Sabbatical Report
Academic Year 2007-2008

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I. Approved Sabbatical Leave Proposal

Elizabeth Lobb
Sabbatical Leave Proposal For Academic Year 2007 – 2008

One of the things that distinguishes geography from other fields of study is its interdisciplinary nature. Geography intersects with many areas of the social and physical sciences, including sociology, anthropology, political science, history, literature, geology and earth science. Geographers infuse these subjects with their own unique perspective—one that focuses on the importance and relevance of *place* in shaping unique human and physical processes across the globe. It is this unique perspective and unusual interdisciplinary approach that makes geography essential curriculum.

On the other hand, it is geography's attempt to do "everything" that very often opens it to criticism. Perhaps from one perspective, geography is a renaissance discipline giving new energy to well-worn subject matter, while others criticize it for producing thinkers whose understanding is too superficial—thinkers who know "a little about a lot." I would like my students to experience geography as a profoundly renaissance discipline and in order to do this I need to broaden and deepen my knowledge as well as increase the exposure that students have to geography through links with other courses. By potentially linking geography with other courses, its interdisciplinary significance will be magnified to the larger campus community (faculty as well as students.) My study sabbatical year will be focused on increasing knowledge in important areas that will enhance the courses I currently teach and will enable me to broaden the geography curriculum in the future with new courses and create a basis for the future development of collaborative teaching opportunities across several disciplines

Each semester, I am responsible for teaching three courses, covering a diverse range of subject matter (from fluvial geomorphology of the California deserts, tropical rainforests in the Amazon basin, to ethnic cleansing and political conflict in the Balkans). As a regional course, *California Geography* covers *both* the physical and the social and cultural processes shaping California's unique landscapes. *World Regional Geography* applies this regional approach at a global scale examining major cultural and physical regions. Finally, *Human Geography* focuses not on the physical dimensions of Geography, but on human processes shaping the earth's cultural and social landscapes (such as population, migration, folk and popular culture, language, religion, agriculture, industry, natural resources, etc.). Last year I also developed a new course, *Geography 8: The Urban World* which creates a unique geographical perspective surrounding the historical evolution of cities, the function of cities, and regional differences in urban development and change--primarily the differences between developed and developing world urbanization. These courses illustrate the fundamental interdisciplinary nature of geography and my study year will add insight and depth to these already existing courses. Additionally, as my study year enhances my knowledge base for these courses, I can continue to promote their interdisciplinary nature, drawing students form a variety of academic interests across campus.

I have already had the positive experience of pairing geography courses with other disciplines on campus. For three years I participated in the Summer Bridge program that grouped students in cohorts and coordinated their coursework. I was matched with English 67, 68, and 1A courses during those three years and was able to develop a cross-

disciplinary approach with several English faculty members (Debra Farve, Tom Edson and Rick Adams). This experience was a positive one, and the decision to further my studies through a sabbatical leave is in part based on developing further collaborative teaching experiences at Mt. SAC. The sabbatical leave allows me the time to build an interdisciplinary focus for the courses I currently teach, the course I recently developed, and the course in Latin American Geography that I plan to propose. The interdisciplinary focus is important as it prompts students to examine issues in non-traditional ways—it encourages students to view topics and issues in larger contexts beyond the confines of more conventional viewpoints and subject matter.

During this leave, I have *two goals*: my *first goal* is to build an academic background in urban studies. An interdisciplinary base of knowledge, drawing from rigorous academic inquiry in urban studies, through the incorporation of contemporary global and local issues, will provide me with a solid background from which to teach the course I recently developed: *Geography 8: The Urban World.* Urban studies courses cross disciplines; many are located in the Urban Studies Department, others in History, Political Science and Geography Departments. These courses complement the other courses I teach and are part of a larger interdisciplinary focus I am pursuing in my studies, research and teaching.

My *second goal* is to take coursework in regional studies that will benefit the World Regional course I currently teach, and allow for the future development of a new course, *Geography of Latin America.* Remaining current with regional changes as well as with

emerging philosophies and theories of regional studies is critical. The focus of these regional studies is **threefold**:

    1.) <u>California</u>. One of the most popular (in terms of enrollment) courses I teach is *Geography 30: California Geography*. I plan to take courses that not only pursue a geographer's approach to the region, but also coursework in political science and history in order to broaden the approach I take to this curriculum. California's cultural (and even physical) landscape has undergone profound change over just the last decade. Southern California has become one of the most diverse urban areas in the world and issues surrounding illegal immigration, patterns of internal migration (pushing the limits of "urban" areas increasingly into the "exurbs"), natural disasters, aging infrastructure, and continued population growth are some of the issues I plan to study during this sabbatical leave. An interdisciplinary approach will be central to this study, building a broad, yet detailed, accounting of this region—involving both historical inquiry as well as analysis of contemporary urban, social and economic issues in the state.

    2.) <u>Latin America</u>. Latin America figures prominently in the *Geography 5: World Regional Geography* course I teach each semester, and an interdisciplinary course of study in this region will assist in the development of a new course I have planned, *The Geography of Latin America.* Many Mt. SAC students are directly connected to this diverse region. In fact, it is the diversity of this region that makes it so problematic for regional study. Because of its complexities, it is essential to have an understanding of current findings, trends, and changes in theory and pedagogy. The coursework I will take in this area will bring the currency necessary to continue to make important connections between regions—especially between the US and Latin America, while providing groundwork for developing the *Latin American Geography* course. A course in Latin

American geography parallels coursework already established in the History program (History of Mexico, History of Latin America) allowing for possible collaborative teaching ventures and perhaps even the pairing of courses.

3.) <u>Middle East</u>. Recent events have prompted increased interest in this region and in the study of Islam. As a significant portion of the *World Regional Geography* course, I have found that students' interest in this region has grown and it is important to accurately respond to questions they pose as well as to foster legitimate academic debate—especially concerning the United States' role in and relationship with this region. Additionally, a growing number of our student body reflects the diversity of this region as well, making the relevance of study even more appropriate.

I strongly believe that learning cannot occur with a single-minded approach. I have been educated—through my undergraduate work at UC Berkeley and later in graduate studies at the University of Washington—in the long-standing tradition of a broad liberal arts education. It is absolutely essential that students in our classrooms at Mt. SAC perceive the importance of such a broad education and that they find value in many different disciplines and the variety of perspectives they afford. I also believe that it is essential for us, as instructors, to model this perspective to them. If students see learning about one particular topic as requiring thinking beyond rote facts and traditional boundaries, they begin to discover the tools needed for thinking critically that will serve them well in the advancement of their studies and the pursuit of careers.

I also think there is great value in students realizing that learning is a truly life-long endeavor. By returning to school after many years, I would have a tremendous

opportunity—to remember what it is like to be on the other side of the podium and to sharpen my own analytical skills while bringing currency to my knowledge base. A sabbatical from teaching five courses each semester, including the preparation and grading this entails, as well as a sabbatical from department commitments, will give me the essential time I need to pursue these goals. The time a sabbatical leave will afford me provides me with the opportunity to become a more contemporary scholar by being able to research current findings, trends, changes in theory and pedagogy in my field. The sabbatical leave will also allow me to develop a breadth in my scholarship essential to teaching the classes I currently teach. Finally, such a leave will allow me to develop a basis on which I can develop new curricula in the future that not only more concretely links geography to other disciplines, but by so doing, will reinforce the critical elements of synthesis, development of multiple perspectives, and application in the students who take these courses—not to mention these same elements becoming part of my dialogue with professors in other disciplines.

At the end of the sabbatical year, I plan to provide detailed summaries of the courses I have completed. Major topics and issues explored during these studies, and their relevance to the courses I currently teach as well as their application to potential future curriculum development will also be presented.

Tentative Timeline*: a minimum of 12 semester units each semester (total should be 24 units, possibly higher with UCLA course which is 4 quarter units)

Fall, 2007	Spring, 2008
GEOG 330: Geog of CA	GEOG 322: Geog of Latin America
URBS 310: Growth of Cities	POLS 380: Los Angeles: Past, Present & Future
URBS 350: Cities of the Third World	POLS 438: Middle East Politics

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GEOG 351: Urban Geography   HIST 432: Urban History of the US
**possibly instead of URBS 310,   **possibly instead of HIST 432,
POLS 332: Latin America Politics or   HIST 488: California History
HIST 463: 20th C Latin America

Urban Coursework

GEOG 351, URBS 350, HIST 432

California Coursework

GEOG 330, POLS/HIST/URBS 380, HIST 488

Latin America Coursework

POLS 332, GEOG 322, HIST 463

Middle East Coursework

POLS 438; GEOG 187XL (UCLA—Winter Quarter, 2008)

*Timeline is tentative because, although I have been in touch with individual departments, at this point I do not know precisely which courses will be offered in which semester. Additionally, there is always the possibility that courses will not meet enrollment requirements or that they are not offered despite being scheduled. Because of these unknowns, I have included a list of potential alternate courses for each subject matter, along with catalog descriptions of all courses in question.

I. Urban Studies Coursework

URBS 310. Growth and Development of Cities (3)
An examination of the forces contributing to the form, development, and structure of cities. Emphasis on urban areas of the United States. (Available for General Education, Social Sciences)

URBS 350. Cities of the Third World (3)
Prerequisite: Upper division standing and completion of lower-division writing requirement. A cultural analysis of Third World urbanization and counter-urbanization with emphasis on particular aspects of urban life and social change in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeastern Asia. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

URBS 380. Los Angeles: Past, Present, Future (3)
(Same as HIST and POLS 380)
A multidisciplinary investigation of the Los Angeles urban area - its patterns of population and resources distribution; its historical, economic, social and cultural developments; and policies models designed to cope with its problems and to develop its potential as an ethnically diverse metropolis on the Pacific Rim. Application of social

science methodology. Series of faculty and guest speakers, weekly discussion sessions, field trips. (Available for General Education, Social Sciences.)

Political Science 404. Urban Politics (3 units)
A study of the structures and processes which determine public priorities and programs in urban areas. Spring Only.

Geography 351. Urban Geography (3) (Normally offered every semester)
Prerequisites: A lower division course in the Social Sciences and completion of the lower division writing requirement. The geographical analysis of past and current patterns of world urbanization. Emphasis will be placed on city origins, growth, development, and current problems. (Available for General Education, Social Sciences.)

History 432. US Urban History (3)
Prerequisite: Completion of the lower-division writing requirement. Cities, as systems of human interaction and service exchange, permit close historical analysis of historical processes and human experience. Study of selected cities, 16th century to present, as illustrations of alternative social, economic, cultural, and political patterns of cities in stages of formation; growth; response to industrialization, immigration, transportation technology and suburbanization; decay and renewal. Spring Only

HIST 486A. History of Los Angeles (3)
Evolution of the metropolis of Los Angeles from pre-Spanish days to the present.

II. Regional Studies Coursework

CALIFORNIA
Geography 330. California (3) (Normally offered every semester)
Prerequisites: A lower division course in the social sciences and completion of the lower division writing requirement. An examination of the geography of California emphasizing the evolution of contemporary patterns of population and settlement, resource exploitation, and human-environment interaction. The course focuses on the regional variation and diversity of the State's geography. (Available for General Education, Social Sciences.)

History 488. California (3)
Political, economic, social, and intellectual growth of California from Spanish times to the present, with emphasis on current characteristics and problems.

LATIN AMERICA
Political Science 332. Politics of Latin America (3 units)
Prerequisite: Completion of the lower-division writing requirement.
An introductory study of the politics of Latin America. The topics treated will include dependency theory, revolution, the national security state, women in politics, theologies

of liberation, and re-democratization. Selected nations are used as case studies. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

Geography 322. Latin America (3) (Normally offered every semester)
Prerequisite: Completion of the lower division writing requirement. A spatial and ecological survey of the environment, cultures, economies, and societies of the Latin American nations. The course emphasizes the changing settlement geography and pays special attention to Mexico, Brazil, and the Andean countries. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

History 463. 20thCentury Latin America (3)
Study of Latin American history since 1914 with emphasis upon the impact of modernization upon the traditional order, efforts toward inter-American understanding, and greater interaction with the contemporary world.

MIDDLE EAST
**Poli Sci 438. Governments and Politics of the Middle East (3 units)
    A study of contemporary social and political movements and of governmental
    institutions and politics of the Arab states, Israel, and Iran.

**According to the department coordinator, this course will appear in some version (title may not be exactly the same) in the fall.

History 496XL: History of the Modern Middle East
This course is designed to be an investigation of different perspectives on the history of the Middle East from 1789, the date of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, until roughly the Iranian Revolution of 1979. These dates are not hard and fast; we will no doubt discuss recent events and we will certainly begin with events before 1789. However, these dates mark a period in which the Middle East was grappling with a series of dramatic political, economic, cultural and intellectual changes. The focus of this class will be on individual and collective reactions to the changes happening during this period. It will include a discussion of such themes as nineteenth century reform in the Middle East, cultural and intellectual reactions to European thought, the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, the development of Nationalism, the Arab-Israeli Conflict, the Iranian revolution, etc. Students will be expected to write midterm and final papers as well as several shorter papers throughout the semester.

GEOG 187. Middle East. (4) (UCLA)
Lecture, three hours; reading period, one hour. Designed for juniors/seniors. Analysis of economic, social, and political geography of the area extending from Iran to Morocco and from Turkey to Sudan. Emphasis on geographical themes and problems during historical and modern times. P/NP or letter grading.

II. Statement of Purpose

My sabbatical year's focus was that of an inter-disciplinary course of study designed to broaden and deepen the connections that I, as a geographer have fostered with other disciplines as well as an opportunity to gain insight into the most current research and trends within geography and its related disciplines. It was my goal to engage in specific areas of study that would compliment the courses I currently teach, while also developing relationships across disciplines that would allow me to structure my courses in a way that challenged traditional disciplinary boundaries. By doing this, my goal is to foster in students an understanding of the intricate connections that exist between disciplines, enabling them to view their educational experience not as a series of separate and unique courses, but as a broad, interconnected foundation to prepare them for advanced studies at a four-year college or university.

In addition to the desire to broaden the inter-disciplinary nature of the courses I currently teach, a second goal of my study sabbatical was to develop a base of knowledge that would allow me to add content to recently approved courses (Geography 8: The Urban World) and also develop new courses based upon my studies. Built into this goal is a desire to encourage dialogue with professors in other disciplines at Mt. SAC to develop linked courses and courses that will allow students to synthesize material across disciplines.

The sabbatical year involved enrollment in the following eight courses at California State University, Northridge as a means to achieving the goals outlined above:

Coursework in Urban Studies:

URBS (Urban Studies) 310: The Growth & Development of Cities (Fall, 2007)

URBS (Urban Studies) 350: The Third World City (Fall, 2007)

URBS (Urban Studies) 380: Los Angeles: Past, Present and Future
(Spring, 2008)

GEOG (Geography) 351: Urban Geography (Spring, 2008)

Coursework with a Regional, Inter-Disciplinary Emphasis:

HIST (History) 488: The History Of California (Fall, 2007)

HIST (History) 681: Graduate Seminar in Western History: California
(Spring, 2008)

GEOG (Geography) 330: Geography of California (Fall, 2007)

GEOG (Geography) 322: Geography of Latin America (Spring, 2008)

URBS (Urban Studies) 380: Los Angeles: Past, Present and Future
(Spring, 2008)

Having concluded the sabbatical year, I am providing detailed summaries of the coursework I undertook and completed. Major topics and issues explored during these studies, and their relevance to the courses I currently teach as well as their application to potential future curriculum development, will also be presented in this report.

III. Report on Sabbatical Studies

My recently completed sabbatical year provided a wonderful opportunity to immerse myself in the pursuit of knowledge and reacquaint myself with research methodology and disciplinary trends in the context of some of the most current research in the social sciences. As a student for the sabbatical year, I focused my studies in two areas: 1) curriculum with an emphasis on urban issues and urban theory and 2) an inter-disciplinary approach to regional studies focusing specifically on California and Latin America.

<u>Urban Studies Coursework</u>

The coursework that emphasized urban issues was offered through the History, Urban Studies and Geography Departments at California State University, Northridge. These courses addressed two major themes: 1) the evolution of cities in the United States and in the developing world and, 2) how cities address the numerous challenges they face in the wake of population shifts, environmental change and resource depletion.

URBS 350, URBS 310 and GEOG 351 provided a crucial foundation for understanding the development of cities throughout the world and supported completion of the first goal of urban studies coursework: to establish patterns of urban evolution in the developed and developing worlds. Each of these courses examined how cities began and how cities have developed over time with special attention to the differing experiences in Europe, the United States and the developing world. I view the material generated in this coursework as foundational and the cornerstone of the course I recently received approval to teach at Mt. SAC—Geography 8: The Urban World.

URBS 350 specifically addressed the development of cities in areas of the world considered 'less developed.' The distinction of 'less developed' and 'developed' worlds,

however, is an artificial, if convenient, one. While there are important indigenous roots to cities in many of the countries deemed 'less developed,' the urban structures that have taken shape in many of these countries are deeply connected to European forms of urbanization. Thus, studying the development of the Third World city is also a study in European forms of urban landscapes as well. In addition, urban forms in both the developed and less developed worlds continue to shape and re-shape one another through the global movement of people and capital.

Cities in the developing world do face unique challenges, however. The Third World is experiencing unprecedented rates of urbanization. In addition, urbanization in the Third World is occurring without prior or simultaneous economic and social development (unlike the US and Europe). Exacerbating this rapid urbanization is urban form that is in large part inappropriate for the needs of the country, often having been imposed during colonial rule. Colonial urban forms have done little to ease the challenges of rapid urbanization since the 1970s. Colonial cities frequently received more resources and were allotted more power than any other city in the colony, and therefore developed a system of *urban primacy* whereby one city dominated the urban landscape, with little, if any, urban development in other parts of the country. These *primate cities* continue to dominate the urban landscape and are plagued by problems of 'overurbanization' today in much of the Third World. The primate city has become the destination for rural migrants from all over the developing country. These cities, with their skeletal infrastructures, are simply incapable of supporting this burgeoning urban population. As a result, informal housing (favelas, slums, shanty-towns), inadequate transportation, and informal employment have come to characterize urban areas in the developing world.

How to face the challenges these circumstances create is one of the primary questions being raised in the context of development studies and urban studies today.

Having an interest in development studies, which influences greatly the organization of material in the Human and World Regional Geography courses I currently teach, I was especially drawn to examining the issues of development specifically within an urban context. I was able to complete three research papers for the course "The Third World City" (URBS 350) which allowed me to pursue my interests in development and urban studies. The first paper detailed the unique circumstance of urbanization without *development* in the Third World (see p.91). The other two papers in this area of study focused on potential solutions to the problems of social and environmental justice in the developing world city today. The first of these papers looked at the importance of providing loans to women in the developing world—as a means to achieve social justice and empowerment for women in societies marked by traditional gender oppression—specifically, Bangladesh (see p 106). The second paper examined the equally important issue of environmental justice for urban dwellers in the developing world (see p.122). The position of this paper was that environmental justice (that the poorest urban dwellers should not carry the burden of greatest environmental contamination and degradation) is inextricably linked to sustainable development. (The issue of sustainability is further addressed in papers written and researched for the URBS 310, Evolution & Growth of Cities, course.) Since within the next decade the world's largest cities will be almost entirely located in the developing world, how to create urban environments that are safe, just and sustainable becomes a crucial and vital question. These abovementioned research papers allowed me to explore specific 'case studies' which I can apply to general theory and discussion in the "Urban World" course I plan to teach next year.

The evolution of cities in North American and Europe was the focus of the coursework in URBS 310 and GEOG 351. Additionally, these courses addressed the question of how to make urban growth more sustainable in the context of population growth, dwindling natural resources and climate change. Finally, URBS 380, was a detailed look at how a specific city—Los Angeles—is coping with these 21st century challenges while exposing and examining the day-to-day functioning of cities.

GEOG 351 provided a detailed look at urban evolution, growth and change in the United States, tracing urban growth from early mercantile centers, to centers of capital production, to suburbanization and urban renewal of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. I wrote a total of three papers for this course; one was a detailed examination of the evolution of the city of Baltimore and a discussion of the urban issues the city has faced for the last several decades. In addition, this paper examined ways in which Baltimore has been addressing its problems of dwindling financial and natural resources, aging infrastructure, and population shifts (Baltimore has been steadily losing population since the 1970s) and commented on the success and failure of these strategies.

The other two papers for this course looked at issues of social justice in US cities. The first was a review of Jennifer Wolch's article concerning access to green space in the city of Los Angeles. Access to parks and other open green spaces is one good measure of the social stratification of a city. In Los Angeles, as Wolch points out, not only is there an unprecedented dearth of green space, but the areas with the highest population densities have the lowest percentage of open and green space. This is one measure of the success of a city in addressing issues of urban poverty and access to resources for its urban population; according to Wolch, Los Angeles is failing to address those needs.

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The final paper, like the Wolch paper, examined the impact of policies of desegregation on cities in the US. This paper, authored by Michael Poulson, asked the question whether or not residential segregation in the United States has decreased with federal mandates for desegregation in the 1950s and 1960s. This paper determined that, for a variety of reasons, empirical evidence shows that residential segregation remains just as pronounced today as it was 40 years ago. Again, this paper addressed issues of social change and social justice in the context of the US urban system.

URBS 310 also examined the evolution of cities in Europe and North America, but did so from a perspective of urban theory. This course provided an important primer on how urban policy evolves and how it is implemented. The course addressed the question of urban planning—what it is exactly, who makes decisions about planning, and how those decisions are realized (or not). While requiring extensive reading on urban theory, this course also allowed me to research several areas that were of previous interest to me. Specifically I have been interested in exploring how cities can address their impact on the earth and its resources. Are cities better suited to lower the so-called carbon footprint or is urban form itself at the heart of high levels of resources consumption and environmental degradation? Through research for two papers, I concluded that cities are actually well suited to address issues of resource consumption and environmental impact. In fact, by re-working the view we have traditionally had of cities (as separate from, not part of, natural ecological systems), cities can become centers of sustainable living.

The first research paper for this course examined the idea that cities are part of ecological systems and that by incorporating such theory into urban design, specifically by incorporating urban river systems into urban planning and framework, a city's impact on the environment is not only mitigated but actually well integrated into natural systems.

The second research paper allowed me to take the theories of the first paper (ecological design in urban systems) and apply it to a very specific case study—the plan to revitalize the Los Angeles river as a means of integrating ecology into urban planning and design.

URBS 380 was a synthesis of both the theory of URBS 310 and the focus on urban origins of GEOG 351. This course, entitled "Los Angeles: Past, Present & Future," applied the theory and history of urban studies to the dynamic city of Los Angeles, examining how the urban landscape of the city had evolved, what forces have been at work shaping this landscape, and what challenges it faces in the future. I felt this course was an especially important source for the Urban World course I will be teaching. Seeing theory in action is crucial for students' understanding of processes and their resulting landscapes (both physical and social). Having Los Angeles as a 'real life laboratory' for urban studies is invaluable, and, ultimately, Mt. SAC students will be able to apply the knowledge base of the Urban World course in their own urban environment.

URBS 380 was an interdisciplinary course, cross-listed with both History and Political Science, which explored several aspects of Los Angeles' development and linked the city's history to the current problems and issue it faces. From this perspective, the focus was on how cities work—what interest groups make decisions in cities, how those decisions are negotiated, and what the impacts of those decisions are for current and future residents of the city. Using Los Angeles as a case study of the 'post-modern' city is particularly appropriate. Many scholars have argued that Los Angeles is the city of the future—a bellwether for the type of urban landscape that may come to dominate in both the US and in the world.

This course, in particular, provided a context for understanding the social landscape of the city of Los Angeles, particularly the organization of public space. The course drew

from the theories of such scholars as Jurgen Habermas, Ray Oldenburg, William Fulton and Richard Sennett to examine the way that public space has been used historically in urban design. Taking this theory in the context of Los Angeles I wrote a paper based on field research that explored public space in downtown Los Angeles, with the thesis that public space has been carefully manipulated and controlled in downtown to produce very specific social outcomes meant to restrict those who can access it (see p.195).

Beyond the multiple dimensions of public space in urban environments, URBS 380 also tackled many other pressing urban issues such as urban politics, urban infrastructure, regional planning, the changing function of cities in the US, redevelopment and gentrification, historic cultural preservation in cities, urban social services (water, power, etc.), environmental protection and degradation, and social problems in cities (crime, poverty, homelessness, etc.).

The second research paper I wrote for this course focused on the issue of urban politics, examining the effectiveness of Los Angeles' Neighborhood Council system that was established in 1998 through an amendment to the city charter (see p.184). Neighborhood councils were established in Los Angeles in response to the issue of San Fernando Valley secession, which was an attempt by San Fernando Valley residents to address a system of representation that they felt had historically excluded them and limited their voice. Ultimately, I concluded that the Neighborhood Council system was limited in its ability to truly allow for more democratic participation in the city's policy making and implementation. However, it was a step toward inclusiveness that has appeared to appease the restless San Fernando Valley population.

While the subject matter of this course was specifically Los Angeles, the themes presented applied to urban areas throughout the United States and perhaps even the

world. Again, Los Angeles is seen by many urban theorists as the city of the future—the city that many other cities in the US and world are coming to resemble in form and function. Therefore, studying urban issues in the context of Los Angeles is not only appropriate but necessary.

Regional Coursework

The courses I completed that fulfilled the regional component of my sabbatical study year were focused in two areas: California and Latin America. The bulk of my regional studies focused on California. Only one of the eight courses I took over the year focused on Latin America. I was disappointed by conflicts in schedules and by department's lack of offerings which meant that the other Latin America courses I was interested in I was unable to take. Geography 322, however, (the Geography of Latin America), served as a broad survey of the physical, social, cultural and environmental geography of the region and will help me fill in some of the gaps in my World Regional Geography course (Geog 5), as well as provide the framework for a new course in Latin American geography that I plan to develop for Mt. SAC next year. This survey course did not call for the in-depth research that my California studies did, however, I did complete a short research paper concerning migratory patterns between Nicaragua and Costa Rica (see p.145) which will serve as an excellent case study in my Human and World Regional Geography courses.

Several courses I completed focused on California—as a region unique to the country, but also one that, contradictorily perhaps, many other areas have come to emulate and resemble. I completed four courses that focused on the California region: HIST 488—California History, HIST 681—Graduate Seminar in the US West, GEOG 330—California Geography and URBS 380—Los Angeles, Past Present and Future. The coursework in California studies complemented personal research interests, but also

supported the course I currently teach, California Geography. California Geography is a mandatory class for all students planning to complete a teaching credential in the state of California. It is also a class that, as an elective, consistently draws high enrollment numbers and a sizable waiting list.

The first History course, History of California (HIST 488) provided me with a strong background in the evolution of the state—from Native American times to the current climate of fiscal crisis, growing population and cultural change. For this course, I wrote three papers—the first explored the importance of the Spanish experience in the state, the second explored the unique evolution of a gay community in San Francisco, and the third examined the implications for growth and development in the state. (See pp.29-53). All three papers pursued themes that describe California's unique geography and significant cultural landscape. Informing the research papers for HIST 488, was the question that has framed California since its earliest settlement by Westerners and one that was voiced by the Western journalist Carey McWilliams in the 1920s, "Is California the great exception?" or is California merely an extreme representation of universal experiences? This is a question and theme that pervades the study of California, whether it is politics, urban landscapes, physical geography, or history and it is a theme that I plan to use to provide organizational structure to the California Geography course I currently teach.

Although a seminar in the US West, the HIST 681 course was tailored specifically to the study of California. (See Appendix 1: HIST 681 Book List). Through specific readings and group discussions, the course addressed common themes in the study of California History. The reading list focused on four essential themes. The first of these themes pursued the question of California's exceptionalism—analyzing the accuracy of such an assessment of the California experience or whether the California experience is

simply a regional variation of national experiences. Another essential theme to the study of California, tackled through several of the books in this course, was the issue of race and ethnicity—asking whether the way racial categories have been constructed and applied has been different for California than the rest of the US or, again, have California's racial relations simply mirrored larger national trends.

A third theme addressed in this course was the question of California as the great democratic experiment. This idea was first articulated in the words of Frederick Jackson Turner when he proclaimed "The West" to be the end of the frontier and that with its settlement, the frontier had closed and the final opportunity for fine-tuning the ideals of democracy were at hand. In this vein, our discussions focused on the question of California's success in this experiment—does California reflect the "dream" realized, or a malformation of the 'dream' that has created, for many, a nightmare.

The graduate seminar allowed me to pursue more personal research interests. Interested in issues of gender and cities, the focus of my research paper for this course was the impact of prostitution during the Gold Rush in San Francisco in shaping the future urban landscape of the city (see p.221). Through my research, I concluded that the practice of prostitution in San Francisco, was, like the California experience, exceptional. Women from all over the world came to San Francisco during the Gold Rush and many found tremendous wealth and success through the profession. However, the realization of success through prostitution was intersected by racial and class politics. Chinese women brought to San Francisco to be prostitutes faired among the worst from their involvement in the profession. On the other hand, many white women from other parts of the US and from France, in particular, found fortunes to be made in the city. So, again, California was both exceptional in this experience, as well as predictable—the

scale of success for prostitutes was unparalleled elsewhere in the US, but the experience was heavily determined by race and class as it was throughout the country.

In a shorter research paper for the graduate seminar, I explored the impact of Proposition 13 (passed in 1978) on the social, economic and environmental landscape of the state (see p.206).   This research included a brief history of California's revolutionary initiative process—initiated through an amendment to the state constitution in the 1920s. The initiative option was exercised only sporadically until Proposition 13, and since then has become one of the primary means by which policy is created in the state. Since 1978, every election has seen a dramatic increase in the number of initiatives on the ballot. Again, the themes mentioned earlier shape the discussion concerning California's Proposition 13—is Prop 13 and the initiative process more generally a demonstration of California as the ultimate democratic experiment? Or is it an example of the experiment run amok, wreaking havoc for decades to come? In California, the initiative process led to the "voter revolution" that passed, overwhelmingly, the most restrictive property tax policy in US history. The California voters' success in changing tax policy motivated many other states to follow suit—most notably Massachusetts just a few years after California—and led the nation in a voter revolt that has had long-term fiscal and social implications. Many scholars argued that California's Proposition 13 would have devastating long-term social and economic impacts and perhaps the current fiscal disaster that California faces, while not entirely due to the passage of Proposition 13, has been exacerbated by an initiative process in California that has run rampant.

IV. Conclusion: Statement of Value to the College

Returning from my sabbatical year I am armed with new enthusiasm and an updated knowledge base from which to infuse new energy into the courses I teach at Mt. San Antonio College. I see my sabbatical year as being of value to the College in the following areas.

First, the sabbatical year of study has exposed me to the most recent research in the areas I currently teach. Every single one of the courses I currently teach will benefit from the study experience. My Human Geography course will be enhanced with a new set of material on urban issues and development studies. My World Regional Geography course will have its section on Latin America greatly improved and, like the Human Geography course, will find its focus on development and urban issues also expanded. My California Geography course will be greatly enhanced by the coursework in California History and Geography as well as the Urban Studies course focusing on Los Angeles that I completed at CSUN. All of these courses benefit from my expanded knowledge base as well as the research interests I was able to pursue in conjunction with the courses I completed during the sabbatical year. The experience has also provided me with new ideas about how to approach the subject matter I teach as well as how to engage students through research and discussion on a wide range of topics. I saw, first hand, what was successful in the college classroom, as well as what was unsuccessful. I saw elements of my own teaching style as well as teaching strategies that failed to foster an energized learning environment. All of these experiences were invaluable to my own position as an instructor and as a researcher.

Second, the sabbatical year allowed me to gather together a base of material from which to develop new coursework. Specifically, my focus on urban studies will provide the base crucial for offering the newly approved course, Geography 8: The Urban World.

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In addition, I plan to use my studies' regional emphasis on Latin America to develop a new course, the Geography of Latin America. This course seems particularly relevant given the large number of students at Mt. SAC of Latin American heritage. Appropriately, this is a course that will cover *all* of Latin America, not just Mexico, reflecting the diverse student and community population at Mt. SAC and in Southern California more generally.

Third, and finally, my study sabbatical will allow me to create a more interdisciplinary approach to my teaching, emphasizing for students that discipline lines are fluid, encouraging them to think beyond rigid discipline delineations. Just as our world has become increasingly globalized and integrated over the last few decades, so has the learning process—systems, experiences, historical events are all today viewed in a much broader lens and an interdisciplinary approach encourages that perspective. That being said, I envision my revitalized courses as being more directly connected to courses in other disciplines. For instance, I would like to attempt some 'pairing' of classes—the California Geography class with the California History class, or the yet-to-be approved Latin American Geography course with Latin American History or Mexican-American Politics. Additionally, I would like to encourage my colleagues in Political Science to develop new coursework in Urban Politics that would nicely compliment the Urban World course I plan to teach.

I have not taken the responsibilities associated with sabbatical leave lightly and I return to teaching with great appreciation for the opportunities I had last academic year which allowed me access to contemporary scholarship including current findings, trends, and changes in theory and pedagogy in geography as well as other fields. Much of the coursework I completed during the sabbatical year challenged me to re-think many of my

established views on teaching and to re-think the ways in which knowledge is collected and imparted. The leave allowed me to develop a breadth in my scholarship that is essential to maintaining the courses I currently teach while also allowing me to pursue ideas that will lead to the development of new curricula that not only more concretely link geography to other disciplines, but will, therefore, reinforce the critical elements of synthesis, development of multiple perspectives, and application in the students who take these courses while injecting these same elements into my dialogue with professors in other disciplines.

Elizabeth Lobb
History 488: California History
September 20, 2007
Readings-Based Paper #1

The Missions of California: A Legacy of Re-imagining the California Landscape

Since the mid-eighteenth century California has been a place re-invented and
transformed by a succession of immigrant groups. California has been perceived as a
malleable palette—one that can reflect the values, culture, and politics of each groups'
ideals. The first outside effort at re-imagining California was through formal Spanish
control over the territory—a territory that was remote and largely ignored until the mid-
eighteenth century. Using the mission system, the Spanish were determined to transform
California into an extension of Spain, manipulating its physical and human resources to
resemble Spanish settlement patterns, economic landscapes and religious systems.
Although the missions functioned in California for less then sixty years, they
fundamentally changed the landscape, radically re-organizing natural and human
resources. California's indigenous population which was significant and had carved its
own unique cultural landscapes was ultimately subsumed into the visions imposed upon
California by these subsequent outside groups, beginning with the Spanish. The
intersection of the existing Indian landscapes and the imposed Spanish landscapes (and
later the Mexican and American landscapes) was both complex and contradictory. It is
the process of re-making the California landscape to suit both collective and individual
ideals, desires, and hopes that becomes the central story for the region for the centuries to
follow. This paper explores the complexities of the mission experience and the legacy of
transformation and change it left for California's social, economic and cultural
landscapes.

