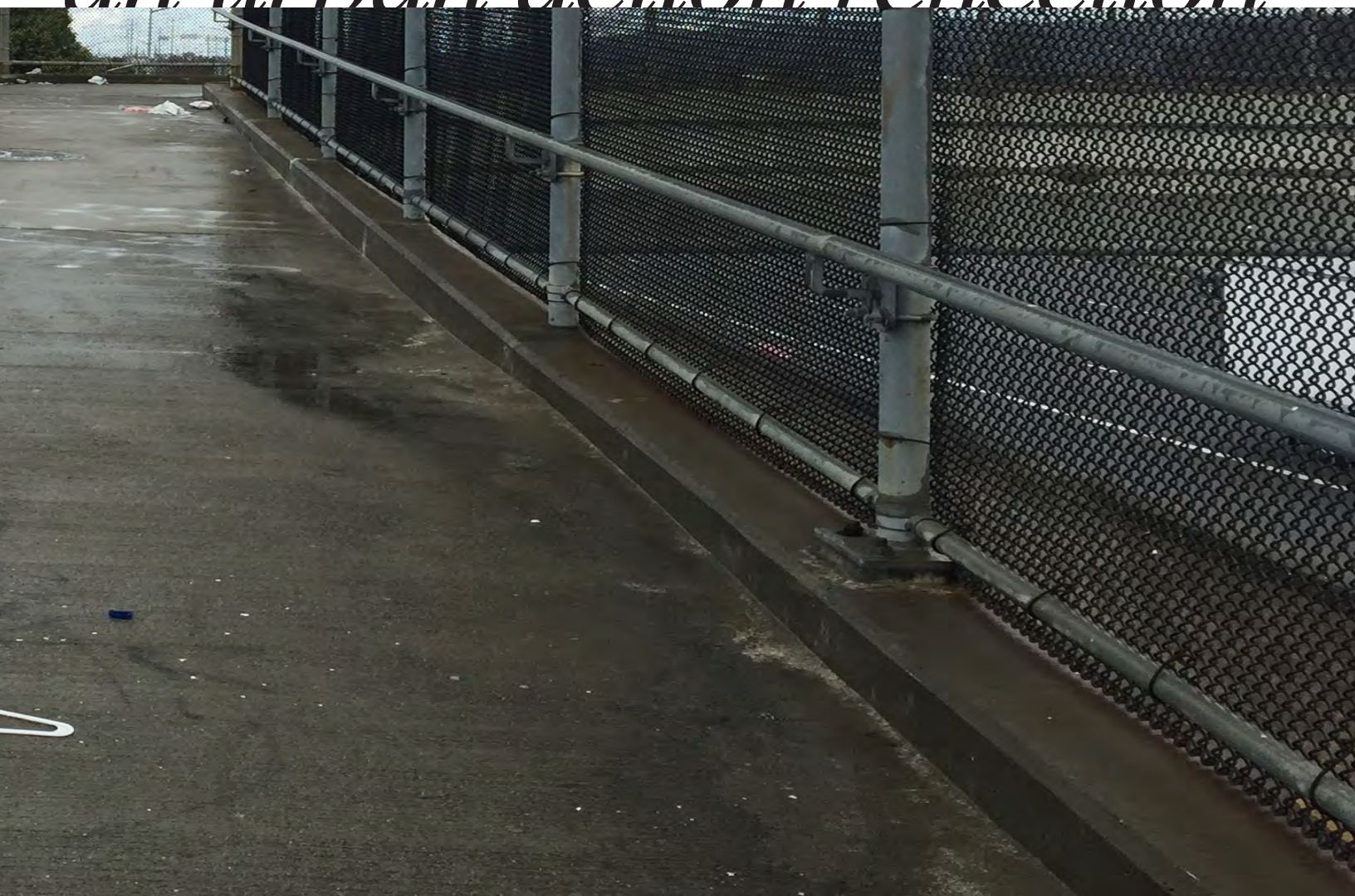


on systematic exclusion

an urban action reflection



Written for the 2001 issue of Urban Action, “The Poetics of Security: Skateboarding, Urban Design, and the New Public Space” by Ocean Howell, explores street skateboarding as it relates to people’s right to public spaces. Howell insists the purpose of this article is not to argue street skating should be allowed in public spaces. Instead, he uses the sport as an example of one of the many activities, including homelessness, that face systematic exclusion in urban planning and design.

Skateboarding, as described by Howell, is a “counterculture” of youth seeking to escape from power regulations (Howell, 2001). Street skating can only be thought of as a form of resistance, as it pushes the boundaries of socially accepted usage of public spaces, because of strategic architectural urban design practices specifically aimed to exclude the activity. Why are skateboarders denied access to public space? Howell makes the argument that spaces are not designed to fit the needs of all of the public, but that they are designed solely to promote the production and consumption of goods and services. This idea reminded me of “The Urban Process under Capitalism,” by David Harvey. Similar to Howell’s claim, Harvey argues that in a capitalist society the urban environment is structured to produce goods and services. Therefore, public space is not intended for public enjoyment but is constructed to function as a “resource system(Harvey, 1978).” Because street skating is not contributing to a capitalist agenda, it is purposefully excluded from the public domain through strategic planning and design.

Howell’s article holds present day relevance when you relate systematic policy and planning exclusion to the hostile relationships that it creates between the public, in this example skateboarders, and law enforcement. In recent years, this deepening divide has lead to violent disputes erupting in the city of San Francisco. On July 11th 2017, a police officer was caught on camera pushing a skater in motion, leaving them with serious injuries (Albarazi, 2017). Additionally, on November 25, 2018, a group of skaters in Union Square were charged by a police officer, leading to a physical altercation that ultimately left the officer with permanent head and brain

injuries (Sernoffsky, 2019). Purposeful exclusion and unequal access to public space is not only unfair but dangerous as it perpetuates the disconnect between the public and those whose job it is enforce policy and planning laws. Although street skating was a primary focus of the article, Howell also touches on other activities that struggle to find a place in urban design such as homelessness. Public spaces are designed to promote regulation and are often patrolled by security in order to intimidate and drive out homeless people. Howell uses the minimalist, unwelcoming design of public benches in Downtown San Francisco as an example of how design is used to exclude homeless people. By making public spaces uncomfortable, homeless people are prevented from laying down or lingering for any prolonged period of time. Other practices such as street cleaning and sweeping also keep homeless people from long term inhabitation of public spaces. Although vastly different from skateboarding, homelessness can relate as another public act that struggles to find a way to interact with and urban environment that is intended to exclude them.

It is no secret that the popularity of skateboarding has grown exponentially in the years since Howell's article, arguably due to the marketability of the sport's distinct culture. As the sport continues to face exclusion through urban design, steps have been taken in recent years to further the conversation about skateboarding in public space. In 2018 Ocean Howell attended a conference in London called "Pushing Borders" that hosted pro-skaters, policy-makers, and academics, to discuss the social and spatial impact of skateboarding in urban areas. Howell was interviewed on The Free Skateboard Magazine by Arthur Derrien, about the event and described the most exciting take away was, "the idea that skateboarders really are in the position to make cities more egalitarian places (Derrien, 2018)." While skateboarding has began to be welcomed by open discussions with urban policy makers and planners, the privatization of public space is still relevant issue as it relates to other public acts that face exclusion in urban areas. Today, there is still a legitimate concern over who, if anyone, actually has the right to public spaces.