Determined to firmly establish Spanish control over its remote frontier, the Spanish Crown sent the Catholic Church, via Franciscan priests, into California to establish a system of missions along the California coastline. Instead of removing indigenous groups by force, Indians were to be gathered into mission settlements, converted to Catholicism and taught the tools of modern society. In this process of "Hispanicization," Indians are transformed into 'good' Spanish citizens, fulfilling the Spanish vision of making California into an extension of Spain.

At a superficial level, the mission project is about the Christianizing of the native population of California and saving the souls of the Indians. The mission project, in reality, was also a vehicle of to further the larger ideological project of Spanish imperialism—religion was used to justify the usurpation of Indian lands and subjugation of Indian rights and Indian culture. The experience, however, was a complex one. On close examination it becomes clear that the reality of Indian lives was more developed then the Spanish imperialist rhetoric allowed for. The existence of clearly defined spiritual systems among native populations may have actually assisted the priests in transferring Indian beliefs to a Catholic god. Anthropologist John Harrington notes that the Chumash of southern California sought spiritual connection with, and explanation of, the natural world, developing beliefs that explained natural phenomena such as earthquakes, notions of death and the afterlife, human creation mythology and concepts of reincarnation. (MP, 31-39).

The mission project was also used to transform the Indians into moral beings, rescuing them from a rudderless state, and assuring their compliance as good Spanish citizens. Again, the complexities of the colonial experience are revealed as Father Geronimo Boscano notes a moral social order already present in Indian society; he describes the

"moral virtues" that Indians have taught their children, with Indians even threatening children that misbehavior might lead to punishment from "the God Chinigchinix" (MP, 42). However, Boscano must justify his presence among the Indians and he goes on to say the Indians need to be rescued from "...the error in which they live...to give them to understand the true religion, and to teach them the true way to their salvation." (MP, 41). The paradox between the reality of the Indians' lives and customs and the image that is promoted through the colonial construct of natives as fundamentally amoral, inferior beings reveals the contradictory nature of the mission project itself. It is necessary to portray the Indians as inferior in order to promote the missionaries' (and the Spanish) agenda of transformation, in yet many missionaries reveal an awareness of the complex reality of the Indians' existing social and cultural systems.

The suffering of native Californians at the hands of mission priests and at the hands of the Spanish military also reflects the incongruity between the objectives of the mission project and the realities on the ground. The Spanish military's mistreatment of Indians became a source of great concern to many of the mission priests. Father Luis Jayme writes in 1772 that he is concerned that the abhorrent behavior of Spanish soldiers is fundamentally undermining the mission project:

> "...the gentiles...have been on the point of coming here to kill us all, and the reason for this is that some soldiers went there and raped their women...turned their animals into their fields and they ate up their crops." (MP, 59).

Even Father Junipero Serra, the founder of the mission system, was dismayed by the soldiers' behavior. As Antonia Castaneda writes, Serra reported to Viceroy Antonio Maria Bucareli in 1773 that the "despicable actions" were "...severely retarding the spiritual and material conquest of California" (MP, 76). Castaneda also finds it ironic that the priests advocate for the protection of the Indians, proclaiming their humanity,

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while also engaging in violence against the Indians. Castaneda quotes one missionary defending the use of corporal punishment as necessary because native Californians were "...untamed savages...people of vicious and ferocious habits who know no law but force, no superior but their own free will, and no reason but caprice" (MP, 81). The missionaries used suffering as a way of not just controlling the Indians, but also of converting them. Francis F. Guest argues that rather then fear such beatings, California Indians saw them in a larger, spiritual context—one influenced by witnessing the self-flagellation of priests expressing spiritual devotion and the Indians saw their own beatings as minor in comparison (MP, 73).

The examples of violence—perpetrated by the priests as well as by the military—are evidence of the complexity of the colonial relationship. The colonial agenda must be justified by painting the Indians as "other" and "separate" from the Spanish and, therefore, inferior. It could be argued that this dichotomy assists in institutionalizing violence toward Indians. However, this simple dichotomy does not convey the nuanced and complex set of interactions that occurred between colonizer and colonized. Additionally, these interactions were not static—new relationships of power evolved as the priests eventually lost control over the mission lands and power shifted to the Californios during the period after Mexican independence.

In addition to establishing Christianity and working to create a moral, law-abiding population, the Spanish also sought to bring the Indians the tools of modern society through farming. The introduction of agriculture profoundly changed both the human and physical landscape of the region. The Spanish introduced cattle, pigs, horses, wheat, and citrus to the landscape of California—many of these items become emblematic of the region for decades to come. Local Indian economies are transformed as market-oriented

agriculture comes at the expense of indigenous food supply systems and the social landscape is re-shaped as native populations are corralled onto mission lands and forced into sedentary lifestyles. As James Gregory notes: "...Indians became the work force...giving up in the process not only their hunting and gathering economy but also much of their culture and all of their freedom..." (MP, 19).

The Spanish construct an image of the Indians as primitive to reinforce and justify their transformation of the land. When Boscano writes, "...they had no employment and profit with which to busy themselves..." he implies that without engaging in the exchange and accumulation of wealth through capital, no social progress can be made (MP, 41). Additionally, the Spanish observe the Indians' foraging lifestyles—obtaining food without cultivating plants or animals—as inefficient and evidence of their backward state. Father Boscano observes, "...these Indians...led an idle and lazy life...like brutes...for they did not cultivate the ground or sow any kind of seed" (MP, 44). The Spanish envisioned a California that could become economically productive with proper manipulation of the natural environment –modifying and perhaps even improving the natural world. Ironically an almost identical assessment is made of the Californios by the Anglos as they arrive and observe what they see as the Californios' passive pastoral lifestyle.

As with the Spanish assessment of Indian spiritual and moral systems, there is a disconnect between the image that the Spanish construct of Indians within their physical environment and the reality of the Indians' cultural ecology. The idea that the Indians were "ecologically passive" was fundamentally untrue. Despite relatively low population densities, native Californians still had to be thoughtful in their use of natural resources. McEvoy notes that even though, "...hunting and gathering economies...operated at

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relatively low population densities [this] did not relieve them of their need to husband their resources if they were to sustain their ways of life." (MP,48). The image that native Californians lived in a state of environmental unawareness, living carefree, unconstrained lifestyles proves inaccurate on close inspection. On the contrary, they were savvy foragers, utilizing resources in conservative ways to assure sustainability.

Ironically, it was the productivity of mission farming that ultimately brought about the missions' demise and delivered a final blow to the Indians. The newly independent Mexican government, well aware of the missions' productivity, secularized the mission lands, stripping the padres of their civil authority. Theoretically the mission lands were to be divided among the Indians and the Californios, but the Californios seized this opportunity to assert their long-desired status as wealthy land owners as they now had access to a labor force (mission Indians). This new vision for California—as a place of wealth and prosperity for the Californios—comes at the expense of Indian sovereignty and further marginalizes the Indian population socially and economically. With few other options, the Indians are absorbed into the new rancho system as indentured servants. Monroy notes, "…after the unraveling of their old way of life and the thorough intrusion on their lands the Indians had no choice but to bind themselves to the ranchos" (MP, 108). By this time also, the sheer numbers of Indians has been substantially reduced as a result of the high mortality rate that came from contact with European disease and they are on the verge of demographic collapse. Certainly for the Indians whatever benefits may be gleaned from the mission experience are far outweighed by the high cost of subjugation and marginalization. For the Indians, then, the legacy of the mission project is disastrous—their mistreatment is only perpetuated in their new relationship with the Californios and later with the Anglos.

Despite their eventual demotion, it is clear that the mission system laid the foundation for complex social and economic landscapes which were further altered and modified by the Californios and eventually the Americans. As each new group entered California, they imposed their own vision onto the landscape. The padres' vision (and the Spanish Crown's) created a landscape of productive farming and Catholic adherents. Brimming with new found affluence, the Californios imposed their vision of a pastoral paradise with a rigid social hierarchy once again transforming the landscape. The period of Californio wealth and prosperity was brief, though, and Anglo arrival by the 1830s transformed the landscape yet again, ultimately disenfranchising the opportunistic Mexican ranchero owners in a pattern reminiscent of the marginalization of Indians by the Californios a decade before. Perhaps the most lasting legacy, then, of the mission project is the precedent it set for transforming California to meet the ideals and needs of occupying groups. The idea of California as a place of opportunity, as a blank canvas for creating success and wealth began during the Spanish mission era but it is a legacy that continues to inform social, cultural and political processes in California through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Elizabeth Lobb
History 488: Readings-Based Paper #2
November 8, 2007

The Evolution of Queer San Francisco:
Symbiosis Amidst Social Change

Despite its iconic identification as a city that celebrates and even promotes its gay

community, San Francisco has a history of both repression and openness toward its gay

population. The gay community in the city has not enjoyed a steady increase of

acceptance over the last century. Instead, tolerance toward the gay community fluctuated

as definitions of sexuality and sexual deviance shifted resulting in periods characterized

by the scrutiny and criminalization of homosexuality. The episodes of greatest

repression, during the early twentieth century and the 1950s, share in common times of

increased national anxiety over changing gender roles, challenges to traditional

definitions of sexuality, demographic change, a changing racial and ethnic landscape, and

anxiety that infiltration of foreign ideology (communism) would destroy the American

way of life. During repressive periods, sexuality became the site for the expression of

larger social anxieties, with real, material effects for the groups that fell under intensified

scrutiny and repression. However, the stamina of a visible gay community in San

Francisco has been achieved not as much through direct resistance but through the

recognition of a mutually beneficial relationship between the revenue generating bar-

based gay community and the city.   Perhaps most ironically, it was the economic

function of the gay community that ultimately shaped a unified gay identity, politicized

the gay community and assured San Francisco's position at the forefront of homosexual

politics and modern queer identity by the end of the twentieth century.

In her book, *Wide-Open Town*, Nan Boyd argues that the experience of the gold rush

created a unique atmosphere of unconventionality and male-orientation in San Francisco

that supported a growing gay subculture. The gold rush, the arrival of the railroad, and the development of port-oriented industries combined to make San Francisco's population overwhelmingly young, male and single. Boyd notes, "Through the second half of the nineteenth century, the economic boom…attracted a stream of single men to…California…creat[ing] a city of bachelors" (Boyd, 27). These young men prowled the city at night, looking for entertainment in the many bars and taverns of the Barbary Coast neighborhood and patronized a growing sex industry (both heterosexual and homosexual) situated within the public space of alcohol-related activities. The transient nature of the population of the city also contributed to a socially permissive environment that encouraged a gay subculture. Young men in San Francisco, with no concrete ties to place, were "less likely to conform to social rules and regulations," allowing "same-sex prostitution and gender-transgressive entertainments [to] exist…alongside other Barbary Coast attractions" (Boyd, 27). This free-wheeling atmosphere earned the city a reputation as a "wide-open town"—a town tolerant of a variety of activities that by conventional standards would have been deemed deviant and dangerous and would have been limited by greater municipal oversight and policies aimed at eradication.

In the early twentieth century, the visibility of gay culture and San Francisco's reputation for being a "wide-open town," was challenged by the Progressive Era reform movement. The progressives' goals of social containment and control reflected anxiety over profound social and economic changes for the country. The US was experiencing tremendous demographic change marked by unprecedented levels of immigration (from new source countries in Europe, Mexico, and Asia), and increasingly urban populations. The anxiety generated by these changes elevated a national discussion concerning race, assimilation, and new definitions of gender and sexuality, which, at a local level,

frequently became focused on concerns of sexual vice and deviance and the desire to control and contain populations that were undesirable. The rhetoric of the era promoted ideas of social containment as a way to preserve white racial hegemony and maintain traditional gender roles. As author Gerald Woods notes, "One characteristic of the progressives… was their abiding antipathy toward saloons, prostitution… dancing (especially in nightclubs where black men played jazz music), and liaisons between black or Asian men and white women" (MP, 210). Reformers worked to Americanize immigrants and to remove those populations that were deemed un-assimilable (i.e. the passage of the 1924 National Origins Act excluded immigration of Asians to the US). In a similar fashion, anxiety over changing gender roles and definitions of sexuality "raised powerful new narratives of homosexual pathology and disease" (Boyd, 33).

Even with heightened scrutiny and an increasingly underground status, the gay bar and club culture of San Francisco remained vital in the early twentieth century. The proprietors of bars that catered to gay populations and supported queer entertainment used the economic importance of liquor and tourism to the city as a way to maintain a queer public space. Local bar owners took advantage of local authorities' open defiance of prohibition laws in San Francisco and the result was a proliferation of "small entertainment venues and nightclubs" that gave a new home to female impersonators and a queer subculture (Boyd, 48). Recognizing the gay entertainment industry's tremendous economic contributions to the city, corrupt police officers (with institutional support) engaged in schemes of 'gayola' which served to actually protect the bars and clubs that catered to gay clientele during the progressive era's crackdowns, and "civic graft… in the form of favors or pay-offs, enabled gay nightclub owners to find protection" allowing

"tourist venues like the Dash...to survive in San Francisco when they would have been quickly shut down in other cities" (Boyd, 29).

The era secured the importance of queer entertainment and queer subculture as vital to the city's tourist industry, as "homosexual and transgender populations socialized alongside adventurous heterosexuals and voyeuristic tourists in popular nightclubs such as Mona's and Finocchio's" (Boyd, 49). It also set a precedent for the response of the bar-based gay community to attempts at repression. Far from being passive victims, bar owners and their gay clientele manipulated existing political and economic structures to maintain their social and economic position. Many of the bars that catered to tourists interested in peeking at queer subculture, such as the Black Cat Café on Montgomery, eventually evolved into bars focused entirely on catering to a gay clientele. Thus, it was the changes wrought by the repressiveness of the progressive era and prohibition that allowed for the establishment of a geographically and socially defined gay community in San Francisco—one centered on lively bar and nightclub venues in North Beach.

Gay bars and clubs became more visible on the landscape during the 1940s, as their geography shifted to more accessible, centralized parts of the city. World War II allowed for more visible homosexuality and queer culture for two reasons. First, San Francisco experienced a huge population growth during wartime that was heavily male (due to job growth in military related industries, and its importance as a naval port), returning "San Francisco to the unbalanced sex ratio of its mining-camp years" (Boyd, 112). Naval servicemen (and some women) on leave poured into San Francisco seeking entertainment, generating a greater demand for the sex trade and sex entertainment industries (i.e. female impersonators) associated with gay bars and clubs; "[n]ightlife, as

a result, took on a new aura, and entertaining the troops became an important vector of San Francisco's underworld entertainments" (Boyd, 114).

Second, gay bars thrived during the war and just after because of the nature of alcohol regulation in the state. Although the military declared certain bars and clubs off-limits to military personnel, the ability to enforce these laws was hampered by a lack of state or local support. Local police lacked the desire to enforce shut-downs of gay bars because of the prevalence of graft and corruption within the San Francisco police, a carryover from the prohibition era. And alcohol regulation fell under the control of the toothless state Board of Equalization making it legally difficult for the military to close bars that were considered undesirable because of their homosexual associations.

Through the symbiotic relationship of economic opportunism and civic graft, gay bar and club culture was firmly established in San Francisco by the 1950s. However, liberal attitudes toward homosexuality in the city began to shift during the latter half of the 1950s. Cold war rhetoric generated fear that the American way of life could be corroded if communist ideology infiltrated the community and concern grew that "sexual desire—particularly homosexual desire—[was] a chasm filled with destabilizing possibilities." (Boyd, 72). Homosexuality became the site for expression of larger social and political anxieties. The result was the repression and attempted eradication of activities (and persons) deemed socially deviant or morally questionable. Senator McCarthy spearheaded efforts to conjure images of "internal decay" within the US and focused on groups within the country that were 'weak' or 'vulnerable,' such as homosexuals. Boyd notes,

> Cold war domestic ideology... dictated complete social control, and sexual transgression
> became tantamount to treason. Homosexuality, prostitution, drugs, and juvenile

delinquency bled tautologically into each other as both the cause and effect of America's

failure to defeat the Russians. Lesbian and gay cultures...seemed dangerous and subversive—resistant to dominant political ideologies (Boyd, 72).

In addition, local efforts to criminalize homosexuality gained strength in the late '50s in San Francisco as alcohol regulation shifted to the newly formed Alcoholic Beverage Control Board and a new mayor (Christopher) appointed a new police chief determined to break the long-established pattern of graft and corruption in the SFPD. These two shifts in the policing of queer space attempted to repress San Francisco's gay community by limiting gay public space.

However, in San Francisco repression was met with more organized and successful resistance than in other parts of the country. As gay bar owners felt the repressiveness of the new policing policies, they challenged these restrictions in new ways. While graft and corruption had protected the bar and club based gay community previously, increased police harassment prompted bar owners to seek protection through conventional, legal channels. A landmark case involved the Black Cat bar on Montgomery, whose owners challenged the suspension of their liquor license in 1949 and pushed for acknowledgment of homosexual civil liberties based on the right of homosexuals to assemble in bars and other public places. After years of political wrangling, the owners won their case (Stoumen v. Reilly) and "gay and lesbian bars proliferated, particularly in San Francisco's North Beach...and the community grew strong despite the momentum of McCarthy-era politics and a post-war culture of conformity" (Boyd, 123).

During the late 1950s and through the 1960s, other forms of organization continued to solidify not just a gay public presence in San Francisco, but the formation of a gay identity. The idea of a collective, gay identity was new—and it was directly linked to the struggle for gay rights born out of the repressiveness of the 1950s. The modern gay

identity was one that crossed the traditional boundaries of a bar and club based gay culture, politicizing the gay community through community activism and more visible roles in local politics. The early 1960s saw the formation of several gay organizations, from the San Francisco's Tavern Guild (an organization of gay business owners) to the Society for Individual Rights and latter the Council on Religion and the Homosexual. Gay groups took on the strategies of the broader civil rights movement, and sustained a public dialogue on the position of homosexuals within their communities and within American society.

By 1965, San Francisco's gay community had become mobilized, challenging the "harassment and mistreatment that had relegated them to second-class citizenship" during previous eras (Boyd, 236). The strength of the gay community by the 1960s is owed, in large part, to its historical role in the economic growth of the city. Despite periods of repression, the gay community, led largely by bars and clubs, utilized their important economic position to maintain gay public space and support a gay subculture in the city. This created a complex relationship between the gay community and the city's social, economic, and political structures. Even as definitions of sex and sexuality shifted and realigned during the twentieth century, one thing remained consistent: the importance of the gay-oriented bars and clubs in generating tourist revenue for the city. Far from the dichotomy of oppressor/oppressed, the city and the gay community enjoyed a nuanced and symbiotic relationship through the century. The pattern of mutual benefit remains in place today, "as gay tourism draws millions of dollars to San Francisco each year, gay, lesbian, and transgender community representatives from San Francisco serve both elected and appointed positions within municipal, state, and federal government offices" (Boyd, 237). Thus, the leverage of revenue generation has supported the gay community

for almost one hundred years in San Francisco culminating in a modern gay identity synonymous with the city itself.

Elizabeth Lobb
History 488: Readings-Based Paper #3
December 6, 2007

Constructing California:
Landscapes of Privilege & Oppression

Since the Spanish era, California has attracted settlers by the millions with the

powerful promise of reinvention, endless opportunity and new beginnings. California's

landscape has been transformed by groups seeking wealth, happiness and prosperity.

However, the realization of wealth and opportunity has been illusory for many. An

examination of racial and social relations in the state reveals that those deemed

undesirable and threatening, such as non-whites and the poor, have been systematically

excluded from realizing the same level of success as the privileged white class. Mike

Davis' book, *City of Quartz,* suggests that in order to assure the success of a few, there

have been many groups fail. Davis exposes the artifice used to maintain the privileged

status of white elitism in California through the lens of 1980s Los Angeles. *City of*

Quartz portrays Los Angeles as hurtling toward a coming climacteric—the denouement

of a history of racial and class exclusion that shaped California since its first 'discovery'

by Europeans. Davis' 1980s Los Angeles reflects a willfully manufactured landscape

that attempts to obscure California's true legacy of racial and economic

disenfranchisement with troubling outcomes. As *City of Quartz* argues, the California

experience has meant tremendous wealth and prosperity for the region's upper strata but

this has been dependent upon the systematic undermining of capital accumulation and

social mobility amongst non-whites, the poor, and eventually even the middle-class. For

Davis, Los Angeles and its environs reflect the culmination of years of class and race

struggles, as groups have sought reinvention and realization of the California 'dream.'

In many respects, Los Angeles serves as a microcosm of the history of California—a history rooted in carefully constructed "mythography" (Davis, 20). Just as the Spanish, drawn to the promise of endless resources and wealth in California, sought to transform the landscape into a 'New Spain,' early Anglo settlers "created a comprehensive fiction of Southern California" that transformed the region into "the promised land of [an] Anglo-Saxon racial odyssey" (Davis, 20). Key to this vision was the promise of land ownership. Like the Californios who opportunistically reconstructed the landscape to suit their transformation into the landed elite they desired to be, Anglo settlement in Southern California also connected social status to land ownership. Davis notes that "unlike other American cities... Los Angeles was first and above all the creature of real-estate capitalism," and land speculation pulled streams of Anglo settlers west in the late nineteenth century, many to Southern California (Davis, 25).

Early Los Angeles "boosters" (such as Charles Fletcher Lummis) also set out to physically transform the environment and manufacture a landscape that reflected their desired image of Southern California's past as well as its future. Foreign plant species (the palm tree, the Eucalyptus tree) physically altered the landscape while powerful re-workings of California's history became part of a shared lexicon. Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*, still performed annually in the Inland Valley city of Hemet, white-washed the history of the Spanish in California, obscuring brutality in favor of a depiction of conquest as "a ritual of obedience and paternalism [in which] 'graceful' Indians... knelt dutifully before Franciscans to receive the baptism of a superior culture" (Davis, 26). The mythologizing of California's past supported the carefully constructed ideas about the region's future—that it was a place of prosperity, supported by steady incomes and easy access to land. The success of the mythmaking relied on its commodification. The

California dream was something that could literally be purchased (buying a piece of land, a house) and, as a result, guaranteed the continuous inflow of capital (and labor).

However, closer examination reveals the unevenness of this experience for "some dreamers of the golden dream," as Joan Didion wrote in 1966. Upon examination, it is clear that the 'dream' was manufactured in such a way as to *prevent* its egalitarian dissemination—it was never meant to be shared equally. On the contrary, as Davis' examination illustrates, the dream was deliberately perpetuated to support the concentrated accumulation of wealth among the state's most powerful industrialists and land owners. The myths' function was important, however, in distracting attention away from the brutal realities of capital accumulation and economic and racial stratification in the region. As early as 1868, Henry George cautioned against enthusiasm for the railroad's increasing influence and its impact on the working class:

> The truth is, that the completion of the railroad and the consequent great increase of business and population, will not be a benefit to all of us, but only to a portion...those who *have* it will make wealthier; for those who *have not*, it will make it more difficult to get" (MP, 166).

California's history bears out George's predictions. Despite numerous efforts on the part of the working class, wealth in the state became increasingly concentrated during the century that followed. As Frank Norris noted in his 1901 novel, *The Octopus*, "They own us, these task-masters of ours; they own our homes, they own our legislatures. We cannot escape from them. There is no redress" (MP, 170). Early labor actions, such as the Pullman Boycotts of the late nineteenth century, brought little change as organized labor was cynically undercut by exploiting racial stratification; in 1893 Collis Huntington encouraged his nephew to bring a final blow to the railroad workers' unions by "importing huge numbers of African American workers from the South"—workers who were far less likely to organize and protest given their precarious social positions (MP,

186). By the 1930s John Steinbeck mirrored the anxiety of his predecessors in his novel *In Dubious Battle*. Like the Pullman strikers before them, farm workers in California's central valley were mere serfs to the large land-owning farmers or pawns of the ideologically shrill communist agitators. The continued exploitation of the working man was symbolized in the slaughter of Jim at the hands of the corporate farmers and the opportunistic use of his murder by Mac, the communist agitator is the working man's final humiliation.

Despite the brutal realities of labor struggles in the state, Los Angeles remained a beacon for millions of migrants seeking the promise of wealth through land ownership. This promise was dependent upon homeownership as the ultimate means to a more 'civilized' lifestyle and a realization of the American Dream. Developers, since the time of Lummis, capitalized on the vast availability of land in Los Angeles to promote detached, single-family homes, and by 1930, 94% of all dwellings in Los Angeles qualified in this category (Davis, 28). For business in Los Angeles, especially its growing industrial sector, homeownership meant a disciplined workforce, one less likely to organize and create trouble. In 1914, F.J. Zeehandelaar of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association noted that "working class home ownership was the keystone of the Open Shop and a 'contented' labor-force;" however, to labor organizers, these bungalows created "a 'new serfdom' that made Los Angeles workers timid of their bosses" (Davis, 28). Thus, the cost of homeownership for generations of Angelenos may have been much higher than their mortgages indicated.

Using the history of the town of Fontana, Davis exposes the bleakness behind the façade of the promise of wealth and prosperity, in a chapter aptly titled "Junkyard of Dreams." Like other parts of Southern California, it was the promise of vast tracts of

available land that first drew large numbers of settlers to the town of Fontana, 50 miles east of downtown, in the early twentieth century. The appeal of Fontana was the offer of a bucolic, rural lifestyle available to those of modest means. Developer A.B. Miller offered this dream in "an arcadian community of small chicken ranchers and citrus growers living self-sufficiently in their electrified bungalows" (Davis, 376). Not surprisingly, "the dream sold well" and by 1930, Miller's Fontana Company "had subdivided more than three thousand homesteads" appealing to groups that stood little chance of homeownership in other parts of the region, country or world (Davis, 382).

By the 1940s, however, Fontana's bucolic appeal was traded for the industrial dreams of a new visionary. Miller and many of the original city founders were dead by 1941, and Henry J. Kaiser entered the scene searching for the ideal location for a new steel production plant. Kaiser's vision of massive wealth accumulation far from the dangers of enemy attack, close to transportation infrastructure, and near the abundant energy resources provided by the Colorado River, would re-shape Fontana into a prototypical industrial city. Kaiser carefully constructed this new vision; he used the former myth of Fontana's rural utopia in order to keep a happy workforce that was less likely to unionize. Davis quotes a local Fontana journalist in 1943,

> Workers at the steel mill had the opportunity to raise chickens on the side or plant gardens. Kaiser believed these 'hobby farms' created a more relaxed atmosphere and the workers would be more content. (Davis, 390).

Not long after its completion it was clear that the Kaiser steel mill's real advantages were to Kaiser and his beneficiaries and not to the city of Fontana and its working-class residents. There was very little tax revenue generated by this new plant as city supervisors agreed to lower the assessed value of the plant after protests from the Kaiser organization, and the mill's impact on the physical environment was quickly

devastating—"acidic vapors…withered saplings and burnt the leaves off trees" (Davis, 392). But Kaiser's dream was sustained by the engines of World War II and the Cold War and steel production continued to expand in the city through the early 1960s providing steady incomes for Fontana's residents.

However, this was an image that subverted a much darker reality. Not all residents of Fontana had equal access to the promises of wealth from Kaiser's steel empire. As Fontana's steel industry began to lure increasing numbers of white workers from the steel towns of the East and Midwest, "undertones of bigotry and racial hysteria" in the town surfaced. Although drawn to Fontana for the same reasons as their Anglo counter-parts—the desire to "stake out their own modest claims to a ranch home or a job in the mill"—Black and Latino families discovered that the dream's promises were hijacked and distorted by skin color (Davis, 399). In Fontana, skin color was the deciding factor in the way in which the dream was experienced:

> Blacks were segregated in their own tracts—a kind of citrus ghetto—on the rocky
> floodplain above Baseline Avenue in vaguely delineated 'north Fontana.'
> Meanwhile in
> the mill, Blacks and Chicanos were confined to the dirtiest departments—coke
> ovens and
> blast furnaces (Davis, 398).

Racism destroyed the family of Black civil-rights activist, O'Day Short when he challenged Fontana's segregationist policies. The family was killed in an arson fire at their home in the late fall of 1945 and despite protests from numerous groups (including the NAACP, California's attorney general, the Catholic Interracial Council and Communist leader Pettis Perry), "as protest faded, the vigilantes won the day: Blacks stayed north of Baseline (and in the coke ovens) for another generation and the fate of the Short family…was forgotten" (Davis, 401). Across Southern California, the specter of race inserted itself into the path to the dream, subverting it and distorting it for millions of

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residents. As with the hopeful black families that moved to Fontana in the early 20th Century, Blacks moved into the city of Compton in large numbers in the 1950s—freed from the geographic restrictions of housing covenants and seeking the same prosperity and homeownership of their white counterparts. But the new upwardly-mobile Blacks in Compton needed the white residents to sustain their dream, and as whites sold their properties en masse, black families saw the dream evaporate as Compton evolved into "a symbol of racialized blight" with diminished property values and increasing internal turmoil. As Josh Sides noted in his article, *Straight Into Compton*, "The mounting flight of white home owners and businessmen undercut the very promise of that vision". Sides quotes Richard Elman's 1967 study of Compton, *Ill at Ease in Compton*, "'It is getting harder and harder,' Elman wrote, 'for the black man to aspire even to Compton when he looks around him and sees the way the white man's children feel about it'"(Sides, 595).

Ultimately, the dream is compromised for the steel workers in Fontana as well—even the white workers are not immune to the massive corporate restructuring and political shifts that gut the steel industry in Southern California (and across the United States) by the late 1970s. As the Kaiser steel mills and their spin-off industries closed through the decade of the 1980s, the working class of Fontana were sacrificed in the name of increased corporate profits. Faced with increased competition from abroad, decaying and antiquated machinery, and the drying-up of government contracts with the end of the Cold War, the Kaiser corporation slashed production, sold off many of its assets and began to consolidate its remaining wealth. Davis quotes Edgar Kaiser Jr. admitting to the family's strategy during this period:

> Nobody else saw it, but I knew what I had to do...break up a lot of Steel. I sold off a lot of divisions of Steel. My first day on the job...I had to go out after 30 per cent of the workforce at Fontana (Davis, 413).

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Even after initial layoffs, Kaiser workers felt confident that the company would honor its payouts to them; however, "four years later, six thousand outraged former employees watched as Hendry cancelled their medical coverage and pension supplements" (Davis, 420).

Although nearly three-quarters of the town drew paychecks dependent upon the mill by the late 1970s, the city was reinvented once again in the midst of the steel shutdowns (Davis, 421). Again the California dream premised on homeownership pulled people east, into the Inland Valley of San Bernardino County. This time the promise was not a rural, arcadian lifestyle, but the promise of affordable housing and an escape from the traffic, crime, and congestion of the greater Los Angeles region. Paralleling the growth that established Fontana in the early twentieth century, this late twentieth century boom drew those of modest incomes for whom the dream of homeownership had seemed difficult, if not impossible, to achieve in other parts of Southern California. Housing tracts emerged across Fontana's landscape throughout the 1980s, born out of the mill shut downs and the loss of thousands of stable, middle-income jobs with healthcare and retirement plans. Seemingly supporting conventional wisdom at the time, it appeared that the massive deindustrialization occurring in the U.S. in the 1980s was not going to bring the economic catastrophe that many had predicted. Fontana embodied the hope of a post-industrial United States:

> when the final shutdown came...Fontana was a boom-, not a ghost-town. Side by side with the defeated milltown, a new community of middle-class commuters was rapidly taking shape. In the last years of the plant's life the population began to explode: doubling from 35,000 to 70,000 between 1980 and 1987 (Davis, 421).

However, the true beneficiaries of Fontana's third reinvention were not lower middle-class workers but large real estate developers. Once again, the dream had been sold to,

and bought by, those who would benefit least from its implementation. City officials, desperate to attract developers to the city, lured in developers with promises of "tax-increment and tax-exempt bonds, waiver of city fees, massive tax rebates, and, unique to Fontana, direct equity participation by the redevelopment agency" (Davis, 422). By the late 1980s it became clear that redevelopment scheme for the central business district, corruption among city officials, and housing developments that were tax exempt had "pauperized the city" (Davis, 425). The fiscal crisis that this situation created left Fontana without the revenue to invest in adequate infrastructure, including schools and roads, and essentially "Bolivianized Fontana" (Davis, 426).

Simmering issues of race and class were again brought to the surface as Fontana transitioned from milltown to nondescript suburb. Fontana's rapid growth was unable to mask the bleak reality and disturbing patterns emerging in the region. The Ku Klux Klan remained a public force in Fontana well into the 1980s. Davis describes the spectacle of Klansmen harassing marchers in the Martin Luther King Jr. birthday parade in 1988, a troubling reminder of the city's racist underbelly (Davis, 428). In fact, just four years earlier, in 1984, racial hostilities led to an attack on a young Black man who "was left paralyzed from the chest down after being beaten by three skinheads" (Davis, 424). The failure of the district attorney to prosecute the white youth for the attack was another reminder that the promises of Fontana (and the region more generally) were limited by skin color.

The mythmaking was not enough to sustain the dream in Fontana, and as Davis seems to warn, the dream's collapse would be inevitable for Los Angeles as well. The promise of land ownership and an affordable American dream leaves a legacy in Fontana that is perverted by the proliferation of crime and drug abuse. Far from becoming the 'Irvine' of

San Bernardino County, Fontana's strongest association by the 1980s was with methamphetamine manufacturing, distribution and abuse. Davis writes, "from the standpoint of free enterprise economics it is...a textbook example of small entrepreneurs filling the void left by the collapse of...heavy industry. Speed not steel is now probably Fontana's major export" (Davis, 430). Just beyond row after row of identical tract house, lay the 'other' Fontana with its "vast number of dismantled or moribund cars deliberately strewn in people's yards like family heirlooms," and the most surreal sight of all—a junkyard for circus discards (Davis, 434). Davis writes:

> Suddenly rearing up from the back of a flatbed trailer are the fabled stone elephants...that once stood a the gates of the Selig Zoo in Eastlake...so much debris to be swept away by the developers' bulldozers...it is only appropriate that they should end up here, in Fontana—the junkyard of dreams (Davis, 435).

The inevitability of the dream's collapse for the Blacks, Latinos and eventually even the working-class of Fontana, is a reminder of the material effects of a history of racial and class oppression. Fontana illustrates the high price that has been paid for the exclusionary nature of the California Dream.

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Recognizing Cities as Ecological Systems:
Ecological Design in Urban Planning and Preservation of Urban River Ecosystems

Depending on one's perspective, humans are either fortunate to be, or doomed to be, urban creatures. The earth's human population has been moving into cities at a rapid pace during the twentieth century and it is projected that one of every two humans on the earth will live in a city by the year 2030 (Decker, 2002). However, the process of urbanization is fraught with social, economic, and environmental implications. This paper explores urban environmental issues and questions of urban sustainability. The focus of discussion will be the concept of ecological design in urban planning, with particular attention paid to the importance of urban river ecosystems in achieving sustainable urban development. Ecological design purports that cities can be planned and designed to maximize their resource potential while minimizing their negative environmental impacts. Fundamental to this approach is a re-thinking of the very idea of the urban environmental as separate from natural systems. Instead, ecological design calls for recognizing the city as an ecosystem itself and acknowledging the multiple 'mini' ecosystems that exist within the city. By seeing the city as a system comprised of many systems, urban planners hope to reduce the ecological footprint of the city while making them healthier and even more appealing places to live. The first half of this paper explores the history and evolution of the concept of the city as a ecosystem, briefly examining the ways in which urban areas interact with, and reorganize, existing natural systems. The second half of the paper turns to the specifics of urban riparian ecosystems as sites for the merging of the principles of ecological design and urban sustainability for

the world's cities. In a later paper, a specific case study, the Los Angeles river ecosystem will be explored in depth for its potential in achieving the goals of urban ecological design for the city of Los Angeles.

Urban Ecology: Integrating Humans with their Urban Environments

The Urban Ecological Footprint

The concept of the ecological footprint is to asses the impact a city has on the environment. Generally, scientists and scholars view the footprint as a measure, both quantitative and qualitative, of the resources that are imported into cities (inputs to the urban system) for consumption, and the waste cities produce, the majority of which cannot be contained within the urban system itself and must be exported. Cities, therefore, are much larger than their geographic boundaries imply, and these larger, more dynamic boundaries can be seen as 'footprint' on the earth. One way to compute the ecological footprint is to use land as a metric—computing how much land area would be required to support an urban population at its current rate. London, it is estimated, requires roughly sixty-times its own land area to supply its nine million inhabitants with food and forest products (Botkin, 1997).

The ecological footprint of cities has multiple impacts and various levels. Locally, this impact may create urban heat islands and local climate change, or a reduction in groundwater as impermeable surfaces cover large urban areas (Decker, 2002). At a regional level, the footprint impacts air and water quality and at a global level, profound ecosystem and climate change. Decker (2002) sites the example of the impact of pollution from China's burning of fossil fuels reducing rates of photosynthesis and the circulation of large aerosol plumes generated in China that circumnavigate the globe.

Despite this 'bad' news, there is encouraging research being done among planners and environmentalists that cities may be the best equipped systems of the earth to address the issues of resource consumption, waste production, and environmental quality. Botkin (1997) argues that cities are better able to reduce their environmental impact than areas of lower-density settlement. Instead of creating systems within the city to counter-act natural forces, cities could achieve lower levels of resource consumption by more efficiently utilizing the existing natural systems. Sustainable urbanization could be achieved by recognizing the city as an ecosystem itself with tremendous potential to counteract many of the negative impacts of urbanization and ultimately reduce a city's ecological footprint. This shift in thinking does not view cities as separate from nature, but acknowledges urban areas as ecosystems interacting with existing and creating new natural systems. This analysis professes the *benefits* of cities—that cities may be more able and better equipped to create new ways of interacting and functioning within natural systems on the earth, thus reducing ecological impacts. With this in mind, cities may be the most environmentally sound way of human settlement on the planet. In addition to reducing environmental impact on the earth, ecological design also serves to make cities fundamentally more livable—promoting integration of the 'natural' and 'human' worlds to achieve livability and sustainability.

Re-envisioning the City as a Natural System

Ecology is defined as the interaction of living things with their physical environment. When humanity is considered part of nature, cities themselves can be regarded as a global network of ecosystems. (Bolund, 1999). By this definition, cities are clearly ecological systems with complex sets of inputs and outputs that cannot be separated from the 'natural' world. As half the human population became concentrated in cities by the early

twenty-first century, urban planners, environmentalists, and other advocates have increasingly cried for urban planning that considers the need to integrate cities with their physical environments. Rather than viewing cities as antithetical and even hostile to 'nature,' recent planning has focused instead on the inherent connections and symbiosis between the two:

> the long-standing idea that cities and nature are fundamentally incompatible is giving way to another idea: that nature embraces all things, cities and the people within them included." (McNamee, 1999).

In fact, many planners, environmentalists, ecologists and even geographers argue that the city is not separate from nature, but is itself a natural form (see Alberti, Boland, Botkin). This view argues that the city is a natural area that has been modified by humans for their own needs. Even if that modification is drastic, the city itself remains a natural system with "…networks of biological relationships chained to the laws of the physical world…and a mix of species, including humans, that continue to act on and influence each other, just as they do in the 'wild.'" (McNamee, 1999).

To support the idea that cities are themselves natural ecosystems, consider the example of urban areas generating their own weather systems, confirming the idea of the city as an ecosystem—one in which inputs such as solar energy and atmospheric pressure and transformed by human systems such as paved streets, buildings, dams, etc. (McNamee, 1999). Cities have the potential powerfully transform existing physical systems; McNamee mentions the case study of Atlanta where rapid population growth and the loss of undeveloped green space (greenfields) has meant the loss of 380,000 acres of pine forest, creating a "heat island" with permanent low-pressure systems producing their own thunderstorms. (McNamee, 1999).

The Historical Context for Ecological Design

The idea of integrating 'nature' and green space into urban design is not a twenty-first or even twentieth century phenomenon. On the contrary, Anne Whiston Spirn identifies the historical evolution of ideas concerning the relationship between green space and cities. From an historical examination, two approaches emerge: an acknowledgement of the unique physical aspects of environment and the importance of considering these unique features in urban planning and integrating them into the design of cities; on the other hand, there is an approach that sees 'nature' as fundamentally separate from the city and the natural world as either in need of conquering or in need of protection. As an example of the former, the ancient Greeks purposefully considered the importance of climate, topography, and natural hazards and incorporated them into the form of Greek cities (Whiston Spirn, 1985). In a similar approach, the Italian architect Alberti, "advocated that siting of cities and the design of streets, squares, and buildings…be adapted to the character of their environment" (Whiston Spirn, 1985).

By the 17th and 18th centuries, however, an enlightenment view saw the city's relationship with nature as one in which nature is fundamentally separate from the city with the city an 'unnatural' environment. This view has informed views on the city and nature ever since. With the city as 'unnatural' there are two options: preserve and protect nature from the constant threat of disruption brought by humans or bring nature into the city through large green spaces where urban dwellers can leave the city behind temporarily and become rejuvenated (Whiston Spirn, 1985).. These views are typified by the great scholar George Perkins Marsh and planner Frederick Law Olmsted. George Perkins Marsh noted in 1864 that 'man is everywhere a disturbing agent" while Marsh advocated that humans should become "co-worker[s] with nature in the reconstruction of

the damaged fabric" (Whiston Spirn, 1985).   Neither Marsh nor Olmsted could see, however, the potential that could come from acknowledging the city as a 'natural' system and exploring how the city could be better integrated with the systems it was already interacting with and changing.

Ecological Design and the City as Ecosystem: Achieving Sustainable Urban Design

Defining an ecosystem as "a set of interacting species and their local, non-biological environment functioning together to sustain life, it is clear that the city is an ecosystem and the city is comprised of ecosystems (Bolund, 1999). While the city functions as a larger, regional ecosystem, it is comprised of smaller, local ecosystems such as parks, lakes, and rivers. As understanding of cities as complex ecosystems has grown, it has also become clear that aspects of these unique ecosystems can be maximized to promote more sustainable urban development. The focus of sustainable development for cities is to create cities that minimize their inputs of non-renewable resources (such as energy resources from fossil fuels), while also reducing consumption levels of other inputs such as water and food. By doing so, sustainable cities and sustainable design focuses on producing less waste and reducing the levels of pollutants, greenhouse gasses and heat that cities produce—ultimately diminishing a city's ecological footprint.

The idea of the city as an ecosystem can be applied in conjunction with the goals of sustainable cities:

> By rejuvenating, restoring and supporting urban green spaces, planners are acknowledging the city as a biological system simultaneously integrating designs that will meet the goals of sustainability . Natural ecosystems are present within city limits and can be utilized to contribute to public health, increased quality of life, improved air quality and even noise reduction (Bolund, 1999).

The revitalization of natural ecosystems within cities, then, are projects that follow the logic of cities as urban ecosystems and the desired goals of sustainability. Current

thinking in ecological design is that by recognizing cities as large ecosystems (and as sets of smaller ecosystems), urban design can be made *better*—that is many of the problems associated with urban areas can be mitigated by incorporating ecological principles into urban design. In essence, not only will this make cities more *sustainable*, but it will also make them more *livable*. Cities create their own ecology in a variety of ways. Careful planning that integrates ecological design can maximize or minimize the effects of cities' ecologies. It is useful to see these ideas applied to two areas of environmental concern in cities: the heat-island effect and pollution (both air and water).

The Heat Island Effect

It has been well documented that cities are warmer than surrounding areas because of increased heat produced by the burning of fossil fuels, surface materials used and their absorption of solar energy, other industrial and residential activities and that cities have a decreased rate of heat loss (less water on the surface for evaporative cooling). (Botkin, 1997). Integrating ecology into planning can assist in mitigating the effects of the heat island. For instance, use of more permeable surfaces allows for greater water retention and greater cooling through evapotranspiration (evaporation and transpiration). In addition, surface choice can impact both absorption and radiation of solar energy, also. Appropriate vegetation will also mitigate the effects of the heat island, as trees and ground cover will also absorb greater amounts of incoming solar energy.

Pollution Effect

Greater heating in urban areas also plays an important role in higher levels of air pollution in cities. Botkin and Beveridge note "The heat-island effect accelerates chemical reactions that produce high ozone concentrations, consequently increasing urban air pollution" (Botkin, 1997). The preservation of natural systems, and the re-

integration of ecosystems within the city plays a crucial role in minimizing a city's polluting activities and energy consumption. In other words, by acknowledging the city as a system itself, modifications can be made within that system (the city) to change the way it functions.

An example of a city that has committed itself to integrating green space into urban life is the Southeast Asian city-state of Singapore. The integration of green space in Singapore has reduced the negatives of urban growth considerably—particularly in air pollution and water pollution:

> Singapore has 2,158 hectares (5, 332 acres) of protected watershed in the middle of the island. The watershed provides half of the city's freshwater Needs. This central watershed contains perhaps the world's only urban old-growth tropical rainforest. Air pollution is not a problem in Singapore...one reason for clean air is...the city's large amount of greenery. Trees and shrubs not only produce oxygen, but they also clean and cool the air. (Hinrichsen, 2001).

Recognizing existing urban ecosystems, such as tropical rainforest in Singapore or the Los Angeles River, and supporting those ecosystems ultimately can make the city less polluted and lower its consumption. By utilizing and protecting existing watersheds, Singapore has greatly reduced its reliance on imported water resources while reducing problems with water pollution. Additionally, allowing for existing old-growth rainforests to be maintained *within* the urban environment has reduced air pollution, lowered heating and air cooling costs and created beautiful spaces for urbanites to live amongst. Botkin and Beveridge confirm the savings that come from planting more trees in cities, "proper planting of vegetation can lead to considerable savings in air conditioning use (up to 24% in semiarid environments)." (Botkin, 1997).

Using Rivers in Urban Ecological Design

One of the greatest challenges cities face is management of water resources. Local water sources in urban areas are often polluted and local demands for water often far

exceed the available local supply. The growing city of Los Angeles exhausted its supply of local river water by the early twentieth-century. The solution to increased demand for water in Los Angeles was the construction of an aqueduct, more than 500 miles long, to bring the Owens River hundreds of miles south, through the desert, to the city. Water is by far largest input for cities (Decker, 2001). How to achieve sustainability in acquisition of, and consumption of, water is a pressing question for cities throughout the world. At the same time, for more than a century cities have neglected, paved over, and polluted the natural riparian systems that flow through them. There is perhaps, no better example of this neglect than the Los Angeles River which has been viewed for the last century as a danger and nuisance with potentially devastating floods rather than a vital ecosystem and resource for the city. Local rivers, such as the Los Angeles river, can be utilized to achieve sustainable urban development—their ecosystems can be restored, integrating riparian ecosystems into urban life, while accomplishing the necessary goals of flood control and water management. By restoring natural flows of water, using "off-channel storage facilities" especially in urban rivers, "sediment, and nutrients on which freshwater ecosystems depend" are not blocked and allow for restoration of complex riparian ecosystems (FitzHugh, 2007). Cities can learn to manage their water systems more efficiently greatly increasing "productivity that can in turn reduce the stress on available water supplies and their source ecosystems…opportunities exist to store and extract water in less ecologically damaging ways" (FtizHugh, 2007

Rivers in urban areas have been negatively impacted by population growth and urbanization in two general areas: the increase in impermeable surfaces and pollution from urban runoff. The latter includes industrial and household waste with increased concentrations of nutrients, metals and toxins which affect the "composition of biotic

communities in these aquatic ecosystems (Yli-Pelkonen, 2006). The proliferation of impermeable surfaces negatively impacts rivers in three ways. Impermeable surfaces (asphalt, concrete, etc.) greatly reduce the river's catchments preventing water systems from accumulating the level of waters that they otherwise would. Impermeable surfaces also impact the speed of surface water flow, causing undesirable flooding in urban areas during times of heavy rain. Finally, impermeable surfaces reduce the infiltration of water and therefore reduce groundwater levels, a critical source of water for urban areas (Yli-Pelkonen, 2006). Ultimately:

> negligence of the ecological values of stream ecosystems in the course of urbanization has resulted in urban streams becoming as channels of water flow rather than as valuable parts of the urban green infrastructure providing important ecosystem services (Yli-Pelkonen, 2006).

Natural river systems within urban landscapes have tremendous potential for achieving many of the goals outlined in the discussion on ecological design and urban sustainability. First, urban river systems have value as the centers of local flora and fauna. Preservation of local flora and fauna make the larger urban ecosystem healthier and may actually help reduce the consumption of resources such as water: native plants (especially in southern California) are more drought resistant and therefore have far lower water demands than exotic plants in urban landscaping. In addition, restoration of riparian habitats increases the amount of permeable surfaces in cities and allows for a decrease of the urban heat-island effect, which in turn will effect energy resource consumption in the city. Less impermeable surfaces will also allow for natural replenishment of river systems by allowing greater catchments and surface penetration to re-build groundwater levels. And, as discussed previously, natural habitats can also decrease the impact of air pollution, providing greater absorption of gases such as carbon dioxide.

Finally, the restoration of river ecosystems can also provide considerable social benefits. As the authors of a Finnish study of the importance of local rivers discovered, local residents unanimously recognized the benefits of the stream with comments such as, "The stream makes the area feel less urban...the stream...enlivens the landscape...well-being increases from nature and natural things" (Yli-Pelkonen, 2006). The authors also note that "memories related to the stream indicate that the stream has shaped the local identity" as well (Yli-Pelkonen, 2006). The river is an urban environment offering "silence, ease and relaxation away from urban noises and stress...opportunities for dog-walking or jogging and observing the local surroundings." (Yli-Pelkonen, 2006). So, in addition to the quantifiable goals aspects of sustainable planning (such as resource consumption reduction) there is also a qualitative benefit, one that is no less important in achieving more livable cities.

Clearly, urban planners are beginning to seriously reconsider the relationship between the city and the 'natural' world. This examination is calling for reframing the meanings of the terms themselves. Rather than viewing the 'city' as a non-natural system, ecological design calls for viewing the city as a dynamic system, one that is interacting with other natural systems on the earth. Designing cities and their components with their inherent natural elements in mind, then requires uncovering these processes (river systems, atmospheric circulation, wetlands...) and working with these processes to produce more desirable results. Rather than a combative approach to the city's own natural systems, ecological design calls for recognizing these systems and *utilizing* these systems to produce more efficient, healthier, and ultimately more *livable* cities.

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**Revitalization of the Los Angeles River:
Integrating Ecology into Urban Planning**

There are few Los Angeles icons as vilified, lamented about, and obsessed over as the

Los Angeles River. In many ways the river symbolizes both the promises and the

disappointments of the city itself. The river was the lifeblood for the region in pre-

European times, supporting one of the highest densities of Native American populations

in North America (Torres-Rouff, 2006). The Spanish appreciated the importance of the

river as well, establishing a pueblo and two missions within its reach. The Spanish

Crown held all rights to the river and issued use permits in a conservative fashion—

recognizing the river's fragility and intermittent nature. On the other hand, the

Americans saw the river as a nuisance and a danger—its waters were unreliable and

unpredictable and in need of taming and control. As Los Angeles grew in the early part

of the twentieth century, it became clear that the Los Angeles River alone would not

support the type of development that the city's fathers, such as William Mulholland and

Fred Eaton, envisioned and it was concreted over, left to carry waste and run-off to the

sea, while new water sources, hundreds of miles to the northeast were tapped.

In recent years community activists and planners have called for a revitalization of the

river. These groups, and many city residents, recognized the terrible social, economic

and environmental price that has been paid from ignoring and in some cases destroying

the natural landscape. In 2005, the city of Los Angeles formed an ad hoc committee to

examine proposals for revitalizing the Los Angeles River. The plan for revitalization has

since passed with approval from the city council and has been marked for funding with a

water bond measure passed in 2007 (Master Plan, 2007). This action seems to indicate a

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radical shift in thinking about cities and the physical world. However, for Los Angeles in particular, the idea of integrating nature into the urban world is not new; social reformers, landscape architects and urban planners pleaded with the city's officials and business leaders as early as 1907 to establish protected green space within the city and, most specifically, they called for the preservation of the Los Angeles River as a vital social, economic, and environmental asset. This paper explores the historical experiences of incorporating ecological design principles in the growing city of Los Angeles by looking specifically at approaches that have been taken to either incorporate or modernize the Los Angeles River. It will quickly become clear that preservation of the river is not a new idea for the city and those early plans that called for its protection correctly predicted many of the modern environmental issues the city faces today. Finally, the paper will turn to the current proposal for the river's revitalization, with a discussion of its usefulness in accomplishing the principles of ecological design.

The Los Angeles River: An Evolving Landscape

The Los Angeles River flows for fifty-one miles from the southwestern corner of the San Fernando Valley, through the Glendale Narrows in Burbank and across the coastal plain until it empties into San Pedro Bay near Long Beach. However, the river is connected to a much larger hydrological system that encompasses more than 800 square miles (Master Plan, 2007). The river is fed by streams and tributaries flowing out of the surrounding hillsides—the Santa Monica Mountains along the southern edge of the San Fernando Valley, the Santa Susana Mountains along the northern edge of the San Fernando Valley, and the San Gabriel Mountains to the northeast of the valley (Gumprecht, 1999). Flowing eastward from the Calabasas area to the northern corner of Griffith Park, it then turns south and moves through the narrows, across the plain toward

the bay (Gumprecht, 1999). Its major tributaries are the Burbank Western channel, the Pacoima Wash, the Tujunga Wash and the Verdugo Wash in the San Fernando Valley, and the Arroyo Seco, Compton Creek and Rio Hondo south of the Glendale Narrows (Master Plan, 2007).

Before channeling, the Los Angeles River traveled along the floodplains of the San Fernando Valley and the Los Angeles Basin. The river carried rich alluvium, sedimentary material that nourished the soils of the floodplain making them especially rich in plant and animal life. As Gumprecht notes, "accounts of early travelers and residents suggest that large parts... were once covered by a sometimes impenetrable jungle of marshes, thickets, and dense woods" (Gumprecht, 1999). The river was lined with trees such as cottonwoods, willows, oaks, walnuts and sycamores, some of which grew more than sixty feet above the river near downtown Los Angeles and were more than twenty feet around the trunk (Gumprecht, 1999). The floodplain was the site of at least twenty different natural plant and animal habitats. A study conducted in 1993 by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles found that birds were even more numerous along the river in pre-European times. Records of eggs and nests indicate that "the river and its overflow lands were home to numerous species that are no longer present or are now rare" (Gumprecht, 1999). The birds of the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles Basin included nighthawks, cactus wren, roadrunners, golden eagles, yellow-billed cuckoos, Bell's vireo, long-eared owls, and California quail (Gumprecht, 1999).

The river's path was unpredictable, though, as its volume varied seasonally. The mouth of the river shifted regularly between Long Beach and Ballona Creek into the Santa Monica Bay in present day Marina del Rey. With each major flooding event, the mouth shifted. After a "catastrophic flash flood in 1835" its course was diverted to its
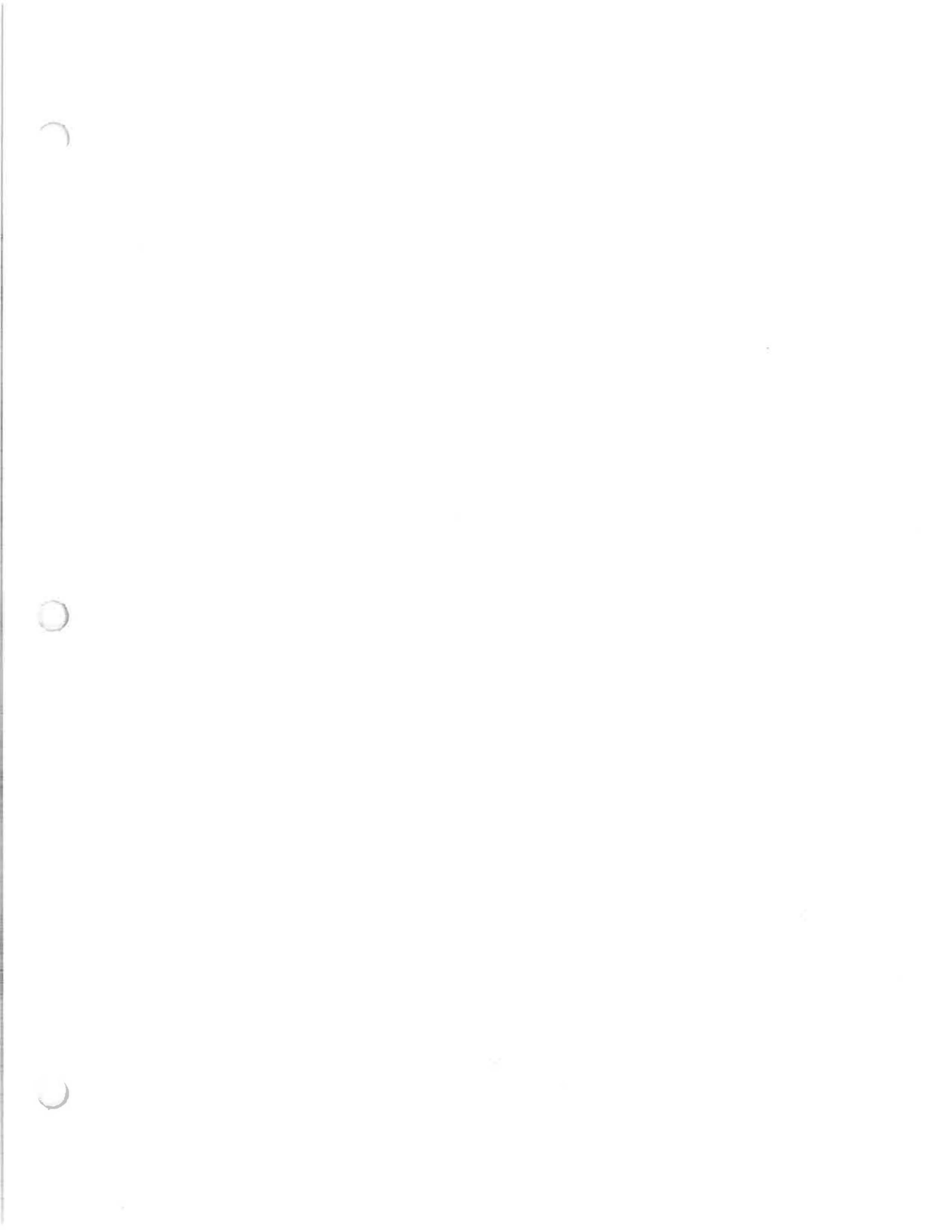
present route, flowing due south just east of downtown Los Angeles and emptying into

San Pedro Bay (Browne, 2000).

Flooding in Compton, 1903
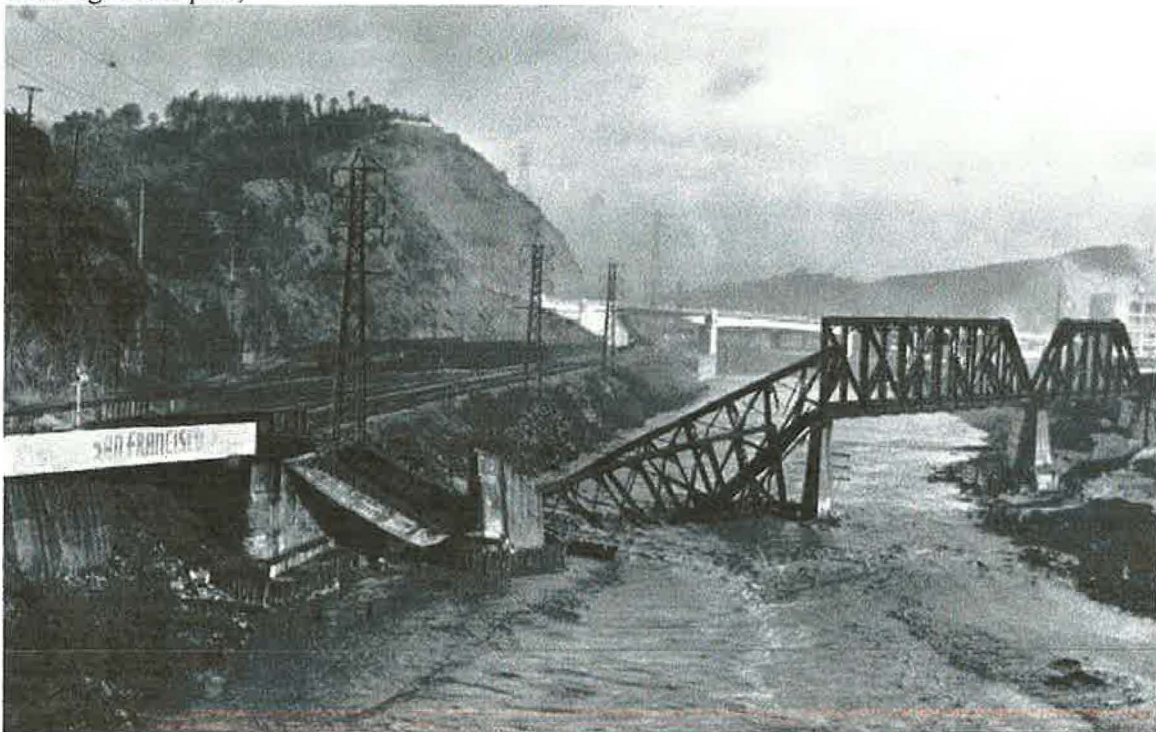
1941 Flooding in Los Angeles

The river is intermittent, reliant solely on rainwater for its flow. Because its

usefulness as a source of water for the city of Los Angeles had diminished by the early

1900s, and because it was considered a danger to the increased development near its

banks, it has flowed in concrete flood control channels, which carry its flow directly to

the ocean, since the 1920's. Today, even during the dry summer or drier winters, the

river carries water. In fact, 80% of the water in the Los Angeles River during dry periods is "tertiary recycled sewage water," evidence of the tremendous output of waste produced in the city (Gumprecht, 1999). Surprisingly, this recycled sewage water is cleaner than the water in most urban rivers in the world, but becomes polluted by oil residues and other chemicals that runoff the city streets when it does rain (Jenkins, 2003). None of this waste water is being re-captured by the city; it flows unhindered through the concrete flood channels to the ocean—a wasted opportunity for creating a much more efficient system of water control and usage in the city. For instance, the area of confluence of the Los Angeles River and the Tujunga Wash (pictured next page) offers an exceptional opportunity for storing water during peak flows (Master Plan, 2007). This particular area of confluence is "especially beneficial because of volume of inflows from the Tujunga Wash" (Master Plan, 2007).
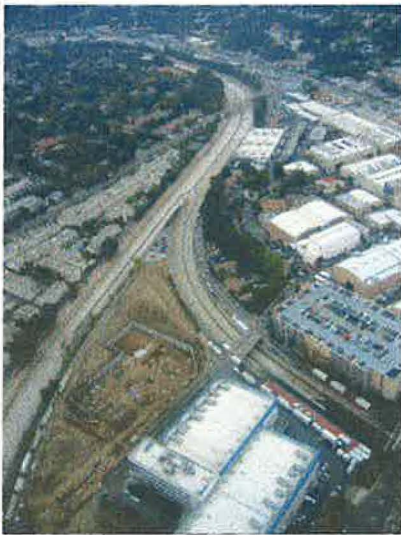
Confluence of the Los Angeles River (right) and the Tujunga Wash.
Source: Los Angeles River Master Plan, 2007.

Early Visions of a Green Los Angeles

Incorporating ecological design in cities has been present in urban planning since the ancient Greeks. It has taken many shapes and forms, but today ecological urban design is understood to be the incorporation of ecological principles in urban planning by acknowledging the city as a natural system comprised of smaller sub-systems. The argument in favor of ecological design principles is that many of the negative outputs of a city—waste, pollution, heat—can be minimized by using already existing natural ecosystems within the city. In addition, ecological design principles suggest that appropriate preservation of and use of the natural world can also dramatically reduce the inputs to a city—such as energy consumption—thus reducing a city's overall ecological footprint.

Incorporating ecological design in urban planning has been pursued in American cities in a variety of forms for the last century. Even in Los Angeles, as early as the late nineteenth century, there was interest in developing comprehensive planning for the city that acknowledged natural systems as essential to city prosperity. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce commissioned a report from the well-established landscape architectural firms of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Harland Bartholomew in 1930 to address issues of public space and environmental preservation in the city. The Olmsted-Bartholomew proposal in 1930 was an early vision of ecologically sound growth for the city. William Deverell describes it in his book *Eden By Design*:

> The focus [in the report] is resolutely on systems—the robust but ultimately endangered systems of nature in the mountains, high desert, the basin, and the Pacific coastline—and the ways these might best be integrated with urban systems, especially the infrastructure necessary for an expanding metropolitan region (Deverell, 2000).

The Olmsted-Bartholomew report of 1930 generated what seems now to be an almost radical vision for the city that called for preservation of natural space and ecosystems, increasing the city's efficiency and quality of life.

The plan, of course, was never adopted by the city. Sixty years later, the city and the region still struggle with many of the same issues that were pertinent in 1930. For instance, recent debates over the use of public space has pitted real estate developers against environmental activists in the Playa Vista development threatening the last remaining segment of the Ballona Wetlands (a delta of the Los Angeles River) in West Los Angeles. Similarly, debate ensued in the northern Orange County wetland area of Bolsa Chica over development of the land for housing and commercial purposes. It is almost painful to imagine what a different city Los Angeles would be today, had the suggestions and recommendations of Olmsted and his supporters been implemented in early twentieth century Los Angeles. Sixty years later, faced with a growing population, increased pollution and traffic congestion, little public land left available, and the loss of natural ecosystems in the city, officials are returning to the idea of incorporating ecological principles in city planning, re-visiting many of the issues that would have been addressed by the implementation of the Olmsted-Bartholomew plan.

The Olmsted-Bartholomew Plan

Since the late nineteenth century, migrants from all over the United States and the world have been drawn to Los Angeles by the promise of wealth and opportunity. The

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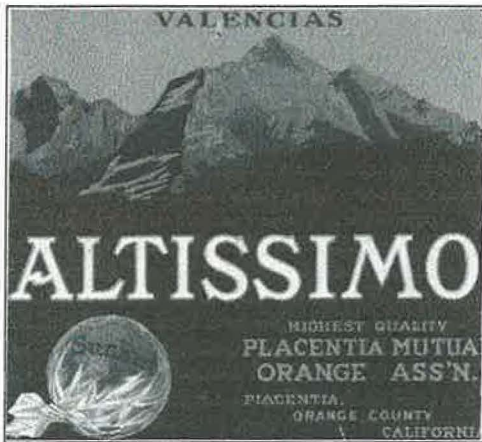
Orange Crate Labels Promote California as the "Promised Land." Source: Davis, 1999.

wealth and opportunity that Los Angeles offered were inextricably connected to the physical beauty, perceived resource abundance, and perfect climate of the region. The beauty of its natural setting was Los Angeles' greatest marketing tool. The pristine Southern California landscape offered lush vegetation, a perfect climate and abundant natural resources—the perfect backdrop for those fleeing repressive, dark, dirty and cold cities of the Eastern United States. Los Angeles, packaged and sold as an arcadian landscape, offered the chance at an idyllic life amongst nature. Promotional material encouraged millions to settle in the region and supported massive development efforts by the early 20th Century in Los Angeles. As the population of Los Angeles mushroomed, the irony of this promotion became disquietingly obvious to many of the city's planners and boosters—the very basis of this economic growth (a pristine landscape) was being relentlessly eroded and diminished by "unregulated private development" (Davis, 1999).

As early as 1907 there were a significant number of community leaders expressing concern about the changes in the region's environment—specifically its rapidly diminishing public space—as a result of unregulated development. Charles Mulford Robinson led a group known as City Beautiful calling attention to the need to preserve

the diminishing green spaces of the city. Robinson's plan called for the creation of "parks, boulevards [and the] beautification of the Los Angeles River." (Davis, 1999). Other early twentieth century social reformers also emphasized the need for public spaces, and parks, beaches and playgrounds were seen as a way to "improve health, reduce delinquency, and promote citizenship" in the rapidly growing city (Deverell, 2000). The social reformer and Methodist minister, Dana Bartlett, promoted parks and natural space as a way to bring order and control within the city. Bartlett wrote, "It is a fact made clear by years of experience, that the fairer the city, the nearer to Nature's heart the people are brought; the more easily they are governed" (Deverell, 2000). Bartlett saw the surrounding Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountains as places of rejuvenation for urban dwellers and he promoted parks as the "lungs of the city" (Deverell, 2000). Although rationale may differ, today ecological planning recognizes the importance of trees and parks as a type of "lungs" for cities—reducing smog through the absorption of CO_2 and diminishing heat island effects.

Many planners at the turn of the twentieth century, such as Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., also placed importance on parks and public space as essential to maintaining social order. Public space was seen as allowing for the democratic mingling of groups from many backgrounds, reducing class and racial tensions in a city. Olmsted Sr. was not interested in "beauty for beauty's sake" but saw public space as meeting "urban psychological and social needs" (Botkin, 1997). Botkin writes that when Olmsted completed Central Park in New York City,

> he was so pleased with the benefits of the park for all the people of the city, that he went down to lower Manhattan, where the poor immigrants lived, and distributed handbills telling them about the park and inviting them to use it. Olmsted wrote [in a letter to George Elliot in 1890] that vegetation plays social,

medical, and psychological roles (Botkin, 1997).

In 1910, Griffith J. Griffith, who gave the city five square miles of Griffith Park issued a "direct precursor" to the Olmsted-Bartholomew 1930 report. Griffith's document reiterated many of the concerns of his predecessor, Dana Bartlett, arguing that "park space could be the lungs of the city; parks could relieve class tensions; parks could be tied directly to comprehensive city planning" (Deverell, 2000).

Others, such as Charles Fletcher Lummis, an early booster and promoter of the 'back to nature' oriented Arts and Crafts movement in Los Angeles, also decried the degradation of Los Angeles' environment accusing the city's leaders of being blinded by real estate developers and giving away "this priceless heritage... for next to nothing" (Davis, 1999). Other Progressive Era leaders of the early twentieth century criticized Los Angeles as having "meager and poorly maintained parks" that were "the shame of the city" (Davis, 1999). By the time of the Olmsted-Bartholomew report, twenty years later, more than two million people had moved to Los Angeles and the city maintained one of the lowest ratios of public land per person in the United States. By 1930, parks comprised a "miserable 0.6% of the surface of the metropolis, and barely half an inch of publicly owned beach frontage was left for each citizen of Los Angeles County. No large city in the United States was so stingy with public space" (Davis, 1999).

An awareness of an increasingly dire situation in Los Angeles—the loss of public green space and rapid degradation of the physical environment—prompted a group of 'concerned citizens' to form the Citizens' Committee on Parks, Playgrounds, and Beaches. The Citizens' Committee prevailed upon the Chamber of Commerce in 1930 to develop a comprehensive plan for the growing city. The Los Angeles Chamber of

Commerce commissioned the well known landscape architects Olmsted Brothers and

Harland Bartholomew and Associates to develop a comprehensive plan for the city that

would include the incorporation of public green space. The Olmsted and Bartholomew

Report was the most elaborate and ambitious plan of its kind in city history. William

Deverell writes:

> It was a bold vision, encompassing an area of more than 1,500 square
> miles stretching from the arid Antelope Valley in the north to the harbor
> in Long Beach, from the famed beaches of Malibu out to Riverside County.
> (Deverell, 2000).

The report, entitled *Parks, Playgrounds, and Beaches*, offered a comprehensive plan for

creating tree-lined boulevards, accessible public parks and other green space and as Mike

Davis describes it, "a window into a lost future" (Davis, 1999). The report's findings and

recommendations were never adopted by the Chamber of Commerce. The looming

specter of the Great Depression, coupled with real estate developers' interests served to

shelve the project forever.
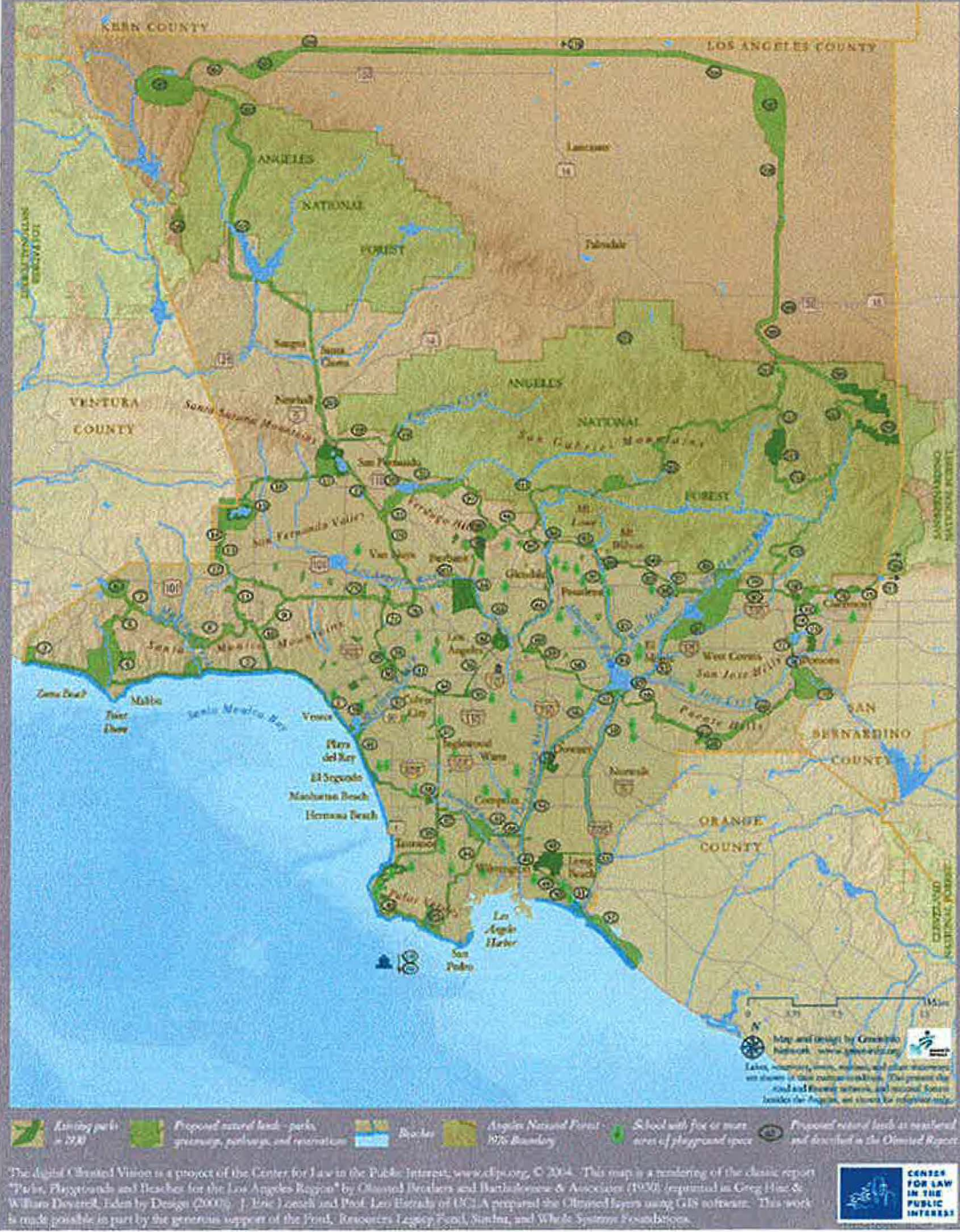
Source: Center for Law in the Public Interest, 2004.

The Forgotten Los Angeles River

The Los Angeles River sat at the center of diminishing public space and environmental degradation. Although it had sustained the Spanish and Native American settlers, the river was being strained as demand for water increased in the city. In addition, the periodic flooding of the river proved increasingly problematic for the growing metropolis. The river, which had made Los Angeles an acceptable Spanish pueblo, was being strained beyond its capacity to support a mushrooming population. Gumprecht notes,

> Water, in fact, would become the most crucial factor in the city's initial expansion under U.S. rule. As Los Angeles grew, demand for water increased and, for the first time, there was competition for the river's supply, stirring division and provoking crime, even murder (Gumprecht, 1999).

The river, essential to creating the beautiful landscape that drew thousands to the region, was being destroyed by the arrival of these new residents. Ironically, their arrival hastened the demise of the very landscape they sought.

Even William Mulholland noted the transformation of the river in the early twentieth century from a "beautiful, limpid little stream with willows on its banks...the [city's] greatest attraction" to one that was being sapped of its vitality, "[o]ur population climbed to the top and the bottom appeared to drop out of the river" (Gumprecht, 1999). There were others voicing concern over the disappearing river as well. The Reverend Dana Bartlett, a local Progressive Era reformer, battled the Southern Pacific Railroad to reclaim floodplain along the river as a nature preserve and "playground for the children of the congested areas east of downtown" (Davis, 1999).

The Olmsted-Bartholomew report in 1930 brought renewed attention to the dying Los Angeles River. By the 1930s the river had become heavily polluted having become a

"sewer for the city's expanding industrial district" (Davis, 1999). Olmsted and

Bartholomew suggested that "all principal natural drainage channels be acquired and

controlled by the community for the highest public use" (Davis, 1999). Perhaps early

ecological design visionaries, Olmsted and Bartholomew argued that "greenbelts flanking

these channels could simultaneously provide flood control, recreation, and

transportation" (Davis, 1999). Similarly Olmsted and Bartholomew suggested that flood-

control could be accomplished through "land-use planning and public works" (Davis,

1999). Olmsted and Bartholomew recognized that the river's natural systems could be

utilized to human benefit at significantly lower cost than the current system of

channeling-over the river for flood control:

> Their preference was to strictly limit encroachment within the 50-year floodplain. They wanted to conserve broad natural channels in which storm waters could spread, irrigating and fertilizing the riverside landscapes that would serve as nature preserves, recreational parks, and scenic parkways out of flood season. (Davis, 1999).

Ultimately, Olmsted's and Bartholomew's proposition would have saved the city money

by keeping floods away from privately owned property, saving the city the expense of

paving over the river's channels. In addition, the preservation of natural stream channels

would have sustained riparian ecosystems, provided accessible public space and created

areas for water storage during flood season.

Unfortunately, greed seemed to drive the uncontrolled population growth and real

estate speculation. And, as Davis points out, this greed was heavily subsidized by local

government as roads, sewers, and other infrastructure were constructed at city expense to

promote this speculation. Olmsted and Bartholomew noted the economic inefficiency of

such expenses:

It costs so much in the long run to adapt….to ordinary private uses that their real net value as raw material for such use is generally far less than their value for watershed protection and for public recreation (Davis, 1999).

But the revolutionary vision that Olmsted and Bartholomew had for Los Angeles was not to be. Not only did public funds get used to continue to pave over the wetlands and streams that were central to the Olmsted-Bartholomew vision, but concerns over the river's dangerous flood potential overshadowed any discussions of its preservation. There is no question of the lost opportunity of Olmsted's and Bartholomew's early vision for Los Angeles. The very ideas they put forth in the 1930s are now being revived in the current plan for Los Angeles River revitalization.

A New Vision for Los Angeles: Revitalization of the Los Angeles River

1989 was a critical year for the Los Angeles River. Two events that year served to bring the Los Angeles River and its sad plight to the attention of urban residents. Browne and Keil identify these "twin events" as the publication of Mike Davis' article, *The Los Angeles River Lost and Found*, in the weekly newspaper, *LA Weekly*, and the proposal by state Assemblyman, Richard Katz, to use the river as a truck route. Browne and Keil identify these events as those that give rise to an "environmentalist discourse on the river… [that] started to challenge the traditional story line of flood control as the river's only purpose. (Browne, 2000). What was eventually born out of this increased awareness was the Los Angeles Master Plan for the revitalization of the Los Angeles River. The resemblance to the Olmsted-Bartholomew plan almost sixty years earlier is uncanny. The Master Plan states that it evolved out of a recognition of the need "to address local issues of traffic congestion, air and water pollution, water scarcity, social

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discontinuity, neighborhood decay" as well as regional and even global issues such as urban heat island effects, smog, and global warming. Sadly in the sixty years since the Olmsted-Bartholomew report, most of these issues have dramatically worsened in Los Angeles.

The Los Angeles River Master Plan

The Los Angeles Department of Public Works is coordinating efforts to implement the master plan for the revitalization of the Los Angeles River. According to their website, project:

> provides for the optimization and enhancement of aesthetic, recreational, flood control and environmental values by creating a community resource, enriching the quality of life for residents, and recognizing the river's primary purpose for flood control (Master Plan, 2007).

The plan's focus, therefore, is still on 'controlling' the river and minimizing its dangerous flooding potential. However, the plan recognizes that such flood control can be done in an ecologically sensitive way, one that not only makes for a more aesthetically pleasing river, but a river that actually minimizes many of the environmental and social problems the city suffers from. Rather than attempting to solve local and regional problems in a singular fashion (solving the problem of flooding by channeling the river and solving the problem of water scarcity by piping in another river) ecological design principles seeks solutions in an integrated fashion, working with nature rather than against it to provide flood protection without sacrificing water supply, impacting water quality or destroying the natural processes. By examining the first two goals of the Los Angeles River Master Plan, it becomes clear that there are multiple benefits to river restoration that ultimately promote more sustainable growth and development for the city.

Master Plan Goal 1: Revitalize the River

The Los Angeles River Master Plan seeks such an integrated approach, using the river

to solve its own "problems." For instance, the issue of flooding is one that has plagued

areas surrounding the river and cannot be tolerated in highly developed areas. However,

by setting aside buffer zones in areas that have not been developed, areas for overflow

can be created without damaging property. Some of the techniques suggested for this

include bio-engineered bank stabilization which "provides living structural integrity,

protects...still-living rivers' beauty, maintains habitat for plants and animals, and

improves water quality" (The River Project, 2007). Other local issues which can be

'solved' by the river include water pollution. By creating storm water retention systems,

porous paving, cisterns and retention basins, water can be captured, stored and even

cleaned during times of heavy rains, rather than having contaminated water run-off flow

directly to the ocean in storm channels. This system alone reduces the amount of

imported water, as underground aquifers are replenished while simultaneously reducing

contamination of downstream lakes, rivers, and bays. The added benefit of a system like

this is the creation of public space and the Master Plan recognizes all of these in its first

goal:

> As a very long-term goal, its [the river's] ecological and hydrological functioning
> can be restored through creation of a continuous riparian habitat corridor within
> the channel, and through removal of concrete walls where feasible. Three goals
> complement the effort... first focuses on off-channel storage of peak flood
> flows... second... improve the quality of water within the Los Angeles River...
> third... offer safe public access... so that it becomes a focus for recreation
> and enjoyment... (Master Plan, 2007).

The Los Angeles River Master Plan meets the criteria for ecological design in this first

goal and its components by seeking an integrative approach to solving the issues of

flooding, runoff and water pollution by restoring and using the river's natural flows and systems.

An example of flood control areas that provide appropriate public use and habitat restoration.
Source: L.A. River Master Plan 2007.

Green Strips would line the restored river channels to naturally filter storm water.
Source: L.A. River Master Plan, 2007.

There is potential for in-channel water quality treatment terraces with native plants.
Source: L.A. River Master Plan, 2007.

The graphic above shows potential locations of large, regional-scale, water-quality-treatment wetlands at the confluences of major tributaries, or on City-owned land adjacent to the channel. It also shows locations of major storm water flows (30 to 60 inches in diameter) that might be served by in-channel water quality "treatment terraces."
Source: L.A. River Master Plan, 2007.

Master Plan Goal 2: Green the Neighborhoods

The irony of the evolution of California's modern landscape is not lost on its residents or on visitors. Southern California, especially Los Angeles, grew because of the lure of its natural beauty. However, the very thing that drew people to the region was often irrevocably lost or altered in the process of settlement. The Los Angeles River Master Plan seeks to integrate "green" space back into urban life—not by delivering a block or two of grass within a residential neighborhood, but by revitalizing existing natural environments. Although the Master Plan acknowledges that through greening the neighborhoods "the overall beauty of Los Angeles can become incredibly enhanced...with more open space, trees, and parks," this goal also serves the purposes of ecological planning. Delivering not just parks, but a continuous greenbelt connected by "green streets" will greatly increase the amount of trees and non-concrete surfaces in these parts of the city. As advocates of ecological design have argued, increasing the amount of trees in a city has numerous advantages, including reduction in smog levels (absorption of CO_2), and reduction in the urban heat island effect. In turn, a reduction in

heat reflecting surfaces means that demands for energy uses could be significantly

decreased. Trees planted along streets and near freeways that carry pollution-spewing

traffic can also serve to counteract these negatives. There is no question that increased

green space means greater energy efficiency for cities, and healthier air.

Examples of potential for integrating neighborhoods with the restored river ecosystem.
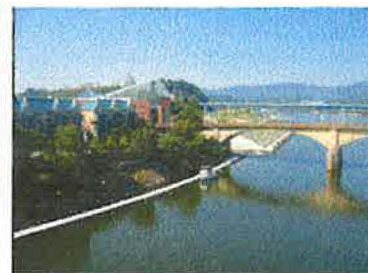

Source: LA River Master Plan, 2007.

Several other cities have served as models for river restoration, informing the L.A. plan:

San Antonio Riverwalk with
adjacent residential properties.

Chicago's Milliennium Park.

Cattanooga, TN Riverwalk with
pedestrian plaza and kayaking.

Source: Los Angeles River Master Plan, 2007.

Perhaps planners, activists and residents in Los Angeles have finally heeded the warnings of early social reformers and Los Angeles boosters. The development of a comprehensive plan for re-integrating the Los Angeles River into the city's urban design is a ray of hope. Los Angeles has the potential to function more efficiently, partnering with its wonderful natural environment to create an urban environment that increases social interaction while it decreases its ecological footprint. There is little doubt that had Olmsted and Bartholomew's vision been implemented, Los Angeles would not be facing many of the difficult choices it must now contend with. As many other cities in the United States and elsewhere have shown, it is possible to make a city more livable and the concept of ecological design purports that a livable city is truly achieved by utilizing the assets of the natural systems present within the city to create a more sustainable structure for urban growth.

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The Third World City:
Urbanization without Development

Just over fifty years ago only two places on earth were categorized as "megacities" (cities with over 10 million residents). Both of these megacities—New York City and London—were located squarely within the "developed world." By the year 2000 the world's urban landscape had been transformed with the number of megacities mushrooming to twenty-six, and more than ¾ of these cities existing within the "developing world." (UN, 2006) Not only have the number of places considered urban rapidly increased, but the percentage of the world's human population living in cities has also exploded: in 1950 only one in six humans lived in urban areas and now more than one in three do (Kaplan 2004), and the United Nations predicts that by 2025 more than 5 billion people, or 61% of the human population will be living in cities (Linden, 1996).

This increase in urbanized population has been most notable in the developing world—only 18 % of the developing world's population lived in cities in 1950 and by the year 2000 this number jumped to more than 40% (UN, 2006). In addition, the fastest growing cities in the world today are in developing countries—cities such as Sao Paulo, Mexico City and Calcutta (Kolkata). The rapid increase of urban places and urban residents in the developing world is profoundly reshaping landscapes in these regions, with local and global implications. This paper will explore the forces driving recent and rapid urbanization in the developing world, specifically natural increase rates and rural-to-urban migration and the complex landscapes being created by these changes.

across households." (Bernasek, 1997). For instance, in Bangladesh, women network to provide healthcare (childbirth, treating a sick child) for the households in a village.

Therefore, even though these networks may not be seen, or may not be considered part of the 'formal' exchange of goods and services, they are important in sustaining women in many parts of the world. The presence of already existing social networks for women is carried over into the micro-credit programs. Rather than leaving social networks behind once they can obtain formal sources of capital, women rely even more heavily on these social networks to support them in new economic endeavors and situations, often using the networks to diffuse the burden of the loans themselves.

Micro-loans, such as those offered by the Grameen Bank are also not just producing change for women at the household level, but are intersecting with women's roles in their local communities, creating new dynamics of exchange. Because of the shared-risk factor of micro-loans, the experience of receiving credit from an institution like the Grameen Bank has obvious local community impacts. It appears that men and women receiving these loans see the loans very differently in terms of their social impacts. Bernasek (1997), notes that men respond very differently when quizzed about the "group aspect" of the loans. According to Bernasek, men seek group members who are considered good risks in terms of repayment, mirroring a conventional economic approach (that loaning to groups rather than individuals would assure fewer defaults due to peer pressure and social sanctions). However, it appears that women view the social dimension of group loans quite differently. Bernasek notes that when women participants were quizzed on the impact of group loans, they "emphasized mutual support and assistance and the sharing of information and advice among group members."

What is Driving Rapid Third World Urbanization?

Cities have become the choice of residence for people throughout the world for a variety of reasons. As noted in the *Atlas of Global Development*, "Cities can be tremendously efficient... access to health, education, and other social and cultural services is... much more readily available" (DDG, 2007). However the developing world's unprecedented rate of urbanization implies that there is more at work then people migrating solely for the obvious advantages of city living. As Nicole Massignon notes:

> In the developing countries urban growth has been sudden, swift and massive, under the double impact of population growth and drift from the land. Forty years ago a little fewer than 300 million people (17% of the population), or roughly one in five, lived in or near a city. Recent UN estimates suggest this figure will reach 1.4 billion (34%) or one person in three." (Massignon, 1993).

For Europe and North America, urbanization paralleled industrial growth as cities became centers of production, industry and wealth. In fact, levels of urbanization tended to reflect the level of industrialization and development of a region—in 1900 the world's ten largest cities included London and five others in Europe (Paris, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, Manchester), and three in the United States (New York, Chicago, Philadelphia), with Tokyo the only city on that list not in the industrialized world (Kaplan, 2004). For developing countries over the last decade, industrialization has not been the primary explanation for the increased percentage of the population living in cities as well as the increase in the sheer number of city dwellers. Massignon points out two specific reasons for rapid increases in urban population in the developing world over the last ten to fifteen years: high natural increase rates and massive rural-to-urban migration.

Rates of Natural Increase and Urban Growth

Since the early 1970s the developing world has been experiencing very high rates of

population growth, a result of high fertility rates and decreased mortality rates.

Introduction of preventative medicine (immunizations, anti-malarial medication) and

increased awareness of sanitation and nutrition have been largely responsible for

lowering death rates in the developing world. As a whole, the birth rates in the

developing world, however, have remained high.

Within the developing world, though, there are widely different rates of population

increase—Sub-Saharan African countries tend to have the highest levels of natural

increase whereas many Latin American countries and some Asian countries (China,

Thailand, Vietnam) have significantly lowered their rates of natural increase. In areas of

the developing world where natural increase rates remain high, cities will continue to

grow even without in-migration. Findley presents data comparing the impact of natural

increase and migration on urban growth rates in several developing countries.

Country	Growth Rate%	Migration Share %
Cuba	1.7	90
Guatemala	3.7	34
Tanzania	7.0	85
Kenya	8.4	64

(Findley, 1993).

Findley's data reveals that the causes for high urban growth rates vary significantly

country-to-country and regionally. For instance, in comparing Tanzania and Kenya,

both Sub-Saharan Africa countries, there are marked differences in urban growth

resulting from natural increase or in-migration. Tanzania experienced an urban

population increase of 7% with almost all of that increase coming from migrants from the

countryside. On the other hand, Kenya experienced a greater percentage of urban population increase then Tanzania, but with a much smaller percentage of that growth coming from rural migrants (therefore most likely from high natural increase rates).

Within Latin America, Cuba and Guatemala also illustrate the differences in sources of urban population increase. Cuba is experiencing a relatively low urban growth rate of 1.7% with almost all of this growth coming from in-migration. Guatemala, however, is experiencing somewhat faster urban growth of 3.7% but only about 1/3 of this growth is occurring as a result of in-migration, reflecting a higher natural increase rate for Guatemala (Guatemala's TFR is 4.8 versus Cuba's 1.6, Rowntree 2005).

Rural Migrants Flood Cities

The role of birth rates and demographic factors explains some of the urban growth in the third world, but does not address the "deeper reasons behind the massive urbanization that is causing cities in the third world to swell" (Kaplan, 2004). The other reason for rapid urbanization in the developing world is the influx of migrants from rural areas to urban centers. There is no debate about the import impact this rural-to-urban migration has on third world urban growth. However, the roots causes behind massive out-migration from the countryside to the city is the subject of considerable research and has produced a range of theories and opinions. The forces that are pushing people out of rural areas and pulling people into cities in the developing world are complex and interwoven. Linden asserts that urban migration is:

> …a product of both the pull of perceived opportunities and services in the metropolis and the push of rural unemployment caused by the mechanization of agriculture, oversubdivision of farmland, and environmental degradation (Linden, 1996).

It is true that cities offer opportunities to migrants from poorer rural areas within the developing world, but the larger question is how did this come to be? What forces are at work and what systems are in place that have contributed to this pervasive pattern of rural poverty and urban in-migration? The literature suggests that there are two general approaches in the scholarship seeking to explain this pattern. One group of research has focused on a "modernization" approach to development (Alonso, 1980; Gugler, 1996) whereas the other seeks to explore external influences and is sometimes referred to as a perspective of "international political economy" (Kaplan, 2004).

Modernization Approach to Understanding Rural-to-Urban Migration

The modernization approach argues that all countries follow a path of developmental stages and that the current trend of "over-urbanization" in the developing world will eventually even out as these countries move toward full industrialization and development. This type of explanation focuses on a hierarchy of urban settlements, arguing that as the economy of a country matures, urban settlement becomes less concentrated in one or two large cities and diffuses to smaller "secondary" or "tertiary" cities (Kaplan, 2004). This approach uses as its model the experience of the "western" world—specifically the experiences of urbanization in North America and Europe. A "modernist" perspective would view variations in urban growth and natural increase as evidence of the linear stages of economic and social development. This approach would argue that as countries continue to industrialize and "modernize" other changes will follow: lower birth rates and slower urban growth. (Kaplan, 2004; Alonso, 1980). However, the political, economic and social context for urbanization in the developing world is considerably different than that of the developed world during its period of

urbanization. It is clear that third world countries today are "...experiencing a much different development path than their predecessors...they have bypassed several stages of development that the U.S. and Europe experienced..." (Shrestha, 1980). The conditions for economic and social change do not seem to exist yet for developing world cities as Massignon writes, "In the long run, urbanization ought to curb population growth...as standards of living and education rise...But in most developing countries the requisite conditions do not yet exist" (Massignon, 1993).

Alternative Approaches to Understanding Rural-to-Urban Migration

The Third World City—Landscapes of Contradiction

One area where the modernization approach falls short is in explaining the rapid urbanization of countries and regions that have seen no or very little economic growth. For instance, African countries have experienced rapid increases in their urban population while their per capita GDPs have actually declined. Shrestha goes so far as to label this "false urbanization." Shrestha writes:

> It is false urbanization in the sense that less developed regions do not experience a widespread expansion of jobs or opportunities to develop a middle-class market with urban expansion, as has been the case in more developed nations. (Shrestha, 1980).

As a result, third world urbanization is creating patterns of contradiction—symbols of wealth in cities lie alongside extreme poverty. In the third world city, poverty and wealth are accepted as living side by side (Shrestha, 1980). An example is found in a visit to the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro, where up-scale restaurants and high-rise condos with sweeping ocean and mountain views line the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema. However, if the visitor is to turn away from the beaches and the ocean and look west toward the hillsides surrounding the city, he or she will see the *favelas* (shantytowns) that

are teeming with the majority of Rio's population. These *favela dwellers* are both visible and invisible—their homes create a clearly visible symbol of extreme poverty on the landscape, but their presence in the economy (both the city's and the country's) remains largely invisible. The residents of the *favelas* work in the city in the informal sector—cleaning homes of the wealthy, caring for the children of the wealthy class, and providing other services along city streets (I observed a man offering tattoos from a flimsy card table and milk cart along a street in the city of Salvador, Brazil). These are groups who are engaged in paid labor, but whose labor remains uncounted, unregulated, and open to fluctuation and exploitation.

These contradictions have created an urban growth pattern different from the experiences of Europe and North America. Urban centers in the third world are increasing their population without growth in the "formal" economy—there is a wealthy urban class and an extremely poor urban class and a dearth of population in the middle.

There are many challenges that come with this rapid urbanization. For example, the city of Jabotabek in Jakarta, Indonesia had a population of 6.7 in 1961 and this swelled to 13 million in the twenty years that followed (Shrestha, 1980). The Indonesian government estimated that it would cost $1.2 billion to build a public transportation system for the residents of Jabotabek—this is seven times as much as the amount the national budget has for all forms of public transportation! (Shrestha, 1980). Similarly, providing an adequate supply of water to the capital of Jakarta requires 60% of the total public investment in water services for the country (Shrestha, 1980).

Clearly there are forces at work that are pushing people out of the countryside and into the cities of third world countries. While it is true that these processes will eventually

evolve into new ones, reshaping the city once again, it is also important to understand the multiple causations of this out-migration so that the needs of these exploding cities may be addressed. Therefore, alternate explanations for third world urbanization call for consideration of how historical, policy and economic connections between countries and regions have established patterns of development that create and/or exacerbate impoverishment in rural areas, pushing people toward cities.

An Urban-Bias Explanation for Rural Out-Migration

Michael Lipton has argued against the modernization approach (Lipton, 1988). He proposes that the reasons for rural poverty and rural underdevelopment lie in structural and systemic biases that have favored cities as centers of wealth and development. Specifically, Lipton argues that in neo-classical development models, rural areas have been structured to support urban development to the detriment of the countryside. Lipton argues that the countryside has been seen as the food producer for the wealthier cities. Price caps and food subsidies designed to make food affordable to urban dwellers has made agriculture unprofitable in the countryside. In addition, the focus on producing food for the city has meant the disenfranchisement of subsistence farmers as land is acquired by wealthier farmers for larger levels of production. These wealthy farmers are further supported by cheap loans and fertilizer subsidies (Lipton, 1988). Lipton writes:

> So concentration on urban development and neglect of agriculture have pushed resources away from activities where they can help growth *and* benefit the poor, and towards activities where they do either of these, if at all, at the expense of the other. (Lipton, 1988).

In Africa, for instance, the agricultural sector dominates economies and is the main source of income for rural populations (Boadi, 2005). These farmers are extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in world market prices. In addition, the prices paid to farmers

are far below the ruling world market prices of exports making exporters gain at the expense of farmers. (Boadi, 2005). For instance, for most of the 1990s, the "administered producer price" for cocoa was less than 50% of the world market price (Boadi, 2005). The issue for the countryside is not a matter of underdevelopment but, but a "failure to develop" as Williams' described, as a result of very specific policies and projects that were biased toward urban areas (Williams, 1973). Even without a bolstering of rural economies, over-urbanization in the third world city could possibly be alleviated through investment in smaller cities, thereby spreading developing geographically as well as hierarchically. If investment were made in secondary (and even tertiary) cities rural migrants would be spread-out within an urban hierarchy rather than descending upon the largest city and straining its already inadequate infrastructure. There is some evidence to suggest that just such change is happening. The fastest growing cities in the developing world today are not the largest. In fact estimates on growth of some of the world's largest cities have actually been lowered—Mexico City had 15 million residents at the end of the twentieth century, about five million fewer than the 20 million that was predicted in 1990 (Massignon, 1993).

Colonialism's Legacy in Rural-to-Urban Migration

One of colonialism's lasting legacies in the developing world was the impact it had on urban settlement patterns. Many of the largest third world cities today had their beginnings as colonial capitals—Calcutta (Kolkata), Bombay (Mumbai), Lagos, Nairobi and almost every city in the Americas (Kaplan, 2004). The urban structure imposed by the colonial power was designed to serve the colonial interests—primarily resource extraction. Therefore, cities were usually located in ports and were connected to the

countryside by roads, sometimes known as tap routes, designed to bring raw materials to the city/port for export. Shrestha notes a classic example of this relationship in Bombay, India, "...it was developed to expedite the cotton fiber production in its hinterlands for export to textile factories in England" (Shrestha, 1980).

As a result, colonialism tended to favor the "overdevelopment" of the port city, creating a situation of urban primacy (a primate city is typically one that accounts for one-third or more of a country's population, Shrestha, 1980). As peasants left the countryside for better opportunities in urban areas, there was only one urban center to migrate to and that city quickly became 'overurbanized.'

> Many African cities were planned as growth poles to stimulate economic growth in rural hinterlands. This concept of development has created uneven spatial development leading to the concentration of social and economic infrastructure and services in African cities to the neglect of rural areas. Between 1990 and 1995, only 28% of the rural population in Senegal had access to potable water, compared with 85% of the urban population (Boadi, 2005).

The lack of formal employment in these primate cities is also connected to the colonial experience. Colonial powers deliberately de-emphasized, and sometimes even sabotaged, industrialization and manufacturing in their colonies. As Shrestha notes, "During the transformation process, not only were colonial cultural and economic values implanted, but indigenous technological processes were dismantled' (Shrestha, 1980). As a result, upon independence the former colonies had underdeveloped manufacturing sectors which could not possibly keep pace with the influx of rural migrants.

Colonialism also created patterns in the countryside that contributed to the migration of peasants to the cities upon independence. The colonial power emphasized export-oriented agricultural production in the countryside—farming that was devoted to the production of cash crops for export (cotton, tobacco, rubber, bananas, etc.). As more land

was devoted to cash-cropping, peasants lost access to land for subsistence production. This loss of land is an important explanation for the flow of peasants to the city. In addition to issues of land tenure, peasants in the countryside found that the export-oriented agriculture introduced by the colonial power increasingly favored commercial production and a reliance on mechanization. This, too, provided further dislocation for subsistence farmers as land became increasingly scarce and jobs on market-oriented farms were fewer.

Neocolonialism and Third World Urbanization

Even after countries in Asia and Africa gained independence from their European mother countries, primarily post WWII, the influence of the colonial era remained present. The colonial legacy lived on as power in countries reverted to local elites. Bhambhri argues that imperialism is still at work in shaping political, economic and social dynamics in third world countries today. He argues that, in the case of India, neocolonial relationships are maintained through a colonialism-fostered capitalist class (Bhambhri, 1985). It is in the interest, then, of this capitalist elite class to maintain certain systems that tend to reinforce policies and organizations that work in their favor and often end up reinforcing inequality—both socially and geographically for the country.

This transfer to neo-colonial entities includes alliances with international capitalist organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and multi-national corporations. Rather than the colonial focus on simple resource extraction and basic processing, neo-colonialism favors "…export-led growth and Free Trade Zones where multinational corporations should be provided with facilities to earn foreign

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exchange for Indian through exports" (Bhambhri, 1985). The influx of investment in this

post-colonial model reinforces the prominent position of the former colonial capital city.

Because multi-national corporations and state-run industry tend to be concentrated in the

urban center, the attractiveness of the city is reinforced for migrants. (Shrestha, 1980).

The primate city becomes the center for wealth (both new and old) in the country and the

location of perceived and real economic opportunity for rural migrants. This type of neo-

colonial growth is one of the processes at work creating the landscapes of contradiction

so common in the third world city. "Such growth is associated with increased wealth on

one hand and expanding poverty and squatter settlements on the other." (Shrestha, 1980).

The post-colonial models of development continue to favor industrial, export-oriented

agriculture in the countryside leaving little land for subsistence producers. Shrestha

notes, "Third world countries suffer from the lack of a sound agricultural base that was

used at first to boost and later to sustain industrial development in the West." (Shrestha,

1980). In addition, the introduction of Green Revolution technology by the mid-

twentieth century has impacted social systems in rural areas of the developing world.

Green Revolution technology favored wealthy farmers who had the capital to invest in

large land area, machines, hybrid seeds, and artificial inputs (pesticides, fertilizers).

Policies of structural adjustment and free trade have also limited the ability of rural

farmers to make a living, forcing them into more marginal farmlands exacerbating

environmental degradation and into cities. Under the economic adjustment policies

imposed on developing countries by the World Bank and IMF, "…investment in

agriculture has fallen consistently over the past two decades" (Boadi, 2005). With the

passage of free trade agreements, such as NAFTA, farmers in developing country have

been left at a distinct disadvantage. While developed countries provide massive subsidies to their agricultural sectors, the elimination of subsidies on things such as fertilizer in developing countries has "...increased the prices of inputs beyond the reach of many poor farmers" (Boadi, 2005). Free trade policies have also resulted in the "...dumping of foreign food commodities..." in developing countries' markets (Boadi, 2005). Because these products are produced with subsidies they are cheaper than the domestically produced food items. In addition, in what is really a contradiction to free trade policies, many developed countries have also placed trade barriers, in the form of tariffs, on exports from developing countries, making it extremely difficult for developing countries to enter the markets of developed countries. The confluence of these policy decisions and regional variation in investment have served to further impoverish peasants, providing a strong push toward cities.

Conclusion

There is no question that the developing world is experiencing rapid urbanization. The reasons for this accelerated rate of urban growth are complex and go beyond just higher rates of natural increase. Central to the increase in urban populations in much of the third world is the massive influx of rural migrants over the last two decades. These migrants are transforming the urban landscape of the third world city—creating new and dynamic social and economic systems. At the same time, the third world city is also characterized by massive inequality as many of these migrants from the countryside cannot access formal employment or housing and function in a seemingly peripheral social and economic realm. An understanding of the complex reasons for rural-to-urban migration in the developing world is essential for addressing the issues of social and

economic inequality so typical in the third world city today. Rural-to-urban migration is being driven by the poverty of the countryside and this rural impoverishment has inextricable links to historical experiences (colonialism), biased development policy, economic policy favoring structural adjustment and free trade, as well as internal policies favoring wealthy land-owners and large-scale market oriented agriculture.

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Alleviating Poverty and Raising Women's Social Status:
The Promise and Problems of Micro-Credit

One of the greatest challenges facing developing countries and developing regions

globally is the eradication of poverty. As Nafis Sadik notes in her 1997 article regarding

women and development in South Asia, "Eradicating poverty is an indispensable

requirement for sustainable development in order to decrease the disparities in standards

of living and better meet the needs of the majority of the people" (Sadik, 1997). In fact,

the World Bank has established as its first Millennium Development Goal, to "eradicate

extreme poverty and hunger" (World Bank, 2007). Development programs addressing

the issue of poverty in the developing world are increasingly turning away from large-

scale projects. Instead, recent projects have focused on local, small-scale programs based

on lending small amounts of capital to a country's poorest, and most often rural,

population. The concept behind this is that access to credit will allow the rural (and in

some cases urban) poor to generate more income and achieve a significant degree of

economic independence. Although not originally designed to be, these loans have

become almost exclusively geared toward women, generally a population that faces many

barriers in accessing capital and other resources.

Micro-credit programs have received criticism for not producing long-term

developmental change and doing little to reduce overall poverty levels or raise per capita

incomes. However, micro-loan programs, such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh,

have had significant economic impacts in the daily lives of the women as women gain

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access to the tools for capital accumulation. Additionally, the program has produced social changes for the women participants, causing a re-negotiation of gender roles within their households and larger communities. This paper examines the complexities of the micro-credit/micro-loan program as a strategy for gender equity and poverty relief, reflecting on the successes of such programs as well as the implications of the intersection of policy with social and cultural customs. This paper begins with an examination of the role of women in development and then turns to exploration of the impacts of the micro-credit model in creating new social and economic roles for women in developing countries.

The Significance of Gender in Development

Achieving gender equity is essential to improving a country's development status. While issues of gender inequity are not exclusive to the developing world (the United Nations notes that there is not a single country in the world that does not face issues of gender inequality), the systematic exclusion of women from formal social and economic systems within the Third World is a barrier to eradicating poverty and making real changes for people's lives. The World Bank has affirmed that sustainability in development can only occur if women are afforded equal opportunities. In fact, the second and third Millennium Development Goals call for the need to "achieve universal primary education" and to "promote gender equality and empower women" (World Bank, 2007). When women's economic contributions are formally acknowledged, they are enabled to make very different choices for their lives, having a more direct say in everything from family size to household resource expenditures.

Women's participation in the economic sector of a country is directly connected to issues of gender equity. In countries throughout the world, rich and poor, women play vital roles in economic life. However, much of the work women do is not calculated as part of the wealth of a country. Neo-classical models of economic development place value on 'formal' labor only. However, much of the work women do (in both the developed and developing world) is part of the informal, and often unpaid, sector such as agricultural work and household work. Women spend "long hours gathering firewood, drawing water, cooking, tending gardens and fields, and raising children" but this is not considered 'employment' and therefore does not appear in labor force statistics (Madeley, 2005). As a result, the invaluable economic contribution of women is left 'valueless,' and hidden from national census data.

Likewise, when women are engaged in paid labor outside of the household or farm, it is usually in activities still considered to be 'informal' work. Informal work includes work as domestics, traders, cooks, or other forms of temporary labor. Because this labor is not considered 'formal' work by neo-classical economic standards, it is also excluded from consideration in national statistics of the importance of women's economic contributions.

Finally, even when women are employed in the 'formal' sector, such as in factories, they are paid considerably less than their male counterparts. Underpayment of women is a well documented, universal experience. Young women were the preferred labor force in the early textile factories of the United States and they remain the preferred work force in factories in the developing world today. Women's paid labor is devalued for much the same reason that their 'informal' work is discounted. Women are not seen as primary

wage earners for families—there is a patriarchal assumption that women's income to the household is always 'extra.' In addition, women, especially young women from rural areas, tend to have very little experience in formal work and are, therefore, more easily exploitable, more disciplined, and ultimately, cheaper.

There is no doubt, then, that effort to address poverty in the developing world must consider carefully the economic role of women as valuable contributors to national economies. It is essential, then that programs addressing economic development create gender equity in accessing economic resources and opportunities. Diminishing inequalities between men and women and valuing women's work within a country has the potential to profoundly transform the path of development a country follows. Micro-credit and micro-loans have been seen as a possible solution to issues of gender inequity, signaling a radical shift in the way development is conceived of and pursued. I will turn now to a discussion of the micro-credit model of economic development and then an analysis of its impacts for women in the developing world.

The Grameen Bank Model of Development

In the early 1970s Bangladeshi economist, Muhammad Yunus, introduced a new model for generating economic development in rural areas of Bangladesh. His model was based on the premise that the main problem of the poor is a lack of access to credit lines (Hasan, 1997). Yunus created the Grameen Bank as a financial institution committed to providing the rural poor with access to credit. Rather then using a traditional banking model in which collateral must be offered in exchange for a loan, the Grameen Bank's loans require "repayment with penalties rooted in the existing social and

cultural practices of the area"—if a participant fails to make on-time payments, sanctions come in the form of social ostracism and peer pressure (Hasan, 1997).

Loans are given to groups of five participants. The groups of five persons are all of the same sex, and multiple members of the same family cannot be in the same group to avoid issues of intimidation and social and religious taboos (women cannot interact with men who are not part of their families) (Tinker, 2000). Each member is expected to begin to save money once they join the group, even if it is a very small amount-- sometimes less then a dime a week. Once that member has learned to save, he or she is allowed to borrow money for some activity that the group as a whole approves of. (Tinker, 2000). In addition, although the loans are issued to individuals, all members of the group are responsible for all five loans. In other words, if one member of the five-member group fails to make remittances on time, then all five members suffer sanctions. Therefore, without collateral, the assurance of repayment lies almost solely on social sanctions and peer pressure. In the beginning, the Grameen Bank was primarily loaning money for the purchase of farm animals, or cooking utensils for making food to sell. The purpose of the loans has since expanded to include purchases of larger items such as carts or bicycles to facilitate the transfer of products to marketplaces.

The bank opened as a national institution in 1983 and by 1994 had 1,045 branches with 10, 861 employees in over 300,000 villages (about half the villages of Bangladesh) (Hasan, 1997). The early success of the Grameen Bank prompted other non-governmental organizations within Bangladesh to follow its model and create similar programs such as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and the Association of Social Advancement (ASA). Outside of Bangladesh a number of

countries have also implemented micro-credit programs and the international non-profit organization, Women's World Banking, identifies more than 200 programs underway in four regions of the world (Women's World Banking, 2007).

The model created by Yunus with the Grameen Bank is a radical shift in thinking about development. In a 1997 interview, Nancy Barry, former president of Women's World Banking, a non-profit organization expanding the idea of micro-credit for women world-wide, explained the uniqueness of this approach:

> There is the old-fashioned way of looking at development and the new kind of way [micro-credit]...the [old way's] tacit assumption [is] that the challenge of development was to get know-how and money from the north to the south. [But] the know-how...is definitely in the south, it is not in the north. So it's much more about local-global... (Jani, 1997).

As Barry notes, the Grameen Bank mode and the many others that have followed it are based on a distinctly *local* approach; information and technology does not need to be imported to these countries to achieve the goals of the Bank because the Bank's system recognizes and acknowledges existing information systems within developing countries. Interestingly, the primary beneficiaries of this new type of development model have been women, signifying yet another shift in development theory and practice.

Women Are The Primary Borrowers

Not long after its inception, the Grameen Bank's loans became dominated by female recipients—by 1994 94% of its 2 million members were women (Hasan, 1997). How did an institution, not originally intended to specifically serve the needs of women in Bangladesh become dominated by female participants? Additionally, other micro-credit

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programs monitored by non-governmental organizations in Bangladesh and those in other parts of the developing world, including Malaysia, Thailand and Uganda, are also dominated by female loan recipients. It has become clear through practice, then, that micro-credit serves women in developing countries in unique ways.

One explanation for the programs' appeal to women is that women tend to be the "weakest social group among the rural poor."(Hasan, 1997). Generally, populations with no access to land, or who possess land that is less than half an acre, are the most vulnerable members of society (Hasan, 1997). Women within this category are especially vulnerable because they "have virtually no employment opportunity except begging and working...as maids. During crises, such as floods, famines...chances of surviving even on begging...dwindle." (Wahid, 1999).

It is also theorized that women are actually the preferred recipients of loans because they are a better credit risk than men. Thus, the evolution of micro-credit programs as programs that are female-oriented may not be predicated solely on the desire to improve the conditions of women's lives, but partly because women are perceived of as being a more reliable source for repayment of the loans (Hasan, 1997). Hasan goes so far as to claim that "lending money to women has largely enhanced recoverability for the Grameen Bank's loans." (Hasan, 1997).

Other scholars see women as the primary beneficiaries of these micro-loans because they have the most to gain from accessing capital and the least to lose socially:

> The majority of women in rural Bangladesh do not have any specific job nor are they gainfully self-employed. After their routine household work, they kill time either in gossip or in total leisure (Wahid, 1999).

Wahid carries this argument further, painting women as truly passive members of the household and society who, because of their "widespread illiteracy and lack of experience and confidence," are not "capable of handling large or medium investments. They cannot keep accounts nor can they take the risks involved in such businesses. They feel comfortable with small loans and thus they accept them" (Wahid, 1999).

Nancy Barry has a very different take on the reason for the prominent role that women have taken in the micro-credit programs. Barry's theoretical framework behind supporting micro-credit programs (specifically through the non-profit organization, Women's World Banking) is that women are fundamentally outsiders of formally recognized social, political and economic structures. The outsider status of women means that they are less vested in maintaining the status quo and are, therefore, more receptive to participate in, and perhaps more willing to promote, programs that approach development from non-conventional standpoints (Jani, 1997). As I will explore in the final section, and as Nancy Barry suggests, far from being passive members of the most impoverished social strata, women are actively re-working social, economic, and political systems at a variety of levels and micro-credit has enabled them to do so in more visible ways.

Changing Gender Roles and Micro-Credit

As micro-credit programs make capital accessible to women in the developing world with unprecedented formality, economic policy is intersecting with social structures at the household, local community and national levels, changing the role of women within existing cultural and social structures.

At the household level, there is no question that women's access to capital creates "a shift in the power dynamic" (Jani, 1997). It is not that women need micro-credit and micro-loans so that they have a structured way of saving, but instead so that they can have control over money within their households (Jani, 1997). At the household level, women's income has often been co-opted by other family members, particularly by husbands, for "drinking or gambling," or to support other wives, or for conspicuous consumption to elevate the social status of the male head of household. This co-optation was illustrated well in Lea Jellinek's study of Sumira, a street-trader in Jakarta, Indonesia (Jellinek, 1997). As Sumira's wealth grew, her wayward husband's visits back to their village with his second, and later third, wives became more frequent. Within the context of the extended family household, it was expected that Sumira's wealth was to be shared by the errant husband and his other wives and was not just to be used to support Sumira's immediate household. Likewise, Sumira was expected by the village members to share her wealth and host lavish parties complete with gifts for the village community. (Jellinek, 1997).

In countries where there is strict adherence to religious laws, there are other dynamics that come into play in the household. For instance, in Bangladesh, Islamic law prohibits women from engaging alone in market-place activities. Any goods that the woman produces at home must be brought to the market and sold by a man. These constraints, however, do not necessarily leave women powerless within their households and communities. In fact, as Bernasek notes, women "do have opportunities to network and devise ways of overcoming social restrictions and maintaining communication networks

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(Bernasek, 1997). In other words, women viewed the group dimension of the loans as a powerful tool for furthering their access to resources and support networks.

The Grameen Bank's (and other similar organization's) female client base is revolutionary as well because gender bias has historically excluded women from formal channels of acquiring credit. Women in need of capital would turn to village moneylenders who would charge upwards of 25% interest on their loans (Yunus, 1994). As an example, in Bangladesh, women were not considered "creditworthy" and any loans they were given had to be signed by a male relative and were negotiated by men only— the male co-signer and the male loan officer (Yunus, 1994). Micro-credit has been successful in combating this type of gender discrimination in two important ways. First, women are given direct access to capital, and share the burden of loans with other women. Second, because of this, micro-credit is bringing formal recognition and legitimacy to existing female social networks. Therefore, micro-credit programs are not simply 'empowering' women but are *recognizing* and formalizing the important role of women and female-networks in generating income in the household and community.

Sustainable Development and Micro-Credit

In addition to the changes in gender roles and new negotiations for power by women at the household and community level, the micro-credit program also connects to larger issues of creating a sustainable path to development that will ultimately assist a country in lowering the percent of its population living in poverty. There is much debate about the long-term benefits of micro-credit. Chowdhury (2005) states, "Micro-credit is not a short-run subsidy. Its aim is to lead to a sustainable increase in a household's ability to create wealth." Chowdhury's study, however, indicates that the effects of micro-credit

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programs are strong for about six years, but level off after that point, and that ultimately the loans are "only a short-term fix" and the real need is to "improve longer-run poverty reduction capacity" (Chowdhury, 2005).

In addition to questionable long-term wealth building potential, other scholars have argued that micro-credit programs really serve to reinforce existing debt structures, just transferring debt burdens to the rural poor in more formal ways. Tinker (2000) admits that interest on micro-credit loans is not particularly low (averaging 16%), but qualifies this by stating that "it is lower than the moneylenders in villages that charge 40%+." Although interest rates may be high, Tinker (2000) also argues that money generated from interest actually serves to help those borrowers through two accounts "an emergency fund available to members with the agreement of the peer group and a fund to repay the debt of a member who dies or becomes very ill."

Perhaps the viability of the micro-credit programs in achieving sustainable development will become clearer in the coming years. However, even if it appears that micro-credit programs cannot lift a country out of poverty, there is little doubt that the programs are making real changes in the daily lives of impoverished people around the globe. The value of the micro-credit programs should not be discounted even if they are unable to meet large-scale regional goals of development. Perhaps most importantly, micro-credit loans are bringing recognition to the economic contributions of women in the developing world, affording them far greater economic opportunity and at times even a degree of economic independence that would not have been possible otherwise. These changes are not without consequences. Women in Bangladesh, Uganda, Thailand, and many other countries are discovering that access to capital brings new sets of social

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relationships at a variety of levels. As women negotiate these changes at the household, community and even national levels, their voices are being heard and they are able to facilitate new forms of social and economic interactions.

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Creating Sustainable Development:
Community-Based, Participatory Projects Achieving Environmental Justice

General usage of the term "sustainable development" dates to the publication in 1987 of a report by the Brundtland Commission (what was once known as the World Commission on Environment and Development) which defined sustainable development as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Kates, 2005). Born out of a context of environmental awareness and conservation, the phrase has become more nuanced and complex since its initial inauguration into the rhetoric of development theory and planning. It is generally accepted today that sustainability in development is not exclusively environmental in its focus; rather, sustainable development must be concerned with economic and socio-political viability also.

Environmental justice calls for a combination of social justice and ecological sustainability. Those who advocate environmental justice argue that there can be no real conservation and ecologically appropriate development without simultaneously reaching for greater social and economic equality. Goals of sustainable development are increasingly being connected to movements for environmental justice and transforming the way in which development projects are being conceived of and implemented. The environmental justice movement is also changing approaches to development by encouraging bottom-up, grassroots reform, rather than the largely top-down agenda of development historically. What this means in real terms is that the vision for

sustainability and the vision for environmental equality are being realized at a local-level through community-based, participatory projects. Through examination of several case studies: community based responses to deforestation in rural Kenya and India and community based response to urban environmental problems in Accra, Ghana and Jakarta, Indonesia, this paper explores the local impacts of these types of projects in an effort to connect the agendas of sustainable development and environmental justice.

Sustainability and Community-Based Development

Poverty in much of the developing world today is in many respects a failure of the approach to development that has been widely accepted since the mid-20th Century. "In fact, in 1999 more than 80 developing countries were worse off economically than they were 10 years before" (Rajeswar, 2002). Addressing the issue of poverty is imperative to achieving sustainable development. Rajeswar argues that the presence of poverty is a global issue, stating "When one-fourth of the world population is living in abject poverty, the implications will not remain confined to that one-fourth alone...Hence, equity is not a charity, but an imperative for global social order" (Rajeswar, 2002). The need for new models of development is widely accepted. One group advocating for community-based development as the means to address issues of social, economic and environmental justice, is the Mega-Cities Project led by Janice Perlman (Mega-Cities, 2007). Rather than top-down projects that have focused on large-scale public works programs (i.e. dam construction), Perlman and the Mega-Cities Project advocates for community-based development. They acknowledge that several community-based development projects cannot alone alleviate poverty in the developing world, but that these community-based

projects could be applied across time and space and serve as a model for development

throughout the world. Perlman writes:

> There can be no lasting solutions to poverty or environmental degradation without
> Building on bottom-up, community-based innovations. The most creative and
> resource-efficient solutions... tend to emerge at the grassroots level, closest to the
> problems being solved... without local participation in implementation, even the
> best ideas are doomed to failure (Mega-Cities Project, 2007).

Perlman goes on to note that these types of projects can have a "meaningful impact" if

they are "replicated across neighborhoods and cities through peer-to-peer learning or

incorporated into public policy frameworks" (Mega-Cities, 2007).

Many development advocates are turning to a community-based approach because an

emphasis on "community participation... [allows] participants [to] give input into the

research, design, and refinement" of each project (Anonymous, Mountainous, 2007).

Another benefit of this type of approach is "the flexibility... allows individual community

needs in different regions and socio-economic conditions to be addressed" (Anonymous,

Mountainous, 2007). Many of these community-based projects are incorporating the

ideas of ecological sustainability and environmental justice as well. As an example, a

community-based housing program in northern Pakistan has sought to produce regionally

appropriate housing while working to "minimize any adverse environmental impacts

through the conservation of natural resources and the use of building materials that are

locally sourced and produced" (Anonymous, Mountainous, 2007). In fact, many recent

studies have shown that traditional approaches to development by nongovernmental

organizations and international and multilateral cooperation agencies have failed (Paredo,

2003). Much of the literature criticizing these former approaches argues that "the real

effect of many developmental activities has been to change community support systems

and create real poverty" (Paredo, 2003). Rajeswar notes that in the "conventional paradigm of industrial production, both 'nature' and those who labor with nature (women and indigenous communities...) are relegated to mere 'resources' without intrinsic value...thereby posing the present environmental and social crises" (Rajeswar, 2002). The poor in developing countries "have too often been viewed as target beneficiaries rather than as actors in their own development process" (Paredo, 2003). Ultimately, such failures exacerbate environmental degradation as groups are alienated from their traditional social economic networks, often pushing the rural poor into cities where they occupy marginal positions in the informal economic and social realm. "A decentralized, bottom-up approach that involves empowerment of women and disenfranchised groups is a precondition to make development humanistic...not only to the human needs but also to ecological and ethical concerns" (Rajeswar, 2002).

Sustainable Development and Environmental Justice

Although her studies are focused exclusively in urban areas, Janice Perlman's "Principles: Lessons Learned from 20 Mega-Cities" are useful in understanding the connections between community-based development and sustainability. Perlman states:

> There can be no urban environmental solution without alleviating poverty. The urban poor tend to occupy the most fragile areas of our cities...their lack of resources often prohibits them from having adequate water, sewage or solid Waste management systems...their survival will increasingly be pitted against environmental needs (Mega-Cities, 2007).

Similarly, environmental degradation in rural areas, especially deforestation, is a leading push factor for rural-to-urban migration patterns. Extrapolating from Perlman's basic premise of the need to create social equity in order to slow environmental degradation in cities, the argument could also be applied to rural areas. By example, as forests are removed, grasslands are overgrazed, and arable land becomes increasingly salinized,

rural populations seek opportunities in cities, swelling urban populations throughout the developing world. Perlman also notes that about half of the migration to cities in the developing world is from the countryside, and that "from 1950 to 2050 the urban population in Third World countries will have increased almost 16 times... to a total of 3150 million people" (Perlman, 1990). Rural or urban, the very problems that plague the world's poor can be eradicated or alleviated through environmentally sound practices:

> Some of the greatest risks to health are associated with the physical environment. Diarrhoeal and respiratory diseases have an intimate, but preventable, link with poor living conditions, inadequate and contaminated water, dirty household fuels and unsafe food and water... There are also important indirect links between the environment and health: as natural resources are depleted or degraded, so are peoples' livelihoods affected (Bugge, 2003).

The OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) now views "integration of environmental impact assessments into projects and programmes" as essential (Sommestad, 2006). The OECD has taken a formal position "linking the environment and development [to] facilitate sustainable growth" (Sommestad, 2006). The OECD even sites several examples of sustainability and ecological conservation: "In Ghana... an environmental assessment helped to relieve pressure on primary forests and fragile river ecosystems while generating new timber resources..." (Sommestad, 2006). Therefore, any program that establishes the goal of sustainability must address issues of social equity and environmental justice.

Rural Community-Based Development: Responses to Deforestation in Kenya and India

Rapid deforestation is both a social and ecological issue for developing and developed countries. While the global impacts of deforestation are widely discussed (exacerbation of global warming, species extinction), the local impacts for the rural poor of the

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developing world are often left out of discussions concerning forest loss. By examining the issue of deforestation, it becomes clear that it is a site of intersection for both issues of sustainable development and community-based solutions. It is estimated that at least two billion people in the less developed countries depend on firewood or charcoal as their primary or sole source of domestic energy (Rajeswar, 2002). However, it is not the use of forest for fuel by local communities that is the major cause of accelerated rates of deforestation; instead, it is "the commercial harvesting of resources by the industries of scale and corporate sector" (Rajeswar, 2002). Community-based projects may be the only effective means of coming to terms with local peoples' loss of fuel source and larger scale environmental degradation. Programs of Joint Forest Management could be used as "participatory management where forests are managed jointly by local communities and the forest department—villagers taking primary responsibility for protecting nearby forest lands" (Rajeswar, 2002).

The Green Belt Movement, founded in Kenya in 1977, by a woman, Professor Wangari Maathai, serves as an example of community-based development addressing issues of social equity and environmental justice. Kenya's Green Belt Movement describes its vision as "creat[ing] a society of people who consciously work for continued improvement of their environment and a greener, cleaner Kenya" (Green Belt Movement, 2007). The Green Belt Movement has been community based since its beginning, desiring to "mobilize community consciousness for self-determination, equity, improved livelihoods and security, and environmental conservation" (Green Belt Movement, 2007).

The movement developed from awareness that women in rural Kenya were bearing the largest social and economic burden of diminishing forest resources. As the primary

food suppliers and processors in the family, women traveled longer and longer distances to access fuel wood as forests were clear-cut by corporate interests. In Kenya, 75% of household energy needs are supplied by firewood (Brownhill, 2007). The approach of the Green Belt Movement has been to argue that "a country needs to maintain at least 10 percent indigenous forest cover to achieve 'sustainable development'" (Brownhill, 2007). In Kenya, however, less then 2% of indigenous forest cover remains (Brownhill, 2007). Women in rural communities increasingly turn to fuel wood sources that have been considered off-limits traditionally.

Speaking at an international conference in 1992, Maathai described her return to rural Kenya in the 1970s to discover ancient fig trees being felled as rural villagers were pushed off of traditional fuel wood lands because of their conversion to tea plantations. Once the fig trees were removed, environmental catastrophe followed—the fig trees were "protectors of the vital water catchment areas" and with their removal, "desiccation of the soil quickly followed" (Brownhill, 2007). A shift to market-oriented agriculture since the 1960s in most of the third world has exacerbated rural poverty and contributed to high levels of malnutrition as "women's food gardens were plowed under" to make room for increased coffee, tea, or other cash crop production. This displacement of rural subsistence farming has been a major impetus for rural-to-urban migration creating "burgeoning city slums in the arid and semi-arid regions where people's access to food and water is increasingly at risk" (Brownhill, 2007).

Wangari Maathai focused on the issue of deforestation, particularly its connection to women's issues in rural Kenya. Through a grant from the National Council of Women of Kenya, Maathai created a movement whose goals were simple at first—to plant trees.

However, as a community-based project, it enlisted the participation of the very women it was designed to benefit. Since its inception, over 30 million trees have been planted by rural women in Kenya and other parts of Africa. The focus of this community-based system was to educate rural women on how to plant trees and the ideal location of trees in relationship to their homes. Additionally, the "women could choose trees for their fruit-bearing capacity, medicinal qualities, ritual purposes, firewood-producing capability, [or] water catchment protection" (Brownhill, 2007). Women, therefore, were the active agents of change in their own communities—creating vital resources while protecting the environment they relied upon. This model has since been applied in areas across Africa and has been used "as an entry point into wider discussions and actions [including]…food security, petro-chemical-based agricultural systems…, genetically modified seeds, civic education and voter registration" (Brownhill, 2007).

Upon being awarded the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize, Professor Maathai said, "Working together, we have proven that sustainable development is possible; that reforestation of degraded land is possible; and that exemplary governance is possible when ordinary citizens are informed, sensitized, mobilized and involved in…action for their environment" (Anonymous, Professor, 2004). In addition to creating change at a local level, such community-based development may also have global implications. Many scholars have criticized the carbon trading approach to addressing global warming. Brownhill argues that "carbon trading relies heavily on the privatization of nature that exacerbates social inequality" while "women's collective tree-planting activities" could be "recognized as contributing to the reversal of climate change" (Brownhill, 2007).

The potential for community-based development and ecological sustainability has also been realized in parts of rural India. One of the earliest organized movements to address issues of forest management was the Chipko movement begun in 1973. Using a non-violent resistance strategy (satyagraha), local villagers literally 'hugged' trees (the term 'chipko' means 'embrace', wrapping their bodies around the trunks to prevent their clear-cutting. Similar to patterns in Kenya, forests are crucial to rural villagers in India, especially women. Forests are a critical resource "because of their direct provision of food, fuel...and because of their role in stabilizing soil and water resources" (IISD, 2007).

Deforestation in India has been accelerating rapidly over the last several decades. In 1960, 80% of the green cover of the state of Uttar Pradesh was made up of pine forests. By 1988 the amount of green cover had fallen to 64% and the entire country's forest cover fell from 20% to 11% during the same time period, 1964-1988 (Saidullah, 1993). The loss of forest cover is especially devastating in the Himalayan regions of the country. Ecological hazards such as landslides, are increasingly devastating as the forest disappears, with a huge loss of life as a result. Other impacts are realized most acutely by women, as they must travel further distances, and devote greater amount of time in their day to the collection of fuel wood. The Center for Science and the Environment notes that women in Uttar Pradesh "walk at least 10 kilometres three days out of four for an average of sever hours a day and return with 25 kilogram load of wood or grass which they carry on their heads (Saidullah, 1993).

As a response to the devastating effects of deforestation in the Himalayan region, the Chipko movement has been from its inception, a women-lead movement from its

inception, allowing for "increased self-determination, self-confidence, and self-worth" (Saidullah, 1993). As one woman, interviewed about her participation in the Chipko movement stated, "It is us common people, especially us women who have made this movement successful" (Saidullah, 1993). Among its regional achievements, the Chipko organization achieved a 15-year ban on timber extraction in the Himalayan forests of Utter Pradesh in 1980. The movement has spread to neighboring provinces and has successfully ended clear-cutting in the Western Ghats and the Vindhyas mountains (IISD, 2007). The slogan of the Chipko movement has been "ecology is permanent economy" reiterating the principles that sustainable development is always ecologically sensitive (IISD, 2007). The Chipko movement works well as an example of community-based development that has social equity and environmental justice as its primary concerns. At a village-level, women are actively involved in the struggle against deforestation, creating pride in getting wood from their own forests.

While there have been many gains, the Indian example also illustrates the co-optation of programs launched in the name of the poor. Many international agencies (World Bank, USAID, FAO) have supported the idea of 'social forestry' in India. In general social forestry is a term "used to indicate tree-raising programs to supply firewood, fodder, small timber, and minor forest produce to rural populations" (Cranney, 1993). The objective of these projects has been to eradicate poverty by providing local people with both employment and access to the firewood they rely upon. Many of the programs began at the time of the Chipko movement in India and are still in practice today in India. However, as will many development projects, the realization of social forestry in India has had mixed results. The benefits of social forestry have been unevenly experienced—

some groups have gained wealth and regional production has steadily increased. However, women have not experienced these gains and have been harmed by new environmental crises that have resulted from these projects (Cranney, 1993).

Employing a joint management approach, there are "over 15,000 formal and informal forest protection groups...protecting over 1.5 million hectares of state forestland" in India currently (Rajeswar, 2002). Most of the social forestry programs in India have focused on the conversion of Oak forests to monoculture based eucalyptus plantations which have been "responsible for much of the ecological degradation that has taken place in the ...region" (Cranney, 1993). In the loss of Oak forests, rural people have lost the provider of a "wide variety of subsistence needs and staple food crops" (Cranney, 1993). In a second blow, most of the wood produced at these sawmills is destined for urban and industrial markets, not ultimately helping the rural poor. For example:

> In Uttar Pradesh, the World Bank sponsored a farm forestry program that exceeded the tree planting target by 3, 433 per cent, while the community woodlots fell short of their target by 92 per cent. (Cranney, 1993).

The impacts of social forestry programs in India illustrate the problems with top-down development projects. Women are bearing the greatest burden for the problems created by such projects. "As fuelwood becomes scarce, women in some areas of Uttarakhand are spending eight to ten hours a day for collection" (Cranney, 1993). Further, the diminishing supply of fuelwood can be directly connected to increases in malnutrition "as more nutritious foods are substituted with those that require less cooking" (Cranney, 1993). In a classic example of the push to cities that comes from unsustainable development projects, "many men are migrating to the towns to find work, placing full responsibility on women for maintenance of the household" (Cranney, 1993). Therefore,

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any development project that seeks to be sustainable must consider the important role of women as producers and providers of food; their absence from development projects is a recipe for disaster—socially, economically, and environmentally.

Urban Community-Based Development:

Jobs and Sustainable Ecology in the Slums of Accra, Ghana and Jakarta, Indonesia

The Greening and Cleaning Project of Jakarta, Indonesia

Sustainable development, environmental justice and economic growth are not mutually exclusive. Janice Perlman's Mega-cities Project provides numerous examples of community-based problem solving that addresses both environmental justice and poverty alleviation. In cities, the poorest populations occupy areas of greatest environmental degradation. In addition to the problems associated with pollution (soil, water, air) access to healthcare, resources, and jobs are also scarce. A program developed in 1994 in a slum in Jakarta, Indonesia tackled the issue of environmental justice while building jobs and creating a community-based development system. The program in Bidara Cina, Jakarta embodied the goals of the mega-cities project

> by supporting environmental programs at the community level... innovations
> address crucial environmental issues... illustrat[ing] that the urban environment is
> a fertile policy arena for the formation of partnerships which may redistribute
> power and control over the urban environment (Darrunduno, 1998).

The situation for Jakarta's urban poor historically has been grim. Jakarta's population exploded during the post-colonial era (post 1945) to a population of 11.5 million people in 1995 (United Nations, 2007). Much of this urban population lives in marginal government lands where they squat illegally. These slums or 'kampungs' are built along riverbanks or swampy alluvial lowlands (Darrunduno, 1998) As a result, the urban poor

of Jakarta are especially susceptible to recurrent flooding compounded by a lack of infrastructure, such as proper drainage systems, paved roads, electricity, and water supply (Darrunduno, 1998). Many of the kampungs "suffer from grave environmental degradation... [and] kampong residents... seemingly lack the resources, know-how, organization and political power" to make improvements to their living conditions (Darrunduno, 1998). Most development projects in the slums have been centrally organized and implemented, leaving the squatter residents without any voice in the creation of the projects and often without the means to maintain these projects after they were built.

The example of the Greening Program in the kampong Bidara Cina represents a shift in the model of development. As with the rural deforestation programs in India and Kenya, this model begins with local input from council members who "organized and motivated residents to change their waste disposal habits and... engage in small-scale planting and gardening" (Darrunduno, 1998). The community had about 45,000 residents in the early part of the 1990's. The population density averaged 350 persons/hectare, but in areas the density was much higher. In Bidara Cina, "structural poverty and environmental devastation come together in ways that are especially problematic" (Darrunduno, 1998). Poverty pushed these slum dwellers into inadequate housing in areas prone to flooding. The lack of proper waste disposal also contributed to large local pollution problems which translated into much higher rates of illness and disease for the residents.

The Greening Program was initiated in 1994 and its primary goal was to simply create a "greener and cleaner" environment (Darrunduno, 1998). Local councils encouraged

Bidara Cina's residents to devote a small area of land to planting and gardening which would produce fruits, vegetables and flowers to be sold at local markets and generate income. By greening their environment, the residents were mitigating flood hazards while simultaneously generating income-producing activities.

The second half of the program focused on local garbage collection and curtailment of littering (UNESCO, 2006). The slum initiated the manufacturing of garbage cans—creating jobs while solving the problems of littering. While funding came from governmental and non-governmental organizations, such as UNESCO, the organization and implementation was done entirely at a local level. Local council members delivered information about the program by traveling door to door making loudspeaker announcements. The program also enlisted the support of two important local groups: the Family Welfare Education group (a women's organization) and the Karang Taruma, a Muslim youth group.

According to the Mega-Cities Project and the UNESCO website, the Greening Project for Bidara Cina has been successful.

> The information campaign has made people more willing to make efforts to improve their living conditions through positive action...by making garbage cans available...increasing trash collection...[and] large number of residents have planted flowers or other plants in their plots" (Darrunduno, 1998).

Residents have been able to improve their environment on their own, without depending on outside organizations or leadership, which has not only improved the physical conditions of the community, but has created a sense of pride and self-reliance. The success of the project has also made it desirable for replication in other neighborhoods.

One of the project's main goals, however, has yet to be realized. Most residents' plots are too small to be viable for production of market crops. Residents do plant in their

gardens, but primarily decorative plants that improve the overall aesthetic of the neighborhood only. While important, this has not been the economic boon that was hoped for. Another obstacle the project faced reveals the intersection of culture and policy. Residents resisted using the newly provided garbage cans because they perceived of them as "too good" for trash (Darrunduno, 1998).

Despite these few disappointments, the case of Bidara Cina in Jakarta illustrates the many advantages to community-based development. Local-based projects are far less expensive then federally based programs and local community leaders are more likely to understand the needs and dynamics of the community they are serving, thus enabling them to avoid potential conflicts between policy and culture/social practices. The other benefits are, of course, that the community becomes the determiner of its future and sees its capacity to make real, concrete changes.

Urban Garden Markets in Accra, Ghana

In Accra, Ghana a unique approach to community involvement, reversing environmental degradation, and generating income has been established with some surprising results. Like many of the problems in Jakarta, Ghana's urban poor occupy marginal lands that are further degraded by waste dumping and improper drainage which exacerbated erosion. As with the Greening Project in Jakarta's slums, the Accra program sought to green its poorest neighborhoods through the creating of market gardens, beautifying the community while addressing issues of environmental degradation and income generation.

Accra's population growth has been great over the last two decades and its population will grow to more than four million by 2010 (Annorbah-Sorbei, 1998). Most of Accra's growth has been the result of in-migration from the countryside (Annorbah-Sorbei, 1998). The influx of rural residents is straining Accra's limited infrastructure and most urban migrants end up living on marginal lands that suffer from erosion problems and waste contamination. Unemployment and poverty are the other issues facing most of Accra's urban poor. As of 1990 the job placement rate for the Accra Metropolitan Area was only 3%. The urban market garden initiative in Accra integrates solutions to both unemployment and environmental degradation for the city's poorest citizens.

The urban market program, in place since the mid-1980s, has developed a system of urban agriculture that supplies the city of Accra with "almost 90% of its vegetables" (Annorbah-Sorbei, 1998). In addition, it "puts marginal lands and urban waste water to good use and creates employment for low-income workers" (Annorbah-Sorbei, 1998). Urban market gardens focus on production of European crops such as carrots, lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower, green pepper, cucumber, Indian spinach and local produce such as Ama, Ademe, Busanga leafs, and Gboma (Annorbah-Sorbei, 1998). Although the gardens are small in size (200-400 square meters) return per meter is actually quite high. An Association of Market Gardeners, formed in 1987, represents the gardeners' interests and serves as a mediator between the gardeners and government agencies and major customers. Pressure from the association has led to a change in laws that allow the gardeners to use vacant land and frees them from much of the taxes associated with the land.

While generating income and employment for the urban poor in Accra, the Market Garden Program has also addressed major issues of environmental degradation. The lands near rivers and channels that was previously poorly maintained and susceptible to soil erosion is now being cultivated and planted, dramatically reducing erosion rates. Second, the project has encouraged recycling—waste that can be composted serves as fertilizer for the market gardens. Much of the waste that cannot be composted is re-used for tools or even fencing.

As the example of Accra, Ghana shows, urban agriculture provides a multitude of benefits at a fraction of the cost of large-scale infrastructure improvements. In addition to addressing the intersecting problems of environmental degradation and poverty, the program foster a sense of community-based control and self-determination that is often absent from top-down projects. Whether in rural communities, as in Kenya and India or in urban communities, such as those of Accra and Jakarta, it is clear that sustainable development is dependent upon community participation—and very often it depends upon the participation of previously marginalized groups such as women.

The case studies examined in this paper also illustrate the inextricable connections between the environment, poverty and sustainability. In other words, sustainability can only be achieved when poverty and environmental justice are addressed. Finally, as all four case studies illustrate, successful change can be achieved when projects are appropriate to the needs and context of local communities. The only way to truly understand local community nuances is by engaging the community in taking a pro-active role to create change and challenge traditional development strategies. Truly sustainable

development sees the poor as partners in development, acknowledging them as highly capable agents of change.

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Term Paper

Nicaraguan Migration to Costa Rica:
A Contested But Necessary Dependency

The neighboring countries of Nicaragua and Costa Rica have been engaged in the exchange of human capital and resources for decades. Thousands of Nicaraguans pour over the Costa Rican border annually in the hopes of bettering their economic and social circumstances. Costa Rica prides itself on its economic and social development. With higher per capita income levels and higher rates of education and healthcare than other Central American countries, Costa Rica is a shining star within the region. Nicaragua, however, has been plagued by chronic unemployment, poverty, and low rates of education. In addition, Nicaragua was devastated by a civil war that lasted most of the 1980s. While the civil war of the late twentieth-century was an important push factor for Nicaraguans, research shows that the flow of migrants from Nicaragua to Costa Rica predates the civil war and was at its highest levels in the 1990s, slowing after 2000 and was largely driven by economic factors[1]. Comparisons are often made between the U.S./Mexico relationship and that of Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Costa Rica's official policy toward immigration is lenient; however, many Nicaraguans, occupying the lowest paying and least respected jobs in the country, find themselves looked down upon and mistreated upon arrival in Costa Rica. In addition, a growing anti-Nicaraguan sentiment is prevailing in Costa Rica, marked by political disputes, such as a "century-old border dispute" and media campaigns against illegal Nicaraguan immigration[2]. By examining

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[1] Marquette, Catherine M. (2006). Nicaraguan Migrants in Costa Rica. *Poblacion y Salud en Mesoamerica* 4:1.

the primary push and pull factors in Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica, insight can be gained into the difficulty Nicaraguans have in becoming fully integrated members of Costa Rican society.

Overview of the Country of Costa Rica[3]

Costa Rica is located in Central America, bordered by the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, between Nicaragua and Panama. Its total land area is 50, 660 square kilometers and it is slightly smaller than West Virginia. It has over 1200 kilometers of coastline and is considered to have a tropical A*f* and A*w* climate. The A*f* climate indicates areas of year-round rainfall, whereas the A*w* climates are characterized by a dry season (in the winter). The topography of the country is characterized by coastal plains and some fairly rugged mountains which are of volcanic origin. Several of the mountain peaks are active volcanoes. By July 2008 estimates, there were just over four million people living in Costa Rica with a fairly low rate of natural increase at 1.4%. Life expectancy in Costa Rica is high for the region at 77 years and literacy rates are over 95%. The dominant language is Spanish, the dominant religion is Roman Catholicism, and 94% of the population is ethnically white.

Costa Rica's economy relies on tourism, agricultural and electronic exports. Primary agricultural products include bananas, pineapples, coffee, sugar; the electronics industry is primarily focused on microprocessors. Costa Rica is a primary destination for ecotourism because of its well-preserved rainforest and subsequent biodiversity. Per

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[2] Nunez, Eric. (1999). Costa Rica, Nicaragua Argue Over Border, Immigration. *Laredo Morning Times.* August 1.

[3] All information on country data compiled from the Central Intelligence Agency's *World Fact Book*, retrieved from: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/nu.html on April 16, 2008.

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capita GDP (gross domestic product) is $13,500 and about 16% of the population live in poverty.

Overview of the Country of Nicaragua[4]

Nicaragua is also located in Central America, also bordering both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, between Honduras and Costa Rica. Its total land area is just over 129,000 square kilometers with 910 kilometers of coastline. Unlike Costa Rica there is slightly less climatic variability in Nicaragua. Most of the country (with the exception of some highland areas) is tropical, *Af* climate with year-round rainfall. Like Costa Rica, Nicaragua is also comprised of coastal plains with interior mountains located in the center of the country. The mountains of interior Nicaragua are also volcanic. Nicaragua is the largest country (in area) in Central America and it also contains the largest freshwater body in the region—Lago de Nicaragua.

There are almost six million people living in Nicaragua (2008 estimate). The population growth rate for Nicaragua is slightly higher than Costa Rica at 1.8%. There are some striking contrasts between Nicaragua and Costa Rica. For one, Nicaragua has a net out-migration rate of -1.13 migrants/1,000 population compared to Costa Rica's net in-migration rate of .48 migrants/1,000. Infant mortality rate differences are also revealing. Nicaragua has an infant mortality rate of 25.91 deaths/1,000 live births whereas Costa Rica's infant mortality rate is similar to that of a 'developed' country with 9 deaths/1,000 live births. Life expectancy in Nicaragua is also lower than Costa Rica, at 71 years. As with Costa Rica the majority language is Spanish and the majority religion

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[4] All country information compiled from the Central Intelligence Agency's *World Fact Book*, retrieved from: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/nu.html on April 16, 2008.

is Roman Catholic, but 69% of the population is considered ethnically 'mestizo' (mixed Amerindian and white) and only 17% of the population is considered 'white.'

Economically, Nicaragua also stands in contrast to Costa Rica. Unemployment is very high in Nicaragua (5.6 – 46.5% if underemployment is included) and the country has one of the highest degrees of income inequality in the world (48% live below poverty), with the third lowest per capita income in the Western Hemisphere. Gross domestic product per capita in Nicaragua is only $3,200 (compared to Costa Rica's $13, 500). Nicaragua's primary economic activities involve agriculture and include exports of bananas, coffee, sugar, cotton, rice, corn and tobacco. There is also petroleum refining and distribution that brings some revenue into the economy.

Nicaraguan Migration to Costa Rica

Estimates place the Nicaraguan population in Costa Rica at 6-8% of the total population of Costa Rica, which is just over four million. Historically, Nicaraguans have favored Costa Rica over any other destination:

> In…Central America…Nicaragua is the only country where the United States is not the major destination, but only the second. Historically speaking, Costa Rica has always been the main destination for Nicaraguans[5] .

The 1999 *State of the Nation* report for Costa Rica placed the number of Nicaraguan immigrants "at between 300,000 and 340,000, but current estimates place the Nicaraguan population at levels as high as 500,000 – 700,000, or almost 15% of Costa Rica's total population"[6]. During the period of greatest civil disruption—the civil war between the U.S.-backed Contras and democratically elected Sandinista government of the 1980s—

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[5] Vargas, Juan Carlos. (2003). Nicaraguans In Costa Rica and the United States: Data From Ethnic Surveys. *California Center for Population Research: The Population of the Central America Isthmus Conference Papers.*

[6] Nunez, Eric. (1999). Costa Rica, Nicaragua Argue Over Border, Immigration. *Laredo Morning Times.*

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Nicaraguan migrants turned to the United States rather than Costa Rica as their primary destination[7]. Once the conflict ended, Costa Rica again became the primary destination for Nicaraguan emigrants.

Examining trends in Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica since the 1970s, it is clear that the decade of the 1990s saw the largest spike in immigration. According to Marquette, "An unprecedented number of Nicaraguans entered Costa Rica during the 1990s in search of employment." During the decade of the 1990s, the population of Nicaraguan migrants in Costa Rica swelled from less than 90,000 to more than 200,000, or from 2% - 6% of the total population[8]. However, by the beginning of the 21st Century, this rapid rate of immigration seemed to have slowed. Marquette claims that such slowing was in large part due to "better economic conditions in Nicaragua" and the annual rate of Nicaraguans entering Costa Rica dropped to 9,000 from a high of 20,000 in the late 1990s. With the end of the civil war, a "demobilization" of the army "left thousands of soldiers and counter-revolutionaries on the loose, with no resources or future, in a country whose economy was unable to integrate them"[9]. Nicaragua also entered into an era of economic restructuring which de-emphasized public spending and promoted privatization. The result of these social and economic shifts was a flow of poor Nicaraguans into Costa Rica that was unprecedented. Emigration also served to relieve pressures on unemployment and demand for public services in Nicaragua. In addition, remittances from migrants in Costa Rica sustain villages throughout rural Nicaragua. In

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[7] Vargas, Juan Carlos. (2003). Nicaraguans in Costa Rica and the United Sates: Data From Ethnic Surveys. *California Center for Population Research: The Population of the Central America Isthmus Conference Papers.*

[8] Marquette, Catherine M. (2006). Nicaraguan Migrants in Costa Rica. *Poblacion Y Salud en MesoAmerica.* 4:1.

[9] Bail, Raphaelle. (2007). Latin America: Politics, Poverty and Crime: Nicaragua Exports Its Poor. Retrieved from: http://mondediplo.com/2007/01/12nicaragua on April 8, 2008.

the village of Santa Rosa del Penon in northern Nicaragua, remittances of $10 to $100 a month assist in buying food, schoolbooks and medicine as well as help in repaying loans[10]. The village was once reliant on agricultural production, but now produces almost nothing. One resident, Julio Antonio state, "What's the point of doing any more? I can't afford to build a well or an irrigation system: credit is too expensive at 40% interest"[11].

Rather than the flows of refugees seeking asylum from conflict and political unrest that marked the late 1970s through the 1980s, the 1990s migrants were of an "economic-labor nature" and for the first time, different *types* of migration began to take shape[12]. Vargas labels these 'new' migration patterns as "temporary," "circular," "unique," and "permanent." [13]. Temporary migration patterns are characterized by seasonal work in agriculture—migrants may return many times or once to be characterized by this temporary, seasonal migration. Circular migration refers to repeated returns to Nicaragua irrespective of crop cycles. Unique patterns refer to a return to Nicaragua without any further migrations; and, finally, permanent migration refers to a permanent relocation from Nicaragua to Costa Rica, with no returns. Clearly, Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica became increasingly complex during the last decade of the twentieth century, and increasingly determined on external economic conditions, such as labor supply and demand.

Migration type is a strong determinant of where Nicaraguan immigrants settle. Permanent migrants, or those engaged in irregular (circular, unique) migration patterns,

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[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Vargas, Juan Carlos. (2003). Nicaraguans in Costa Rica and the United States. *California Center For Population Research.*
[13] Ibid.

tend to migrate to cities[14]. 40% of Nicaraguan migrants to Costa Rica are located in the country's capital, San Jose[15]. Seasonal migrants, engaged primarily in agricultural activities are primarily located in Costa Rica's northern border region with the second largest concentration of Nicaraguan immigrants (30%). Most of the Nicaraguan migrants to Costa Rica are young, working-age adults, both men and women, between the ages of 20 and 39. Nicaraguan migrants also tend to have very low levels of education— averaging about 7 years of formal education. Whether living in the city or in more rural areas, Nicaraguan migrants occupy the low-skilled, low-paying occupations within Costa Rica. Most of the Nicaraguan migrants living in the capital, San Jose are engaged in either construction (men) or domestic work (women). In the countryside, agricultural workers are dominated by Nicaraguan migrants.

With half the population of Nicaragua living in rural areas, the transition to farming in Costa Rica is not surprising. However, most Nicaraguans leave villages that are barely producing enough food to subsist on to engage in work as "peons" in Costa Rica's banana, coffee, pineapple, sugar and orange plantations[16]. Reflecting a typical seasonal pattern, one worker stated, "Starting in January I pick coffee, then I move on to other crops. Then, like other people around here, I come back to sow *frijol* (beans). I make at least twice what I could hope to earn in Nicaragua" [17]. This worker, Nino, crosses the border illegally every year as what Vargas labeled a 'temporary' worker.

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[14] Marquette, Catherine M. (2006). Nicaraguan Migrants in Costa Rica. *Poblacion & Salud en Mesoamerica*. 4:1.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Bail, Raphaelle. (2007). Latin America: Politics, Poverty and Crime: Nicaragua Exports Its Poor. Retrieved from: http://mondediplo.com/2007/01/12nicaragua on April 8, 2008.

[17] Ibid.

Besides being poorly paid, Nicaraguans are "often racialised and criminalized, and it is often argued that Nicaraguan immigration is undermining Costa Rican national identity" [18]. Increasingly, Costa Rican politicians and citizens have expressed anxiety that the presence of Nicaraguans is undermining the strong-middle class national identity of the country. One Costa Rican academic expressed this growing social and economic anxiety:

> Why not begin to banish the anarchy that threatens our social system, undermines our traditions, unbalances our job market, reinforces criminality and increases poverty, by stopping the arrival of undesired groups and persons? [19]

Nicaraguan immigration has come to be associated with a deterioration in public services in Costa Rica. Many in Costa Rica feel that middle-class lifestyles are becoming increasingly difficult to achieve and the presence of Nicaraguan immigrants has become the perceived source of these problems. Garcia notes that "despite the fact that Nicaraguans are located in a lower status position, Costa Ricans tend to perceive them as all-powerful" [20]. During the 1980s, Costa Rica embraced neo-liberal economic policies and cut public investment in education, health and other social services. The result has been that the lower-middle-class suffered the most from a decline in standard of living [21]

Most of the Nicaraguans in Costa Rica are easy to spot—their skin and hair are darker, they dominate certain professions in the city (security guards, domestic help) and they are derogatorily referred to as 'Nicas.' Costa Ricans see themselves and their country as a stark contrast to their neighbor. Costa Ricans pride themselves on their light skin—the

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[18] Garcia, Carlos Sandoval. (2004). Contested Discourses on National Identity: Representing Nicaraguan Immigration to Costa Rica. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. 23:4, pp. 434-445.
[19] Ibid., p. 435.
[20] Ibid, p. 435.
[21] Bail, Raphaelle. (2007). Latin America: Politics, Poverty and Crime: Nicaragua Exports Its Poor. Retrieved from http://mondediplo.com/2007/01/12nicaragua on April 8, 2008.

lightest in Central America—their stable democratic government, their successful economy, referring to themselves as "the Switzerland of Central America"[22]. On the other hand, Nicaragua has been plagued by chronic poverty and political insecurity, and Costa Ricans often describe "the dark-skinned immigrants [from Nicaragua]…as violent, ignorant and untrustworthy, as thieves and alcoholics. *No seas Nica* (don't be an idiot) is a common insult." [23] Evidence of rising tensions between the two groups is mounting. In November, 2005 police were called to a workshop outside San Jose where the owner had set his two rottweiller dogs on a young Nicaraguan who he thought was breaking in. The police just stood by and watched as the dogs killed the young man and film of the incident made its way to the television news. [24]

Growing social tensions run counter to business interests in Costa Rica. Many Costa Rican businesses, especially agriculture, rely heavily on Nicaraguan labor. Some employers worry that with increased tension, Nicaraguan migrants will choose to go to El Salvador, which is experiencing a labor shortage, rather than Costa Rica. "In August 2006 the Costa Rican Exporters' Chamber complained that the labour shortage could reduce national exports by 15%, even 25% in the agricultural sector." [25] Nicaraguan workers have kept costs lower in Costa Rica, assisting the growth of the country's export market, making it globally competitive. In fact, the Costa Rican government offers work permits to Nicaraguans, and predicts that they will need about 40,000 Nicaraguan workers in the coming year (2007)[26]. Costa Rica's economy is growing at more than 6%

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[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] McPhaul, John and Barbara, Philip. (2007). Nicaraguans Find "USA" in Booming Costa Rica. *Boston.Com News*. Retrieved from: http://www.boston.com/news/world/latinamerica/articles

for the third straight year and unemployment has fallen to 4.6% from 6% in 2006[27]. One industry that relies heavily on Nicaraguan workers is the famed Costa Rican coffee industry. One executive in the industry predicted needing more than 10,000 workers for the harvest that begins in December (2007). This executive said "the government can help by giving amnesty to illegal Nicaraguans so they step forward and renew expired work permits held by legal migrants."[28] The labor market in Central America is also becoming increasingly competitive; Nicaraguans earn on average $1.25 - $1.80/hour working in Costa Rica. However, new projects, such as the expansion of the Panama Canal that began in September, 2007, will require workers (approximately 8,000) and El Salvador is an increasingly popular destination for those seeking work.

Many parallels exist between the Nicaragua/Costa Rica relationship and that of the United States with its primary labor source, Mexico. Like the U.S. and Mexico, "Costa Rica suffers from a contradiction: it needs immigration to sustain its economy and population, but is unable to deal with the social consequences."[29] Much of the rhetoric that surrounds the immigration debate in the United States also parallels that of Costa Rica's anti-Nicaraguan sentiments. In both cases, it is clear that the low-skilled, low-wage migrants serve a vital economic purpose. It remains to be seen if they can become fully integrated into the dominant society as well.

/2007/12/03/nicaraguans_find_usa_in_booming_costa_rica/ on April 8, 2008.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Bail, Raphaelle. (2007). Latin America: Politics, Poverty and Crime: Nicaragua Exports Its Poor. Retrieved from: http://mondediplo.com/2007/01/12nicaragua on April 8, 2008.

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Elizabeth Lobb
Geography 351
Article Review #1
February 21, 2008

Ethnicity, Wealth and Access to Green Space
A Review of Jennifer Wolch's *Parks and Park Funding in Los Angeles*

In her article, *Parks and Park Funding in Los Angeles: An Equity-Mapping Analysis*, Jennifer Wolch and her co-authors make a compelling argument for the importance of examining access to parks in relationship to the ethnic composition and socio-economic status of Los Angeles neighborhoods. Wolch argues that such an examination is especially important for the city of Los Angeles, which has suffered since the early twentieth century from a deficit of accessible green space for its residents. Wolch examines accessibility to park space in the context of neighborhood demographics—specifically ethnicity and income levels—to draw convincing conclusions about the unequal distribution of park space in the city. In addition, data collected for the authors' study supports the premise that attempts to address park inequality, such as Measure K, have done little to alleviate the disparities of access to parks, and in some cases may even exacerbate the polarized experience of Angelinos relative to park space.

Wolch and her co-authors place their work within a larger body of scholarship that has examined public parks and open space in Los Angeles as well as other major urban areas. This scholarship has sought to examine the importance of public spaces for the health—both social and physical—of city residents. In the early 20th century, scholars and planners argued that access to public space like parks would combat social problems. Later research, cited by Wolch, suggested that outdoor play is "critical to children's social and cognitive development" and can help prevent delinquent behavior among older children. (Wolch, 2005).

The lack of public space is especially pronounced in Los Angeles, and Wolch suggests that the scholarship links this deficit to the historical settlement patterns of the city—"Los Angeles was historically conceived as a place of low-density homes…real estate developers resisted the dedication of land for public open space (Wolch, 2005). Despite plans for redress in the early twentieth century and concern again in the late twentieth century following the Watts riots, little was done until 1996 when city residents passed Measure K to earmark funds specifically for park rehabilitation and development.

Wolch and her co-authors employ "geospatial analysis" as their methodology using GIS software to spatially represent the distribution of parks in the city (both city owned and those owned by other agencies) and overlay that pattern with data on ethnic composition and income levels obtained from the US Census. Finally, the authors bring in data on Measure K grant proposals (those rejected as well as accepted) and add this to the maps already created.

Not surprisingly, given the strong argument made in the first half of the article, the authors' data comparisons revealed deep disparities in access to parks based on ethnic and socio-economic composition of neighborhoods. In addition, the findings showed that the city as a whole (also predicted based on previous scholarship) suffered from a lack of parks in general with only 7.3 parks for every 1000 population and only 29% of the city's population living in an 'accessible' distance to a park (within one-quarter mile) (Wolch, 2005). Access to parks, however, was even more limited in non-white and poor communities in the city. This was most pronounced with predominantly Latino neighborhoods, having only 0.6 parks for every 1000 population compared to 31.8 parks for every 1000 population in predominantly white areas (Wolch, 2005). The inequality

was also reflected in socio-economic comparisons. According to Wolch, only 30% of children living below poverty had access to parks with less than 0.5 acres of parkland for every 1000 population, while higher income areas had 21.1 acres per 1000 population on average (Wolch, 2005).

Finally, according to Wolch, despite its intentions, Measure K has not succeeded in reducing the large inequalities that exist in accessing parkland in Los Angeles. Instead, the measure has often exacerbated existing patterns in inequity. The article reveals that although Measure K grant money did primarily go to neighborhoods with concentrations of children, approved grants were concentrated in predominantly white neighborhoods while grant proposals from Latino dominated neighborhoods had a much lower rate of success (Wolch, 2005). Wolch offers that this may be the case because of a lack of experience in community-based organizing in many of these largely Latino areas as opposed to a long history of neighborhood organizing in White and African-American communities.

Wolch's article is a valuable contribution to the body of scholarship addressing issues of environmental racism and environmental justice. The article exposes the blatant inequities in park access that are drawn on ethnic and socio-economic lines throughout the city. However, as she makes brief mention of, perhaps the solution to equitable access to public space does not lie in the formal structure of parks. Instead, access to green space for the city's diverse residents may need to come from more creative sources. For instance, rehabilitating underused government owned space may be a more appropriate solution. In addition, there is the issue of integrating green space into urban planning in new ways—ways that are moving away from the formal structure of parks

and toward integrating green space into the physical and built environment of cities. A good example of this is the proposal to revitalize the Los Angeles River which would restore natural riparian habitat along the river and extend greenbelts along boulevards through the San Fernando Valley linking communities to the restored environment. In this way, natural vegetation is given preference, restoration of ecosystems is achieved, and increasing green space accessibility to large number of city residents is made possible. In a similar project, the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles has proposed developing a greenbelt that connects City Hall and Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles as well as creating green space above freeways in areas where the freeway is below street level (ie along the 101 Freeway in Hollywood). Not only do these projects achieve green space accessibility in non-white and poor neighborhoods, but they begin to create a vision for the city in which green space is integrated with urban design, rather than being seen as areas "set aside" for park space—taking away land that has high value for real estate development. Wolch encourages further exploration of these solutions as vital areas deserving increased research attention. Wolch's article is essential reading for exposing the material consequences of racism and elitism in city design and development.

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Elizabeth Lobb
Geog 351
Article Review #2
April 10, 2008

Review of Ron Johnston, Michael Poulsen, and James Forrest's article, *And Did the Walls Come Tumbling Down? Ethnic Residential Segregation in Four U.S. Metropolitan Areas 1980-2000*

Johnston, Ron and Poulsen, Michael and Forrest, James. (2003) And Did the Walls Come Tumbling Down? Ethnic Residential Segregation in Four U.S. Metropolitan Areas 1980-2000. *Urban Geography*. Vol. 24, No. 7. Pp. 560-581.

Abstract: The initial releases of data from the 2000 U.S. Census allow exploration of the extent of change, if any, in residential segregation in four major cities, where substantial population growth has continued to generate increased ethnic diversity. Using a recently established method of classifying residential areas according to their ethnic composition which facilitates comparative study over time and space, this paper examines segregation trends in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Miami over the period 1980–2000 in the context of recent discussions of the nature of residential patterns there. It finds that though there has been some reduction in the extent of extreme segregation areas that are predominantly either White or African American with consequent greater ethnic mixing at the census tract level, nevertheless cores of extreme segregation remain, and these are being extended with greater segregation of the Hispanic population. Ethnic residential segregation in United States' metropolitan areas attracted much research throughout the 20th century, with each census providing new impetus for mapping and analysis. The 2000 census will be no exception, providing data with which the extent of change can be assessed after a further decade in which discrimination on the grounds of race and color was illegal. This paper provides an initial exploration for four metropolitan areas that have experienced substantial recent multi-ethnic in-migration. Using a method for classifying residential areas designed to facilitate comparative studies over space and time, it explores the extent of desegregation during the previous 20 years for each of the four main census ethnic groups.

Johnston, Poulsen and Forrest's 2003 article is a laudable effort to make sense of demographic data and patterns of neighborhood ethnic segregation over the last several decades for four major U.S. cities. The authors' hypothesize that despite the two-decade old abolition of laws that allowed for residential segregation along racial and ethnic lines, there has been very little residential segregation change in U.S. cities since the 1980s;

and, in fact, there has been an increase in extreme segregation for Hispanic populations for the first time.

The conceptual framework for the article is a body of scholarship dating back to the early twentieth century and the "Chicago school" of urban studies. Johnston, Poulsen and Forrest identify three threads of study that have evolved since the 1920's Chicago school examined patterns of racial segregation on the urban landscape of U.S. cities. The authors site Goldberg as representative of a 'neo-Chicago school' approach. Goldberg, and other authors through the 1990s, argued that census data reveals that segregation has not changed since the civil rights laws of the 1960s. Instead, segregation is being reinforced through new measures—rather than being "locked out" of certain neighborhoods due to restrictive covenants, minorities, and African Americans especially, are now "locked in" to neighborhoods as a result of economic segregation. For instance, African Americans have lower paying jobs which affects their ability to live in certain areas, which in turn impacts their political clout and their access to adequate education. Goldberg argues that those unable to pay, will get "locked away" in increasingly homogeneous ghettos. In this approach, African Americans are identified as most vulnerable to residential segregation with five characteristics of their residential patterns: unevenness, isolation, clustering, concentration and centralization.

On the other hand, post-modernist approaches to urban residential segregation argue that ethnic concentrations in cities have become much more complex and fragmented than in traditional cities (such as New York or Chicago). The post-modernist perspective uses cities such as Los Angeles and Miami as examples of cities with less extreme segregation—instead they are characterized by separate small areas of concentration,

rather than massive blocks of ethnic ghettos or enclaves. What is creating new spatial forms in these post-modern cities is the influx of new immigrants and an internationalization of these cities' populations which is breaking down the extremes of polarization "in a society with more fluid ethnic identity."

The third approach to the study of residential segregation is a kind of post-modernist critique, where authors such as Marcuse and Van Kempen have questioned the rise of a new urban spatial form. Marcuse and Van Kempen argue that the mixing and decreased polarization identified by the post-modernists is really only reserved for certain segments of society and that extreme segregation remains at the "polar ends of the income spectrum." According to this approach, ghettos are increasingly separated from the rest of the city as are "exclusionary enclaves" of the rich. Not surprisingly, the authors see their work as challenging the binary of post-modern city (Los Angeles, Miami) vs. traditional city (New York, Chicago) and argue that their methodology exposes a complexity obscured in the current scholarship.

As opposed to previous scholarship that relied on limited methodology of an index or factorial ecology approach, Johnston, Poulsen and Forrest present their methodology as superior because it uses a classification procedure based on absolute levels of ethnic differentiation, rather than averages. The authors' methodology divides cities into areas that are either "host society" dominant or where the "host society" is a minority. Each community is further divided based on the degree to which whites or non-whites are present and how isolated each community is. The authors argue that their methodology is superior because outcomes are not a function of the relative size of any one group, and are, therefore, more absolute. Despite acknowledging the imperfect nature of ethnic

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census categories, the authors focus on four main ethnic groups for study: white (Non-Hispanic), Hispanic, Asian (including Pacific Islander) and African American.

Based on this methodology, the authors' hypothesize that if greater assimilation and mixing has occurred, several outcomes are expected: 1) isolated host communities will decline in their extent, 2) ghettos will decline in size and proportion and 3) an increase in all ethnic groups living in mixed areas. Using data from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 census the authors apply their methodology to four major U.S. cities: New York, Chicago, Miami, and Los Angeles. These four cities were chose because of their substantial non-white populations, their growing immigrant communities, and their position among the debate of traditional vs. post-modern urban patterns.

With several elaborate charts the authors present the findings of their analysis of the data. Overall, for all four cities, they note a decline of the size of the African American ghetto, with Los Angeles' African American ghetto virtually disappearing by the 2000 census. However, for all cities, in areas where African Americans predominate, there is still "extreme ethnic homogeneity." For Hispanic populations in all four cities the analysis demonstrated an increasingly segregated community with the evolution of a new Hispanic ghetto, or barrio, in Chicago where none had existed in 1980. Asian populations also appeared to be increasingly segregated, but most Asians in the four cities lived in relatively mixed areas. The final finding was that so-called 'white citadels' (areas of extreme white separation) were on the decline in all four cities—more so in Miami and Los Angeles than in New York and Chicago—but most whites in the four cities still lived in areas dominated by a white population.

Several of these findings suggest that there may be distinctive patterns of urban ethnic segregation in 'traditional' versus 'post-modern' cities. Miami and Los Angeles do appear different—their white population is more mixed than in either of the more traditional cities. Based on the analysis, Los Angeles does deviate from the traditional "Chicago school" of urban studies. Los Angeles presents a more complex picture of ethnicity; for instance, Asian populations in LA have little significant segregation, but are changing the urban landscape with concentrated "Asian nodes." Likewise, for African Americans the picture in Los Angeles is complex. While there is little evidence in Miami, New York, and Chicago that the "ghetto walls" have been eroded, Los Angeles has seen the disappearance of an African American ghetto since the 1980s. However, is this 'disappearance' the result of African American upward mobility or is it the result of the 'invasion' of the African American ghetto by large Hispanic populations?

While the authors acknowledge the validity of the 'Los Angeles school,' which argues that Los Angeles presents a new form of urban structure, they call for further empirical studies and research to test this hypothesis in greater depth. On the other hand, the authors also acknowledge that as far as trends for Hispanics in the four cities, the ideas of the 'Chicago school' appear to apply—that Hispanics are increasingly ghettoized as a result of lack of access to three primary factors: housing, income and education.

Johnston, Poulsen and Forrest's article is a valuable contribution to the body of scholarship on urban residential segregation patterns. The authors' present their methodology and research findings in a clear, well-organized manner. They acknowledge the importance of other scholarship on the subject and the various schools of thought regarding changing urban form important in the field today. Perhaps the most

significant aspect of their research is the changing nature of urban landscapes. The body of scholarship reflects the dynamic nature of cities and the importance of looking at urban residential segregation over time. It will be interesting to see what conclusions can be drawn from information to be gathered in the 2010 census—the urban patterns identified for so long may again shift as the demographics of U.S cities continues to change.

Elizabeth Lobb
G351: City Biography Paper
April 22, 2008

Baltimore, Maryland: City of the Past with an Unsure Future
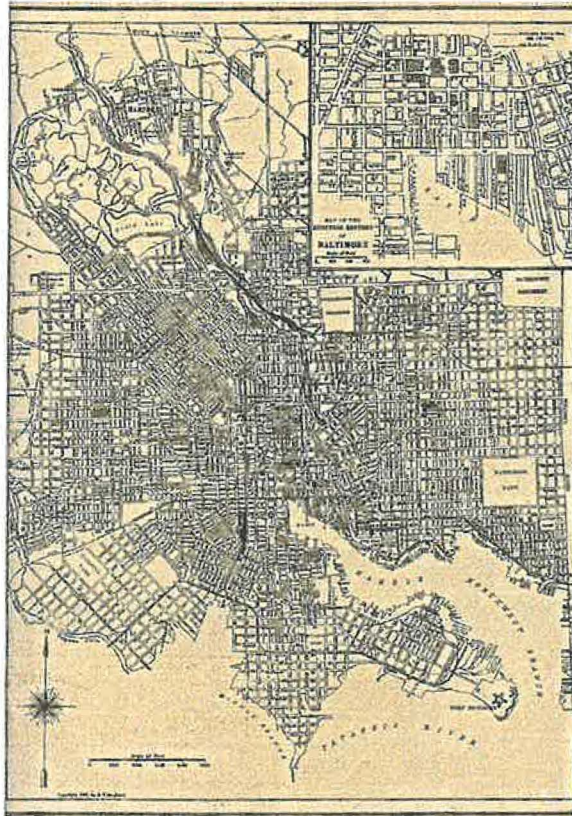
Baltimore at the turn of the century (1905).
Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/baltimore_md_1905.jpg

Baltimore, Maryland, once one of the most important cities in the United States, has

seen its fortunes change over the last two decades. Rather than a center of steel

production and crucial port activities, Baltimore has experienced a steady decline of

population since the 1960s as economic restructuring and deindustrialization in the U.S.

shifted power from *places*, like cities, to *capital*, in the form of corporations. As capital

became increasingly mobile through the 1970s and 1980s, cities like Baltimore

experienced a rapid decline in their employment base, their tax revenue, and ultimately in their status as cities of importance. Baltimore city officials, business owners, and residents have struggled against this tide of change and by the 1980s tremendous capital was being invested in 'revitalizing' or 'restoring' areas of downtown Baltimore that had suffered from the city's economic downturn. Whether the processes of gentrification can restore Baltimore to its former status remains to be seen. There is little doubt, however, that gentrification in Baltimore is controversial and has impacted residents unequally. After a brief history of the city, focus will turn to Baltimore's many neighborhoods and attractions, with a final discussion of the impacts of gentrification on the city and its residents.

Overview of Baltimore and Its Geography

Baltimore is the largest city in Maryland with just under 650,000 residents. Named after Lord Baltimore, the founder of the Maryland Colony in 1632, Baltimore and its suburbs make up a metropolitan area with approximately two and a half million residents and is considered part of the Washington, D.C.-Baltimore metropolitan region with over eight million residents. Historically, Baltimore's importance has been closely attached to its position as the closest eastern seaport to Midwestern markets in the U.S. Baltimore's economy has shifted, however, and today the primary employer is The Johns Hopkins University and its affiliated hospital (Ward).

Baltimore is forty miles north-east of Washington D.C. on the Patapsco River and near the Chesapeake Bay. Baltimore's climate is characterized by year-round precipitation with mild winters (no months average below freezing temperatures) and warm summers. Because of its eastern seaboard location, Baltimore receives substantial rainfall over the

course of the year (on average, 44 inches). As a result, warm summers are also characterized by high humidity levels (Ward). According to *The Rough Guide: Baltimore*, two physical features (the Appalachians and the Delmarva Peninsula) account for the city's moderate climate. The Appalachians protect the city from harsh winter weather from the Great Lakes region and the Delmarva Peninsula protects the city from tropical storms that affect the eastern coastal cities of the United States.

Baltimore City's History

After its founding along the Chesapeake Bay in 1729, the city of Baltimore benefited during the 18th Century from its strategic location as the closest seaport to the British colonies in the Caribbean. The city became quite wealthy as a result of sugar processing (with sugar from the Caribbean colonies) and came to produce sugar cane itself as well as import most of its food. Baltimore's position as a major import/export center also brought it to the forefront during the Revolutionary War, as the city's leaders supported resistance to the British tax system (Visit Maryland Website). Through the 18th and 19th centuries, the city's population grew rapidly. In 1800 Baltimore's population was 26, 500 and by 1900 it had ballooned to 509,000 (Census Bureau). Once Baltimore was connected to markets in the west and Midwestern U.S. through highways and railroads, its position as a major shipping and manufacturing center was assured (Ward).

By the mid-twentieth century, Baltimore was at its zenith. Its population had soared to just under one million and it ranked as the sixth-largest U.S. city (U.S. Census). Baltimore's economy was heavily reliant on steel processing, shipping, car manufacturing and as a center of transportation.

Less then twenty years later, however, Baltimore was struggling with racial tensions, declining employment and population loss. Riots struck Baltimore after the assassination of Martin Luther King in Memphis, Tennessee. Although such riots were not unique to Baltimore (similar riots occurred in Los Angeles, Detroit, etc.), many city residents and leaders feel the city is still recovering from the damage done during those riots. According to Gadi Dechter, "lasting effects of the riot can be seen on the streets of North Avenue, Howard Street and Pennsylvania Avenue" where there are long stretches of blocks that are devoid of businesses. Other blows to Baltimore's economy and civic pride were the loss of its manufacturing base in the 1970s and '80s as companies moved to non-union towns in other parts of the U.S. or overseas to cut costs. By the 1980 Census, Baltimore had lost more than 13% of its population, with 780,000 residents. This drop continued through the 1990s and into the 21st Century, with the 2000 census recording another 13% loss of population, down to 635,000 residents. (See Table 1.1).

Baltimore's Demographics

The most current data on Baltimore's demographics is provided by the U.S. Census' 2006 Neighborhood Community Survey. Tables 1.2 and 1.3 provide data on major demographic categories for both the Neighborhood Community Survey of 2006 and the 2000 Census. The city's demographic data is notable for the high percentage of African Americans, comprising more than 65% of the city's population while the white population was about 1/3 of the city population. The demographic profile of Baltimore is also notable for its contrast with sunbelt and western cities with a low percentage of Hispanics, at only 1.7%. However, according to the Census Bureau, the Hispanic population has been steadily increasing over the last two decades.

The median household income in Baltimore was just over $35,000, which is significantly lower than the U.S. median of $48,000. Baltimore also shows a higher percentage of both families and individuals living below the poverty line (15.8, 19.5 respectively)—both higher than the US averages (9.8, 13.3).

Baltimore's economic struggles are reflected in the economic situation of many of its residents. Also reflective of its deterioration through the 1970s and 1980s, was an increase in crime. Currently, Baltimore's high crime rate is notorious—the subject of a little-watched, but critically acclaimed HBO series, *The Wire* (one of my favorite shows). Crime in Baltimore is considered some of the worst in the U.S. It had the highest homicide rate per 100,000 of all U.S. cities of 250,000 or more population in 2005 (269/100,000). CNN ranked Baltimore as the 12th most dangerous American city, second only to Detroit for cities with a population over 500,000.

Baltimore's Neighborhoods and Cultural Attractions

Baltimore's neighborhoods are divided among areas to the north, south, east and west. The central commercial district is located in downtown Baltimore and this is an area that has seen recent revitalization and an increase interest in residential possibilities. The downtown area is anchored by the "inner harbor" area, which declined and fell into disrepair through much of the 1960s-1980s (Fieser). However, revitalization efforts brought new life to the harbor area with the market-place, festival complex known as "Harborplace" which opened in 1980. It is also the area of a major sports complex known as Camden

Map of Baltimore Neighborhoods
Source:
http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://images.apartments.com/maps/AR005702.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.apartm
ents.com/Maryland/Baltimore%26AnnapolisVicinity/BaltimoreCity&h=284&w=305&sz=18&hl=en&start=11&um=1&tbnid=Y
FWwrRLd8PUz0M:&tbnh=108&tbnw=116&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dwest%2Bbaltimore%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26saf
e%3Doff

Yards, which includes a stadium for the Orioles (Oriole Park at Camden Yards) and also

a stadium for the football team, the Baltimore Ravens (M&T Bank Stadium). It is also

home to the National Aquarium of Baltimore and the University of Maryland, Baltimore

campus

The area of the city south of the Inner Harbor was traditionally mixed industrial and

residential. This area today has several neighborhoods that are transitioning and

gentrifying. East of downtown are residential neighborhoods that are largely African-

American. To the west of downtown was a neighborhood that was the center of the

Jewish community until the 1960s when white flight took many of its residents into

outlying suburbs and the neighborhood became largely African American as well. Other

areas of West Baltimore have experienced socio-economic decline as more upwardly

mobile residents have left the city and the area is now known for its high crime rates (this area is the setting for HBO's *The Wire*).

Baltimore has its share of distinctive cultural attractions and attributes. There is a distinctive Baltimore dialect, referred to as Baltimorese, characterized by a dropping of the "t" so that Baltimore is pronounced "Bawlmer". It is thought that this dialect has its roots in the Cornish settlers (from Cornwall, England) who first settled Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Baltimore's distinctive culture has evolved through changing demographics. From the 1960s until the early 21st century the city was shaped by out-migration to suburbs and in-migration of African-Americans, especially from the southern states of Georgia and South and North Carolina (Visit Baltimore website). As a result, Baltimore has a long history of black American culture, dating back to the 19th Century. Baltimore had the largest concentration of free black Americans in the U.S. before the Civil War and Baltimore claims the first black Supreme Court justice, Thurgood Marshall. Other Baltimore natives include Nancy Pelosi (the current Speaker of the House), John Waters (filmmaker of cult classics like *Pink Flamingos* and *Hairspray*) and Barry Levinson (filmmaker who always uses Baltimore as the backdrop for his movies, such as *Diner*). Edgar Allan Poe, the gothic American poet and writer also called Baltimore home for a few years. The home he lived in still exists, on Amity Street, in West Baltimore. As a child, my family visited this small two-story house in the midst of the squalor of West Baltimore (probably in the early 1980s) and I remember being terrified as we looked for parking and then made our way to the house. Not much has changed since then, I think, as the website for the house warns "use caution when parking in an urban

environment..." (Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore website). Poe was also buried in Baltimore.

Baltimore's Inner Harbor Today
Source:
http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.baltimore.to/images/BaltimorePanb.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.baltimore.to/baltimore_panorama.html&h=400&w=1477&sz=103&hl=en&start=7&um=1&tbnid=E_2HA3lhE9v0BM:&tbnh=41&tbnw=150&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dbaltimore%2Binner%2Bharbor%2B%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26safe%3Doff%26sa%3DN

Panoramic View of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. To the left is the Hyatt Regency, center is the World Trade Center, Baltimore Aquarium and Columbus Center to the right.
Source:
http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.baltimore.to/images/BaltimorePanb.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.baltimore.to/baltimore_panorama.html&h=400&w=1477&sz=103&hl=en&start=7&um=1&tbnid=E_2HA3lhE9v0BM:&tbnh=41&tbnw=150&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dbaltimore%2Binner%2Bharbor%2B%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26safe%3Doff%26sa%3DN

The Challenges of Urban Renewal in Baltimore

Perhaps more than any other U.S. city, Baltimore has been defined in terms of its urban renewal efforts. Early revitalization efforts focused on the decrepit harbor area striving to bring wealthier residents back to the downtown area for shopping, restaurants and entertainment. Now the city's Inner Harbor "teems with life. Yachts and

paddleboats crowd the water. Throngs stroll the brick promenades…city benches read 'Baltimore—The Greatest City in America'" (Gately, 2005). However, not all of Baltimore has benefited from urban renewal programs, and not all residents benefit equally from gentrification.

Only about two miles from the thriving Inner Harbor, an East Baltimore neighborhood struggles. Residents of this neighborhood must contend daily with problems such as the "vacant row house overlooking a playground, long since taken over taken by a drug gang with the spray-painted image of a bullet and the words 'Body-More Murdaland.'" Residents in these depressed neighborhoods question the city's planning priorities. As the city pours money into a brand new convention center and sports stadiums, blighted neighborhoods, like the one in East Baltimore, see little of the rewards of such investments. Since processes of deindustrialization and economic restructuring swept the U.S. in the 1970s, the role of cities has shifted—no longer do cities find it possible to focus on 'redistributive' policies, such as social welfare, but cities, like Baltimore, must promote themselves to lure in investment and capital (Gately). This conflict between the socio-economic needs of the residents and the capital interests of the city is played out over and over again in cities across the U.S., highlighted through the conflicts generated by gentrification.

West Baltimore neighborhoods.
Source:
http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.pha.jhu.edu/~chiu/innercity02.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.pha.jhu.edu/
~chiu/innercity.html&h=486&w=648&sz=47&hl=en&start=4&um=1&tbnid=IpRNqptmzDU5bM:&tbnh=103&tbnw=137&prev
=/images%3Fq%3Dwest%2Bbaltimore%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26safe%3Doff

The Forest City development group is a major contributor to redevelopment in East

Baltimore. Their website touts the economic benefits of urban renewal for the

community:

> Baltimore's New East Side will eventually comprise an 80-acre, $800 million
> urban redevelopment effort that combines significant new business activity with
> new housing and a high level of human services. It is a one of a kind effort that
> brings together leadership from the community, business, government, and
> foundations to rebuild East Baltimore.
>
> The community will have 1,200 new or renovated homes for mixed-income
> buyers and renters, including town homes, duplex homes, apartments and senior
> housing. Up to 6,000 new jobs will be created for skill levels ranging from high
> school to those with advanced college degrees. (Forest City).

Artists' sketches of the redevelopment present an idyllic and vibrant community:

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Source: Forest City website.

However, serious questions remain for many residents of East Baltimore. Will "affordable" housing that is planned for the redevelopment be accessible to the neighborhood's current residents? Will the jobs created in the redevelopment go beyond service-sector jobs that pay minimum wage and will they be jobs that are geared to the immediate community, or will they attract in outsiders?
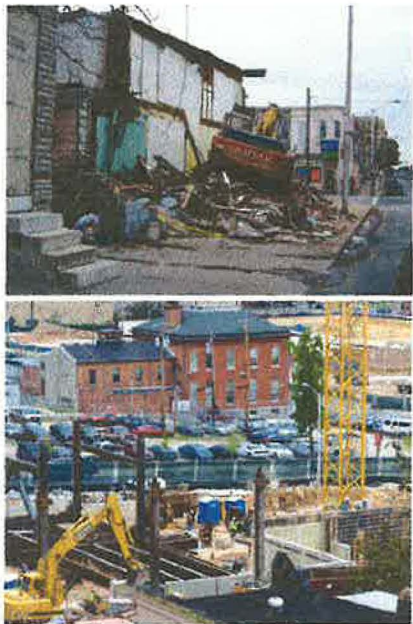
Demolition in an East Baltimore neighborhood. Source: Key Science website.

In Baltimore's West Side, one resident ponders the changes that gentrification is bringing, wondering, "Those new apartments are high, but nice. I guess they're trying to rebuild the area and I'm for that. But who's living there?" (Goldberg). The building that resident Ronetta Coleman refers to is the newly built 'Atrium'—a luxury apartment high-rise, "designed to encourage young professionals to live downtown... with rental rates that start at a little under $1,000 a month" (Goldberg). While residents in blighted neighborhoods of West and East Baltimore are happy to see new construction and clean up in their communities they wonder if rents will rise in these newly renewed neighborhoods, eventually forcing them out. Other residents question the wisdom of the city government's 'giveaways' to new developments. One Federal Hill resident, Phil Jacoby, pointed out that the city allowed "some condos to be taxed as apartments... apartments are taxed based on revenues and so while the condos are empty, there is no revenue stream to be taxed, therefore no taxes are being paid. The city doesn't have those funds to give away. City services are deplorable" (Goldberg).

Baltimore's connections to a historic past maintain its importance in the United States. However, as Baltimore has struggled to redefine itself since the 1970s, the future of the city has remained unclear. As projects of urban renewal and gentrification redefine the urban landscape in Baltimore, many residents struggle with the problems of chronic poverty and unemployment. Can Baltimore's revitalization bring prosperity and benefits to most of the city's residents? The answer to this question remains to be seen.

Table 1.1: The Changing Population in Baltimore: 1790-2006 (City of Baltimore)

1900	508,957	17.2%
1910	558,485	9.7%
1920	733,826	31.4%
1930	804,874	9.7%
1940	859,100	6.7%
1950	949,708	10.5%
1960	939,024	-1.1%
1970	905,759	-3.5%
1980	786,775	-13.1%
1990	736,014	-6.5%
2000	636,251	-13.6%
Est. 2006	640,961	0.7%
1880	332,313	24.3%
1890	434,439	30.7%

Table 1.2: Baltimore Demographics, 2006 (US Census Bureau)

Social Characteristics	Estimate	Percent	U.S.	Margin of Error
Average household size	2.57	(X)	2.61	+/-0.04
Average family size	3.57	(X)	3.20	+/-0.10
Population 25 years and over	405,867			+/-662
High school graduate or higher	(X)	74.2	84.1%	(X)
Bachelor's degree or higher	(X)	23.3	27.0%	(X)
Civilian veterans (civilian population 18 years and over)	40,594	8.6	10.4%	+/-2,862
Disability status (population 5 years and over)	110,658	19.2	15.1%	+/-4,714
Foreign born	38,579	6.1	12.5%	+/-4,396
Male, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	67,876	29.7	52.4%	+/-4,152
Female, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	66,001	24.0	48.4%	+/-4,324
Speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over)	49,333	8.4	19.7%	+/-4,549
Household population	610,164			+/-693
Group quarters population	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Economic Characteristics	**Estimate**	**Percent**	**U.S.**	**Margin of Error**
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	298,666	60.4	65.0%	+/-4,949
Mean travel time to work in minutes (workers 16 years and over)	28.2	(X)	25.0	+/-0.9
Median household income (in 2006 inflation-adjusted dollars)	36,031	(X)	48,451	+/-1,123
Median family income (in 2006 inflation-adjusted dollars)	43,889	(X)	58,526	+/-1,943
Per capita income (in 2006 inflation-adjusted dollars)	20,791	(X)	25,267	+/-588
Families below poverty level	(X)	15.8	9.8%	(X)
Individuals below poverty level	(X)	19.5	13.3%	(X)
Housing Characteristics	**Estimate**	**Percent**	**U.S.**	**Margin of Error**
Total housing units	296,064			+/-284
Occupied housing units	237,758	80.3	88.4%	+/-3,586
Owner-occupied housing units	120,431	50.7	67.3%	+/-4,328
Renter-occupied housing units	117,327	49.3	32.7%	+/-4,196
Vacant housing units	58,306	19.7	11.6%	+/-3,612
Owner-occupied homes	120,431			+/-4,328
Median value (dollars)	126,400	(X)	185,200	+/-5,700
Median of selected monthly owner costs				
With a mortgage (dollars)	1,142	(X)	1,402	+/-19
Not mortgaged (dollars)	427	(X)	399	+/-17
ACS Demographic Estimates	**Estimate**	**Percent**	**U.S.**	**Margin of Error**
Total population	631,366			*****
Male	293,895	46.5	49.2%	+/-847
Female	337,471	53.5	50.8%	+/-847
Median age (years)	35.6	(X)	36.4	+/-0.2
Under 5 years	44,746	7.1	6.8%	+/-349
18 years and over	474,845	75.2	75.4%	*****
65 years and over	76,132	12.1	12.4%	+/-453
One race	622,128	98.5	98.0%	+/-2,332
White	195,030	30.9	73.9%	+/-1,896
Black or African American	406,491	64.4	12.4%	+/-2,218
American Indian and Alaska Native	1,279	0.2	0.8%	+/-351
Asian	12,000	1.9	4.4%	+/-667
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	306	0.0	0.1%	+/-517
Some other race	7,022	1.1	6.3%	+/-2,033
Two or more races	9,238	1.5	2.0%	+/-2,332
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	15,000	2.4	14.8%	*****

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

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Table 1.3: Baltimore Demographics in 2000 Census (U.S. Census)

General Characteristics	Number	Percent	U.S.
Total population	651,154		
Male	303,687	46.6	49.1%
Female	347,467	53.4	50.9%
Median age (years)	35.0	(X)	35.3
Under 5 years	41,694	6.4	6.8%
18 years and over	489,801	75.2	74.3%
65 years and over	85,921	13.2	12.4%
One race	641,600	98.5	97.6%
White	205,982	31.6	75.1%
Black or African American	418,951	64.3	12.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native	2,097	0.3	0.9%
Asian	9,985	1.5	3.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	222	0.0	0.1%
Some other race	4,363	0.7	5.5%
Two or more races	9,554	1.5	2.4%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	11,061	1.7	12.5%
Household population	625,401	96.0	97.2%
Group quarters population	25,753	4.0	2.8%
Average household size	2.42	(X)	2.59
Average family size	3.16	(X)	3.14
Total housing units	300,477		
Occupied housing units	257,996	85.9	91.0%
Owner-occupied housing units	129,869	50.3	66.2%
Renter-occupied housing units	128,127	49.7	33.8%
Vacant housing units	42,481	14.1	9.0%

Social Characteristics	Number	Percent	U.S.
Population 25 years and over	419,581		
High school graduate or higher	286,882	68.4	80.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	80,324	19.1	24.4%
Civilian veterans (civilian population 18 years and over)	55,092	11.3	12.7%
Disability status (population 5 years and over)	162,044	27.2	19.3%
Foreign born	29,638	4.6	11.1%
Male, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	84,227	35.9	56.7%
Female, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	80,894	28.8	52.1%
Speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over)	47,280	7.8	17.9%

Economic Characteristics	Number	Percent	U.S.
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	287,159	56.6	63.9%
Mean travel time to work in minutes (workers 16 years and over)	31.1	(X)	25.5
Median household income in 1999 (dollars)	30,078	(X)	41,994
Median family income in 1999 (dollars)	35,438	(X)	50,046
Per capita income in 1999 (dollars)	16,978	(X)	21,587
Families below poverty level	27,864	18.8	9.2%
Individuals below poverty level	143,514	22.9	12.4%

Housing Characteristics	Number	Percent	U.S.
Single-family owner-occupied homes	116,580		
Median value (dollars)	69,100	(X)	119,600
Median of selected monthly owner costs	(X)	(X)	
With a mortgage (dollars)	853	(X)	1,088
Not mortgaged (dollars)	291	(X)	295

(X) Not applicable.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Summary File 1 (SF 1) and Summary File 3 (SF 3)

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URBS 380
May 2, 2008

Northridge East Neighborhood Council:
Community Activism vs. Big Government

In July of 2007, the Northridge community lying within the boundaries of the

Northridge East Neighborhood Council found themselves faced with a classic contest:

the little guys (neighborhood residents and small business owners) versus big government

and big money. Residents in the area surrounding White Oak Avenue and Kinzie Street

were presented with notification of a developer's plan to tear down four existing single-

family homes and re-zone the area for the construction of thirty-six single family homes

on much smaller lots. One of the most important functions of the neighborhood councils,

as they were set forth in the revised city charter in 2002, was to allow for neighborhood

level input in the planning and implementation of development projects throughout the

city. The case of the White Oak development project tested the power of the Northridge

East Neighborhood Council and the effectiveness of the neighborhood council system in

general. Although the Northridge East Council ultimately lost in their effort to prevent

the White Oak development, the importance of the neighborhood council as a means for

community involvement in government decision-making was not lost. Instead, from this

experience, new strategies of community action and involvement were born.

The White Oak development project has been the primary issue for the Northridge

East Neighborhood Council since late summer, 2007. In July of 2007, neighbors were

notified that the sale of four properties—9750 – 9810 White Oak Avenue—was to lead to

the construction of thirty-six new homes on significantly smaller lots. The developer,

Mr. Tom Stemnock, of Planning Associates, Inc. applied for permits for the project,

which required zoning changes, under the name 9800 White Oak, LLC with a plan to develop four lots that were designated "Very Low I Residential" into 36 two-story 3-4 bedroom single family homes. The homes would have a floor area of 1900-1990 square feet and the total area of the project was 2.4 acres (See Appendix A).

The project required several entitlements from the city in order to reach approval. The entitlements, as listed on the Northridge East Neighborhood Council website (www.nenc-la.org) included: changes to the Northridge Community Plan to allow the new properties to be designated as Low Medium II Residential, a zone change from RA-1 to RD2-1, a "vesting tentative tract map" to divide the property into 36 lots, a "building line removal" to the zone change for the existing 75 feet of permitted building area of White Oak Avenue, and a determination by the zoning administrator to allow for a new six-foot fence with eight-foot gates at the front of the new gated properties.

The developer, described as a "multi-millionaire" by one of the Northridge East Council members, filed all the appropriate paperwork for the development triggering a series of impact reports by the city. The city's impact reports examined the environmental impacts, traffic impacts, and quality of life impacts that the project could have (see Appendix B). After carrying out these impact studies the city concluded that there would be no adverse effects from the project that could not be mitigated through a minimal number of requirements and changes to be carried out by the developer—for instance, to mitigate an increase in traffic flow on White Oak, the developer must widen the street by 22 feet (see Appendix C & D).

In addition to the routine procedural checks done by the city for the proposed project, it also required amendment to the Northridge Community Plan. The Northridge

Community Plan has been a joint effort of the Northridge East and Northridge West Neighborhood Councils with Councilman Smith to create a long-term vision for the Northridge community. The objectives of the plan are to create "a safe, secure, and high quality residential environment for all economic, age, and ethnic segments of the community" (NENC website). The Northridge Community Plan identifies as its main issues: the need to preserve single family neighborhoods, the need for adequate infrastructure and public facilities, a scarcity of affordable and senior housing, a lack of open space in apartment projects, a deterioration of the streetscape, and where to place housing related to the University. The White Oak development challenged some of these primary goals, and required the amendment of the Northridge Community Plan.

The developer of the White Oak project had another major supporter on his side—the city of Los Angeles. The city had on-record and policy-driven support for the very type of development that was being proposed for White Oak. In 2004, under the mayor-ship of James Hahn, the city passed a "Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance" signaling a new direction in city planning and development (see Appendix E). The ordinance was seen as the solution to a housing shortage, fueled by a mushrooming city population, that "has left many residents scrambling in an expensive and highly competitive real estate market" (Small But Smart website). The ordinance was meant to "streamline regulatory processes" that affect housing development and construction to "open up the supply bottleneck" (Small But Smart website).

The Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance (#176354) eliminates the setback requirements traditional for subdivided lots. The ordinance allows developers (or, theoretically, individuals) to purchase a lot and subdivide that lot avoiding the costly and time-

consuming process of applying for a series of variances for the new houses on the subdivided property. The other large benefit of this ordinance to developers, and potentially to consumers, is that allows for the creation of "fee simple parcels" without requiring a homeowners/condominium association be created. Finally, the ordinance is seen as progressive because it encourages development in already existing neighborhoods, closer to job centers. The ordinance promotes the city's commitment to 'infill'—supporting new construction and development in existing neighborhoods, perhaps revitalizing them, and, therefore, minimizing the need for builders and other developers to seek property beyond city limits adding to suburban sprawl, traffic congestion, and other related environmental and social problems.

As the neighborhood residents and other stakeholders began to gather information about the proposed development last summer, they had no idea of the mandate and procedure that supported the developer and his cause. In many respects these 'little guys' were blindsided by the intricacies of government bureaucracy that supported the White Oak development. Nonetheless, they armed themselves as best they could—by bringing the matter to the Neighborhood Council and using this agency to lobby against the proposed housing structure. The arguments against construction that were presented by the Neighborhood Council and other stake holders in the community, centered on four major concerns, some quite concrete, others more subjective. The concerns were primarily increased traffic and congestion for the neighborhood, impact on property values for surrounding homes and businesses, the loss of the character of the neighborhood, and the potential for other areas in the neighborhood to be developed

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similarly raising larger concerns about preserving the current character of the neighborhood for the future.

The residents' traffic concerns centered on worries over increased congestion for White Oak, which south of Lassen is reduced to one-lane, and increased traffic on neighboring streets of Lassen and Plummer. Neighbors were also concerned that more people living in the neighborhood would produce an increase in noise (from autos and otherwise), trash, and other nuisances. The city's impact reports stated that with minimal required adjustments (the developer was required to widen the street, provide two parking spaces for each home), these traffic concerns would be negligible as would the quality of life issues. The city did require, in the issuing of permits, that the developer follow several rules and policies to mitigate the impact of the project during construction—for instance, the developer could not use more than one heavy machine at a time to reduce noise, the developer had to wet down dirt areas continually during the day to avoid increased air pollution in the immediate area, and the developer had to have a direct street route to the Sunshine Canyon Landfill that was consistently followed for the dumping of materials.

The residents were concerned about impacts of this project on their property values. One particular concern relating to this was the plan to have balconies on the new two-story homes that would, potentially, allow for residents to see into the properties of their neighbors. The residents living in the existing homes around the development had purchased their homes because of the extensive privacy a large lot offers. Having thirty-six new homes with residents on balconies peering over into their lots seemed to definitely detract from the value of the existing homes.

The last two concerns were of a more subjective, and perhaps, nebulous nature—concerns over preserving the 'character' of the community currently and for the future. For the Northridge homeowners this centered on Northridge having historically been a community of large lots and sprawling, ranch-style homes. The White Oak development with its small lots and two-story homes contrasted with the 'older' neighborhoods. In addition, residents were concerned that the White Oak development would give way to other, similar developments and the historic character of Northridge would be lost forever.

Armed with these concerns, the Northridge East Neighborhood Council's representatives (Don Dwiggins is the council's point person on this issue) attended the first public hearing on the matter in October, 2007. The city's city planning representative, Thomas Glick, heard information from the developer's representatives and from community residents. At the hearing, the Northridge East Neighborhood Council presented their resolution of opposition to the development. After hearing both sides, the city planner, Mr. Glick made a final recommendation for the Planning Commission to review and eventually rule on. His recommendation was approval of the project with several concessions: reduce the number of new units to thirty-two from thirty-six, increase parking requirement (to 2 ½ spaces per unit), increase setbacks on the east side of the development and disallow balconies on second stories.

The Full Planning Commission Hearing was held two months later, on December, 20, 2007, before the City Planning Commission in Van Nuys. It was at this hearing that the final approval would be given for the project. According to Mr. Dwiggins' notes, there were fourteen speaker cards submitted in opposition to the project; each of these speakers

had about ten minutes to speak. Mr. Glick reported his findings and suggested amendments to the project and Mt. Stemnock, the developer, was present to answer questions. As the Council expected, the project received its final approval. The only new concession added was that a homeowners' association must be established and that it must include a covenant preventing units from becoming full rentals with no owner present. However, the commission's legal counsel noted that a covenant such as this could really never be enforced legally.

The Northridge East Neighborhood Council had battled Goliath and lost. In many respects, the fight was a *fate accompli* from the start. The developer had the financial resources and the professional experience to know the exact procedures to follow in getting project approval. By the time residents and the Northridge East Neighborhood Council became involved, all of the developer's necessary paperwork had been filed and impact reports had been done. In addition, the city's mandate for small lot development crippled the strength of the NENC's arguments. By the time the developer appeared at the October Neighborhood Council meeting, it was clear that the city supported the development and that its ultimate approval would be difficult to prevent or limit. The final action of the Neighborhood Council after defeats at the initial planning hearing and at the second planning hearing was to draft a letter to Councilman Greig Smith, expressing the continued opposition and grave concerns of the Board Members and community stakeholders (See Appendix F).

After ultimately losing the battle to re-shape or limit this new development in their community, the Northridge East Neighborhood Council has turned to new strategies with which to address future similar conflicts. At the April, 2008 Council meeting a motion

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was made to hire, on retainer, the planning consulting firm of JPL. The motion was made by the Board President, Mr. Kelly Lord and his argument was that the council should dedicate $5000 to keep the consulting firm of JPL on retainer to assist the council in any future land use and/or development projects that may arise in their district. Learning from the experiences of the White Oak Project, Mr. Lord said that without professional expertise, it will remain virtually impossible for a community organization of lay people, such as the neighborhood councils, to fight multi-million dollar developers and City Hall. After investigating the issue, Mr. Lord discovered that other neighborhood councils already held JPL services on retainer and had utilized their services to combat potential development projects in their respective communities. Mr. Lord, and others on the board, were convinced that JPL could have assisted the NENC in the White Oak Project by helping to craft a strategy that would have better promoted the neighborhood's vision for their community. In addition, many board members voiced support for having foresight on the issue of land use and planning as it will most likely continue to be an issue for the council as future development projects evolve.

The White Oak Project tested the viability of the neighborhood council system in addressing community concerns in city planning and government. While the council system was inadequate in achieving its goals concerning this particular project, it has not been defeated. Instead, from this experience the NENC has developed new strategies for addressing such issues in the future. Perhaps the deck is overwhelmingly stacked against city councils—lay persons working on a volunteer basis to protect their community vs. the structure and agency of city government—but for the first time there is a formal

channel by which neighborhoods can organize and voice collective concerns about their communities.

As a resident of Northridge, I am torn by this particular issue. I chose to live in Northridge for many of the reasons that the community used to rally against the White Oak Project. Northridge has historically been low-density, with large lots and sprawling ranch homes providing a good deal of privacy. Although there are multi-family units in Northridge, most have been developed in proximity with the University. This is part of what has given Northridge its unique 'character.' However, having lived in the San Fernando Valley off-and-on (with periodic stints in Berkeley, Seattle and New York City) for the last 35 years, I have also witnessed a massive demographic transformation as the Valley has swelled to almost two million people and became increasingly ethnically diverse. At the same time, housing in the Valley and throughout the region has become increasingly problematic. As real estate values have climbed (sometimes more rapidly than others), scarcity and affordability have become pressing issues for the city. I understand the city's small lot initiative as an attempt to address some of the issues of scarcity (and perhaps affordability) while incorporating many of the ideas of 'smart' urban growth. Encouraging infill may discourage sprawl; certainly the growth of Santa Clarita, Valencia, the Antelope Valley, and cities even as far as Castaic are indicative of the multitude of problems that come from unchecked suburban growth. But my selfish desire to retain 'my neighborhood' and 'my lifestyle' are still at work in this dynamic.

There are difficult choices ahead for Los Angeles and for the Southern California region. Population growth, environmental degradation, traffic gridlock, global climate change, water resources and many more issues present challenges with no clear good

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solutions. It has become increasingly evident that lifestyle changes may become a

necessity despite our desire to cling to the past.

APPENDIX A
Map of Development Area
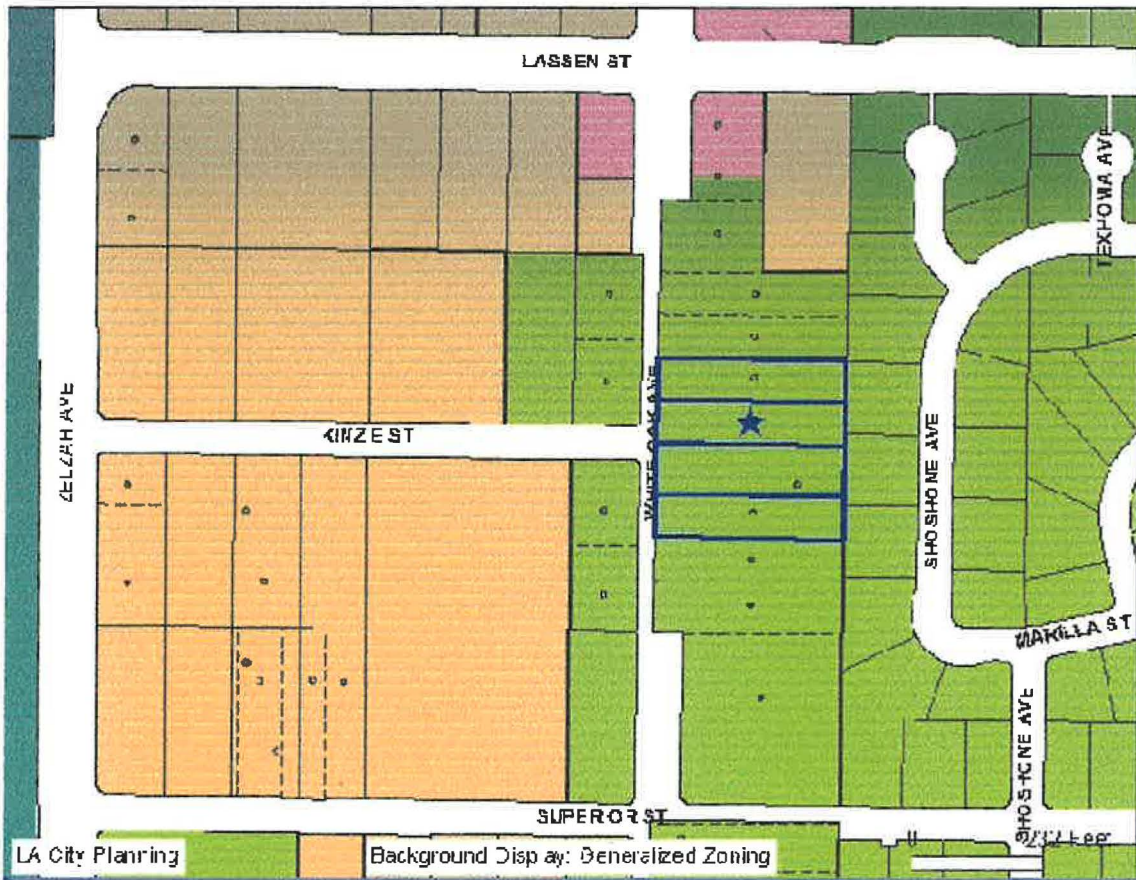
Source: Northridge East Neighborhood Council website: www.nenc-la.org

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URBS 380
Field Trip Paper: Friday Field Trip
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Downtown Los Angeles: Landscapes of Inequity and Social Control

<u>Question #1: Social Patterns: Contrasting Bunker Hill with Broadway/Spring/Main/Hill</u>

The Bunker Hill neighborhood of downtown Los Angeles was identified in the 1960s as an area of 'urban blight' by the CRA (Community Redevelopment Association) and the Victorian homes that housed poor and transient residents of downtown were slated for demolition. The 7,000 Bunker Hill residents who lost their homes made room for a stunning transition—Bunker Hill is now the economic heart of downtown Los Angeles, boasting skyscrapers, iconic architecture and centers of high culture. From the 7th Street Metro station, a quick walk along 7th, 6th or 5th streets brings one to the heart of Bunker Hill. Walking the streets of Bunker Hill (Grand Avenue, Hope, Flower, etc.) it is apparent that this is a business center—men and women dressed in business attire make their way into the multi-story business towers or into the Starbucks or Coffee Bean retail stores located conveniently in the bottom floors of many of the buildings. While uniform in their 'dress code,' I noted during our field trip that the business crowd in Bunker Hill was not completely homogeneous. While whites (Anglos) seemed the largest group represented, there were many Asians, Latinos and African Americans among the white-collar professionals. In addition, each skyscraper was well staffed with security personnel who were ethnically mixed. Thus although socio-economically homogeneous, Bunker Hill does appear to have some ethnic diversity.

Perhaps the Gas Company Building is the 'crown jewel' of Bunker Hill, with its fifty-two stories and spectacular views from the roof (which we were lucky enough to be able

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to access). Access into the Gas Company Building and most of the other office towers was limited to those who were there for business reasons; the 'general public' was noticeably absent from these buildings. Across the street from the Gas Company building is the Los Angeles Public Library's central branch. The library was saved from demolition during Bunker Hill's make-over, and despite several arson fires has become an architectural anchor for the neighborhood. Paintings on the walls of the Children's Literature section of the library depict the successful conquering of California by the Spanish, while the Tom Bradley wing houses very modern art and sculpture—art that was somewhat controversial when added. An exploration of the library is illuminating for other reasons, as well. As soon as one roams the stacks or searches out a quiet place to read, it is apparent that the library is the daytime shelter for a significant transient and homeless population. Hidden in the bowels of the library, this 'unseen' population remains safely tucked away from the bustle of high-value transactions occurring in the skyscrapers surrounding the library.

The Spanish Steps take the Bunker Hill visitor up the hill, away from the library and towards the Wells Fargo Tower and Plaza and eventually to the cultural center of downtown—Grand Avenue. Grand Avenue houses the showcase Walt Disney Hall, a piece of iconic architecture designed by Frank Gehry, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and the Mark Taper Forum. Plans for Grand Avenue in the near future include a pedestrian only portion of the avenue with a five-star Mandarin Oriental Hotel and upscale restaurants and retail stores. On the Friday morning of our visit, this area of Bunker Hill was relatively quiet. A few tourists made their way along Grand Avenue, snapping photos of the Walt Disney Hall. At present, Grand Avenue has

appeal really only to those specifically seeking out activities at the Music Center, Museum or Walt Disney Hall—there are very few places to eat on the street, especially once the working day has ended, and virtually no public gathering places. The space as it stands is difficult to conceive of as a major gathering place for shoppers, restaurant-goers as well as those seeking out other cultural activities. In fact, the walk from the public library to Grand Avenue was one of the least pedestrian friendly on our downtown walking tour. At one point our group inadvertently ended up *underneath* the avenue, at the loading docks for the hotel and buildings above. There was absolutely no access to the ground level from this underground tunnel and, as a group, we had to retrace our steps and climb a series of very steep stairs to the California Plaza above us.

The California Plaza is a privately owned space with attractive water displays and a few shops (a Starbucks, a Subway, a Jamba Juice, a shoe repair store, etc.). These stores catered exclusively to the needs of the business men and women working in the towers of Bunker Hill. Not a homeless person could be seen in the California Plaza, and not many other people, either! In another excellent example of the social control of space, California Plaza is not readily visible from the street. This 'protects' the space from undesirable visitors. However, it also leaves the plaza feeling sterile, and somewhat defunct.

Despite the beauty of the skyscrapers, the architectural interest of the Central Library and Walt Disney Hall, and the well-manicured grounds, Bunker Hill leaves the visitor with a sense of *absence*. On every visit to this downtown neighborhood, I am left wondering *what is missing*? Bunker Hill lacks a vibrancy and an energy that is so much a part of central business districts in other large downtowns. Bunker Hill's space has been

so tightly calibrated, so carefully controlled, that it lacks a kind of organic energy that gives cities spirit and character.

Bunker Hill also serves as an example of the way in which the built environment conveys and contains social power. Southern California journalist Mike Davis, commenting on the infusion of power in space in downtown Los Angeles, has used the Bonaventure Hotel as an example of the way power is conveyed in the landscape. Trying to enter the hotel from the street is difficult—it is largely inaccessible to the person strolling down the sidewalk. There have been many times where I have wandered with friends searching for the entrance so that we could ride the outside elevators at the hotel or visit the hotel's revolving lounge for its spectacular views of the city. Without access by car, a visitor might feel that the Bonaventure Hotel is a true fortress appearing to keep out the multitudes of undesirables (the homeless?) who might desire respite in its expansive lobby. Davis argued that the design of the Bonaventure was calculated—a deliberate design to prevent homeless from wandering into the lobby and using lobby bathrooms or chairs.

There is a kind of sweet justice, however, in the story of the Bonaventure. The hotel has suffered from low occupancy since it's opening in the late 1980s, has changed management several times, and has failed miserably at retaining retail clients in its cavernous, multi-storied lobby. Interestingly, it was the current management and owners of the Bonaventure that sued to prevent passage of the expansive Grand Avenue Project. The Bonaventure management argued that the tax subsides being given to the new investors in the project unfairly disadvantaged the existing business interests. The

Bonaventure owners lost their suit and the Grand Avenue Project received a 'green light' from the city council a year and a half ago.

At the crest of the California Plaza is the Angel's Flight box office. No longer in use, Angel's Flight was once located at Hill Street and carried the residents of the Victorian neighborhoods of Bunker hill down the steep east slope to the shopping, banking and entertainment center focused on Broadway. Until the mid-twentieth century these two regions were deeply connected. Residents of the 'hill' relied on services along Broadway for their daily needs. However, since the revitalization efforts of the 1960s Bunker Hill and the Broadway district have been dissected from one another, creating two mutually exclusive (with a few exceptions) spaces.

During our Friday walking field trip, our approach to the Broadway shopping district was through Pershing Square. Pershing Square is a literal dividing line between two downtown spaces. Like the physical topography of steep Bunker Hill, Pershing Square also clearly divides the 'revitalized' Bunker Hill from the lower-rent Broadway district. As Professor Ovnick informed us, Pershing Square was once a central green space for the downtown community. Filled with trees and grass, Pershing Square was a central gathering place that had become a hang-out for the homeless and transient communities by the mid-twentieth century. As Bunker Hill was transformed, the CRA commissioned proposals to re-vamp and re-invent Pershing Square as well. The 'losing' architect was chosen to transform what had been Los Angeles' Central Park into a space that could be integrated with the 'new' vision of downtown. What was created is one of the worst examples of public space I have ever seen. Giant obelisks tower over the square in garish colors of purple, yellow and orange with large sculpture spheres perched precariously.

Very little greenery was incorporated into the 'new' Pershing Square; instead, concrete benches line the park and the sole patch of grass is broken by uneven concrete walls. Finally, to clearly establish this public space as 'reclaimed' from the vagrants that previously resided there, the concrete benches are curved and have concrete 'arm rests' to prevent a dozing visitor from drooping over and sprawling on the bench. The space, successful for the most part in keeping out the unwanted, has been almost totally unsuccessful in drawing in the desired population—business men and women from surrounding buildings taking their breaks or eating their lunches in anoutdoor area. On every visit to the Square I have traversed it without ever seeing people socializing or relaxing. Instead, it has always had the feel of a no-man's-land, to be quickly scaled while remaining especially aware of its dark corners.

Again, tightly controlled public space, such as Pershing square has a fundamental feel of artificiality, and even worse, of elitism and social failure. Having lived in New York City (Brooklyn to be exact) I remember that public space thrives on the energy of its diverse participants. Central Park, Washington Square Park, even my local park in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn would not have been the engaging places they were had it not been for the mix of populations enjoying the weather, the landscaping and their friends, families, dogs and acquaintances. These types of public spaces feel *alive*. Pershing Square is decidedly *dead*.

The Broadway shopping district, which spills out from the Broadway artery onto Hill, Spring, and Main Streets, is a lively contrast to the sterility of Pershing Square and parts of Bunker Hill. Predominantly Latino and lower-income, the Broadway district is focused on shopping (bargain shopping) and providing daily services to the local

residents. I observed women having their hair done at a neighborhood salon; families shopping at the bargain stores along Broadway; and single men visiting with shopkeepers. One of the most important retail centers in Los Angeles, Broadway has successfully catered to this growing Latino community since the mid-to-late twentieth century.

However, the region is undergoing its own transition as well. Prompted by a focus on redeveloping downtown buildings into high-end lofts, condominiums and apartment rentals, there has been an increased interest in fundamentally altering the nature of retailing along Broadway. As new residents seek such businesses as Starbucks and LA Fitness as signs of a 'complete' neighborhood (and a neighborhood that caters to people like *them*) the Los Angeles Conservancy has proposed the "Broadway Initiative" to create "an attractive and comfortable streetscape... a diverse mix of ground-floor retail activity... [while maintaining] an ongoing connection to the Latino community." How to cater to new upper-income residents while preserving the vitality and success of the current Broadway culture will be a difficult task. Despite the grimier appearance and poorer clientele along Broadway, as I stood and looked back at Bunker Hill's gleaming towers, reflecting the mix of sun and clouds, I wondered what had been lost and what had been gained by severing these two neighborhoods through gentrification and revitalization. Likewise, what will be lost and gained by altering the appearance and nature of the Broadway neighborhood? Ultimately, I believe residents of Los Angeles have paid a high social price for the separation of Bunker Hill and Broadway. Perhaps today as developers struggle with 'what to do with Broadway' the issues would have been very different, and perhaps less daunting, had Bunker Hill's 'new' urban space been

better integrated with surrounding communities and the residents living within them. Instead we are left with urban landscapes reflecting and perpetuating social, economic and ethnic difference—a clear division between the haves, and the have-nots—a landscape that Los Angeles has struggled with for much of the last century.

Question #2: Social Control: Biddy Mason Park/Bradbury Building and Spring-Main/4th

The design of public space in urban areas is essential to determining *who* uses the space and *how* the space is used. Design determines accessibility and therefore is a powerful tool for social control. The preservation of the Bradbury Building and the creation of a park behind it to commemorate the home and works of Biddy Mason are examples of carefully constructed urban and public space that serves to welcome some while deterring other participants.

The Bradbury Building stands as an example of the ability to integrate professional office space with lower rent retail activities. The Bradbury Building stands at the corner of Broadway and 3rd Street, nondescript from the exterior, but remarkable on the inside. Built in 1893, it is an architectural marvel of wrought iron and terra cotta with imported marble as accents. Rather than being converted into a wedding shop or bargain retail outlet, the building has been cared for and preserved in its original glory. Its occupants include the Los Angeles Police Department's Internal Affairs division, as well as private architectural firms and other white-collar professionals. Its residents can lunch at the Subway in its ground floor level or across the street at the Grand Central Market (a better choice, by far). Although the management of the building restricts access above the second level, it does not have an exclusionary feel. Security guards are not an

overwhelming presence and tourists take photos with the sculpture of Charlie Chaplin and pick up literature on downtown tours.

Just outside the southwest exit of the Bradbury Building lies a courtyard, designed for working professionals from the surrounding buildings to gather for lunch and breaks. This courtyard is connected to an 'urban park' designed to recognize the African-American freed slave-turned-property-owner-and-midwife, Biddy Mason. In the many trips I've made to downtown, I have never visited Biddy Mason Park. It is tucked away in a walkway behind the bustle of Broadway and to the side of the Bradbury Building. Even with numerous stops at the Bradbury Building, I have never ventured into this courtyard, unaware of its presence. My guess is that many visitors are similarly ignorant of its presence which means that those who access the space seek it out intentionally and have some local knowledge.

The urban park was designed in three parts—a memorial wall to Biddy Mason, a walking path connecting the urban park to Broadway, and a tunnel of retail stores that lead to the large Ronald Reagan Building across the street. Unlike the well-integrated Bradbury Building, this urban park has failed to draw together disparate groups. Instead, this public space appears to divide socio-economic and ethnic groups spatially. Latino men from the Broadway neighborhood primarily occupy the connecting walkway from the Biddy Mason memorial to Broadway. In the Latin American tradition, it is not acceptable for single women to sit out in the public square alone, so this domain is dominated by men, or women accompanied by men. The courtyard with the Biddy Mason wall was empty on the day of our visit—perhaps the lunch crowd had already dissipated. However, it was originally designed to appeal to the large number of African-

American women working in clerical and administrative positions in the offices of the Ronald Reagan Building.

The corridor linking the courtyard to the Ronald Reagan Building was not welcoming at all. Clearly, businesses struggled in this dark passageway, suggesting a high rate of turnover, and only a few people sat by themselves eating in the restaurants that were open. The corridor was under intense police scrutiny, with an LAPD substation located within it. Again, the sense was that this public space was tightly controlled and monitored; keeping out 'undesirables.' However, the result of this careful design and control have been to create a space that was sterile and underused. Opening this urban park to the Broadway street entrances might go a long way to increasing its use and vitality. If the businesses along Broadway were able to overcome their concerns about security and allow foot traffic to enter their stores from Broadway as well as from the park, it would create a much more usable urban space.

The changes unfolding in the Spring/4th Street neighborhood are not as obvious as the contrasts between Broadway and Bunker Hill. Spring Street was the financial center of downtown until banking businesses began to move toward newer development on Bunker Hill in the 1960s. Most of the buildings in the Spring/4th Street area date to the turn of the century (Banco Popular, Continental Building). Many of these buildings, with their historic architecture, were neglected as businesses left the old financial core of downtown. Today this neighborhood is being swept up in the larger changes effecting downtown—the conversion of historic buildings into lofts and condominiums priced well above the median home in Los Angeles County. The aim has been to bring the young, affluent and professional to downtown to live and work, and eventually to play.

The Spring Street area has been undergoing 'redevelopment' since it was designated as a redevelopment area by the CRA in the 1980s, but success was limited as Bunker Hill's newer development made the Spring Street area less attractive. The other issue that has slowed successful redevelopment along Spring Street has been the concentration of homeless—accessing services from a variety of shelters and agencies in the immediate area. The solution for CRA was a 'spatial fix'—relocation of homeless shelters and subsidized clinics farther east, into the downtown fringe, creating a new skid row proximate to the warehouse district. On this portion of the field tour, what I observed was an area still in transition—there were many buildings undergoing adaptive reuse, but the area did not yet reflect a critical mass of high-income dwellers. Few stores were geared toward the loft dwellers and I wondered if the buildings being converted into lofts and condos would find buyers given the declining real estate market. If these overhauled buildings do not meet their marks for sales will downtown be left with another example of failed urban design and redevelopment?

Present in any comparison or analysis of the urban landscapes of downtown Los Angeles, is the visibility of social and economic inequality intertwined with urban forms. Will the CRA's and other groups' vision of a 'new' downtown (including the Grand Avenue project and the Broadway revitalization projection) simply reinforce the patterns of separation and isolation that have been carved through previous gentrification attempts? Or is an era of change upon Los Angeles—where residents of various socio-economic backgrounds will live, work and play side by side?

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April 29, 2008

The Not-So-Golden State
Peter Schrag's *Paradise Lost: California's Experience, America's Future*

First published in 1998, with an updated re-printing in 2004, Peter Schrag's book,

Paradise Lost, attempts to detail the deterioration of California's public services since the

1970s while positing both explanations for these serious declines as well as predictions

for the future implications wrought by these changes. According to Schrag's narrative,

the 1960s marked a decade of transition for California, from the land of golden dreams to

dysfunctional nightmare. This transition was characterized by a type of "neopopulism"

reinforced by the plebiscitary nature of the initiative process, part of California politics

since the early 20th Century Progressive Era, but not actively utilized until the 1970s.

With careful analysis Schrag dissects the initiative and referendum process in the state,

including its early twentieth-century origins, and argues that combined with demographic

shifts and periods of economic slow-down, the initiative process has paralyzed state

government and led to the exoneration of "civic laziness and political ignorance"

(Schrag, 265).

For the first half of the book, Schrag determines to uncover the confluence of

circumstances that supported a rise in anti-tax, anti-government sentiment in California

by the mid-1970s that, in turn, supported the most influential piece of state legislation

ever crafted in California, and perhaps in the entire United States—Proposition 13. In

exposing the origins and aftermath of Proposition 13, Schrag is successful in linking

declining public services, a lowering of social morale and governmental gridlock;

however, his critique is often shrill and vitriolic. Many of the examples he uses to

support his position are simplistic and easy; in addition, his conclusions about California's future lack consideration of the dynamism and nuanced nature of the California experience. Schrag does not seem to fully consider that California has been in a state of change and flux since its earliest days and that perhaps the social, political, and economic landscapes are again being worked and re-worked, not solely by the forces of disgruntled "white, wealthy voters," as Schrag posits, but by the intersection of multiple forces, many of which are often contradictory. In addition, the California of the past that Schrag romanticizes never existed for many of its citizens. Multiple groups—some with power and others disenfranchised—have been challenging and changing the character of this dream for decades.

Schrag also touches on persistent themes in the study of California history. His book touches on the question of whether or not California is a reflection of larger, national sentiments, or whether the state is indeed a place of 'great exception' and a trend setter shaping sentiments across the country. If California is not the exceptional place that Carey McWilliams once described, what is its place in larger regional and national contexts? One possibility is that California should be used as a cautionary tale for other states—a lesson in the dangers of hubris and unbridled growth. Another possibility is that expectations for the state have always been unreasonably high, fed by myth-making and organized booster-ism for more than a century. Given this context, has California's fall from grace been particularly brutal and visible and has disappointment over its mere mortality led to "a dejection born of overblown dreams"?[30] Has the realization that California is quite *unexceptional* contributed to a sense of hysteria and fear—as Joan

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[30] Neil Morgan, editor of the *San Diego Tribune*, in 1991 interview with *Time*, as cited in Schrag. 55.

Didion wrote it 1968 in *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*, California represented the last,

best chance for the dream:

> California is a place in which a boom mentality and a sense of Chekhovian loss
> meet in uneasy suspension; in which the mind is troubled by some buried but
> ineradicable suspicion that things had better work here, because here, beneath this
> immense bleached sky, is where we run out of continent.[31]

Ultimately, Schrag argues, that in coming to terms with these questions and realizations,

California's socio-political landscape has been fundamentally re-shaped with both

immediate and long-term implications.

The meat of Schrag's book is found in the two middle sections (*Part II: Altered State

and Part III: Mississippication*). The *Altered State* chapter is divided into two chapters,

the first of which, "Golden Moment," portrays California in the 1960s as a region

unstoppable in its successes. Schrag describes a decade in which hundreds of thousands

are drawn to the state, lured by the media love affair with the idea of a liberating and

unique California lifestyle. Through the 1960s California was adept at meeting the needs

of this burgeoning population. Massive public works programs illustrated California's

innovation and prowess. For instance, this "go-go" decade (as Schrag calls it) saw the

construction of the Central Valley Project, the largest public works project ever

undertaken by a state, at a cost of $3 billion. In the 1960s, not only could California claim

the country's most modern infrastructure, but it also led the nation in education funding

and amassed one of the most impressive higher education faculties in the world. By

1963, California had 36% of the nation's Nobel laureates in science and 20% of the

National Academy of Science members—a far greater drawing power for the state than

cheap labor or low taxes—and more than half of its high school graduates went on to

college (compared to national averages which were less than 1/3) (Schrag, 37-38).

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[31] Joan Didion, 1968, *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*, as cited in Schrag. 42-43.

What happened to bring an end California's golden era? How did a state once seen as the model of public education find itself ranked near the bottom nationally in education funding by the 1980s? Schrag identifies the confluence of three major processes intersecting to create the fissures that eventually shattered the golden era of California. Social upheaval, at local, state, and national levels; processes of economic restructuring and deindustrialization; and unprecedented immigration creating massive demographic change as a result of the lifting of the federal national origins quotas in 1965, re-shaped the social and political landscape of California in profound ways—many of which continue to drive the political and social context of the state.

In the broader context of local and nation-wide upheaval, Schrag argues that the 1960s produced a hardening and strengthening of the right-wing in California. 1964 saw the passage of Proposition 14, the overturning of the 1960 Rumford Fair Housing Act in addition to the crack-down on student demonstrations at UC Berkeley. By 1965, reeling from the unrest and contentions of the previous year, Californians found their image as an egalitarian utopia, "short on oppressed minorities," forever shattered by the Watts riots. Schrag argues that California was stunned by Watts, and that the visual display of the "simmering resentment of the Black community that had swelled during post WWII Los Angeles from 75,000 to 650,000" fulfilled classic noir images of apocalyptic Los Angeles, such as that described in the fictional painting, "The Burning of Los Angeles" in Nathaniel West's *The Day of the Locust* :

> Across the top, parallel with the frame, he had drawn the burning city, a great bonfire of architectural styles... Through the center... was a long hill street, and down it, spilling into the middle foreground, came the mob carrying baseball bats and torches.[32]

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[32] Nathaniel West, *Day of the Locust*, 1939, as cited in Schrag.46-47.

By the 1970s there was growing anxiety in California. The *San Francisco Chronicle* predicted serious consequences from the "population bloat" occurring in the state; national disappointments in Vietnam, and the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy (in Los Angeles); local breakdowns of law and order such as the Manson murders and the fiasco at Altamont, all served to cinch the feeling that California had become a monster of over-growth with a deteriorating social order completely out of control.

In many respects California was lucky. The economic restructuring of deindustrialization, begun in the early 1960s, which meant large-scale job loss and the decimation of cities in the northeastern U.S., spared California until the 1980s. However, with the contraction of military contracts post-Cold War and the ease of relocating capital to more 'business friendly' locations by the 1980s, California was plunged into economic recession. For the first time in the history of the state, California experienced a net out-migration of 600,000 as residents fled to neighboring states from 1991-94.

In the context of economic recession, immigration, which had rapidly increased since the mid-1960s, became a fixation for public policy and rising public anger. The lifting of national origins quotas in 1965 contributed to the doubling of California's population in less than 40 years, from 17.5 million to 35 million by the late 1990s. And, as Schrag points out, while studies draw varying conclusions about the true fiscal impact of immigration, this became the focus of campaigns at local and state levels calling for protection of the state's limited resources from the draining effects of endless streams of immigrants. Schrag points out in this section that although California becomes increasingly diverse during this period, and while naturalized citizens did have the right

to vote, the electorate remained overwhelmingly white and middle to upper-middle class. This minority electorate perceived the bulk of public services being gobbled up by Hispanic and Asian groups. The political response, Schrag argues, was that the white electorate began to systematically withdraw its support for the funding of public services that were perceived to be largely benefiting immigrants.

The second chapter of *Altered State*, attempts to document California's total breakdown in public services as a result of the right-turn taken by the California electorate during the late 1970s and "a series of deliberate public policy choices, to the radical tax and spending limitations imposed by Proposition 13, and…a long string of other policy mandates, imposed through voter initiatives" (Schrag, 65). The focus of this chapter is primarily the total breakdown of education (both K-12 as well as higher education) in the state, but it also touches briefly on issues of crime and the judicial system and the undue burden placed on counties to make up for needed public services.

Despite his careful analysis in the first half of *Altered State,* the discussion of the education system's nervous breakdown in the second half of the section becomes shrill and leans toward hyperbole. As one reads through the litany of problems, including "dismal" reading and math scores, deteriorating school structures and the inability for funding to pass due to the 2/3 majority required for bonds, the sense is that he is describing a system so far gone, so unredeemable, that all hope is lost. Schrag's analysis here seems limited. While there is no question that horrific examples exist, those that he chooses to support his contention of total breakdown in public services seem a bit obvious and too easy. His analysis fails to dig a bit deeper to explore how schools and districts (beyond the obvious wealthy ones such as Beverly Hills High School) met the

challenges of the changes in public funding and demographics during this period. He also completely ignores the upheaval and turmoil caused by mandatory integration programs that were moving through California during the late 1970s as well—processes of de-segregation that were mandated by the federal courts. It would have been interesting to see Schrag connect this social change with the demographic and fiscal changes of the same era in California.

Despite Schrag's dire descriptions, there was innovation and on-the-ground problem solving in California's educational system during this era. Schrag's portrayal, on the other hand, is one of the absolute failures of public education, where children go to school in buildings that "look more like migrant camps" (Schrag, 83). In many place in California during this time, public schools were meeting the challenges put before them—and not just in the halls of Beverly Hills High School. Not one mention of the innovative, integration-based magnet school program, developed by the Los Angeles Unified School District during the 1970s appears in Schrag's litany of disasters. The magnet program in the LAUSD continues to be the shinning star of the district, with exceptionally high graduation rates and academically competitive environments. Schrag even goes so far as to include an editorial sent to the *LA Times* in June of 1996 that described one former California public school parent's astounding discovery that schools in her new town of Pittsford, New York (population 27,000) were better! Schrag swallows this article with all of its effusiveness regarding the glory of a small, central-New York city's wonderful school system without the blink of an eye:

Thornell Road has a full-time music teacher who specializes in vocals. Another part-time music teacher visits the school to teach instrumental music. Park Oaks had a part-time uncredentialed music teacher who spent five hours a week at the school. To help compensate, our principal at Park Oaks…spent a half-hour every Friday afternoon singing with the third graders. [33]

While there is no question that the underfunding of California schools due to Proposition 13 and other tax-cutting measures has created untold problems and left the schools in many areas in crisis, Schrag does not do the hard work of fully teasing-out the on-the-ground experiences of schools throughout the state. Unfortunately, his overblown portrayal does little to win-over skeptics and raises some serious questions—how can it be that Proposition 13 is responsible for all of the tales of woe listed in this section of the book? is it truly *that* bad for most of the state's students, and, perhaps most importantly, is California really worse off than other states—are the public schools in Denver, in Seattle, in Baltimore succeeding in ways that California has been too incompetent or too inert to explore?

The impact of the fiscal and social changes of the 1970s was felt not only by K-12 education. The university system, once the jewel in the crown of California's educational system, carefully crafted under UC President Clark Kerr to be the nation's most elite public university system, was also showing cracks. The promise of free higher education for all of California's residents was gone by the late 1980s. Caps on college and university fees were lifted and enrollment in community colleges, the state university system, and the elite University of California system declined markedly. With less money from the state, colleges and universities responded by cutting the number of classes offered, making it impossible for many students to get the courses required to

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[33] Robin Greene, "A Happy Trade-Off—High Taxes, Fine Schools",, *Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 1996 as cited in Schrag. 85.

graduate in a minimum of four years. The other fiscal solution was to encourage early retirement—through the "golden handshake"—which gutted the universities of their best and brightest faculty members. Schrag indicts those he deems responsible for this push to mediocrity:

> And here, too, California fell further. Here, too, it ceased to be the great exception—in considerable part because, in the decisions they made on budgets and taxes... California voters and political leaders implicitly chose to be merely ordinary, and sometimes much less (Schrag, 93).

Schrag convincingly argues that counties have been the real losers in California's fiscal and policy making right-turn, "the state's crazy-quilt fiscal structure gives the counties no independent way to raise new revenue" and this is compounded by the raiding of "local coffers" by the governor and the legislature to "meet their own constitutional obligations" (Schrag, 98). Ultimately counties are left "the dirty job of keeping the scruffy, the mentally ill, the addicted, the drunk, the chronically ill... out of the way" (Schrag, 99). The loss of funding at the county level has meant a skeleton crew of social workers, decreased sheriff patrols, shorter hours for libraries, and less money to maintain public parks. In addition, as the once famed roads and highways of California crumbled and quality of life continued its downward spiral, Schrag notes the penchant toward the pursuit of security through gated communities and a fortress mentality that is "not simply racist," but more a fear of the erosion of the California, or perhaps American, promise—of homeownership, of the good life, of living 'the dream.'

The third part of Schrag's book focuses on the re-shaping of the political landscape in California—particularly the revival of the initiative and referendum in the late 1970s and the push toward a 'plebiscitary' democracy for the state. The first chapter of this third

part establishes Proposition 13 as the defining moment of California's (and the U.S.'s)

new political landscape:

> It set the stage for the Reagan era, and became both fact and symbol of a radical shift in governmental priorities, public attitudes, and social relationships that is as nearly fundamental in American politics as the changes brought by the New Deal (Schrag, 132).

As many of the proponents of Proposition 13 gushed, this was a true 'revolution'—on the

same scale as the anti-tax based Revolutionary War. The fixation of this tax revolt,

however, was property taxes. Although Schrag argues that there were much larger forces

at work shaping public sentiment about taxes and public services, he does establish some

of the causes for immediate concern in 1978 regarding rising property taxes in the state.

Fear drove this tax revolt—fear of losing one's home in a state where "the single family

home has represented so much: not only an emblem of economic respectability... but

often the only source of attachment, status, and self-esteem in new communities"

(Schrag, 133). This fear became more real as property taxes (and property values) began

to rise at a rapid rate, due in large part to a series of property assessment reforms (born

out of scandal) and the evolving 'slow-growth' movements throughout the state which

blocked much new construction. This rise in property tax was coupled with a

"perception, partly true, partly exaggerated, that a growing share of taxes was no longer

going to schools and cops but to welfare and health, meaning to the poor and to the new

foreign immigrants" (Schrag, 139). The image from the "go-go" years of California, the

young family in their new home, had been replaced by the image of elderly homeowners

being driven from their homes due to a rising tax burden.

Several other factors made the environment ripe for the passage of Proposition 13 in

1978. Two years of legislative gridlock symbolizing the inertia of state government, the

inability of any political leader, including Governor Jerry Brown, to put together any kind of counter-legislation, a clever and well-funded direct marketing campaign backing Prop 13, and the premature release of new (and much higher) property assessments by the Los Angeles County tax assessor made the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 a *fait accompli*. The only voting blocks to oppose the proposition were African-Americans and renters.

What followed in the wake of Proposition 13 went far beyond the immediate fiscal implications of the tax reduction. Schrag argues that the true legacy of Proposition 13 has been the absolute breakdown of legislative democracy in the state and the spawning of the "initiative industrial complex" in California which has ultimately left policy making in the hands of the majority with no checks, other than the judiciary, on legitimacy or efficacy. This shift transformed California's political style to "austerity and self-reliance" rather than "planning and social reform...Politicians increasingly came to speak the language of trade-offs and constraints rather than growth and progress"[34]. Proposition 13 and its spawn constricted the power of all government to manage revenues and ended any power local governments had to control property tax. As a result, a profusion of lobbyists representing a myriad of 'special interests' from environmental groups, labor unions, realtors, etc. began to fill the halls in Sacramento in unprecedented numbers. However, by the late 1970s, Proposition 13 was also the "third rail" of California politics and no one in any political party would have thought of criticizing it or suggesting reform.

In Proposition 13's wake, dozens of initiatives followed. Many of these initiatives were meant to solidify Prop 13's hold on state spending. The most severe of these was

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[34] David O. Sears and Jack Citrin, *Tax Revolt: Something for Nothing in California* as cited in Schrag. 157.

Proposition 4 which limited the growth of state and local spending to no more than the increase in population plus the increase in cost of living or the increase in personal income, whichever was *lower*. The response to this initiative was Proposition 98, guaranteeing public school funding (K-12) followed by Proposition 218 designed to close "loopholes" in Proposition 13, and on and on it has gone.

What this fiscal shift has done, Schrag argues convincingly, in addition to creating a new political machine, has been to change the way that local governments and agencies seek revenue. One way that localities have tried to recoup lost revenue is by placing the burden on new development through fees which are then passed down to the residents of those new homes. This system of shifting the tax burden to younger, newer residents is what Schrag refers to as the 'welcome stranger' policy of the post-Proposition 13 landscape of California. This shift has protected the older, white, middle-class homeowners who purchased their homes pre-Proposition 13 and, therefore, are paying taxes at pre-1975 assessments. On one street in any community in California, you will find homeowners paying vastly different property tax amounts, for similarly valued properties, and this has shifted the burden of revenue generation onto younger (and perhaps less wealthy) residents. Schrag provides the following statistics to support this claim: in 1989, 44% of California property owners who had owned their homes since 1975 paid only 25% of the total residential property taxes paid by homeowners statewide. This type of regressive politics favors the old and places the tax burden on the young, while also disfavoring new business investment—businesses are less inclined to buy new commercial property knowing that the tax rate will be significantly higher than their

competitors in the area who have been there a long time. Combined, Schrag argues, these impacts have protected the few at the great expense of the many.

The initiative, referendum and recall became part of the state's constitution in 1911 with a campaign led by Progressive Era reformers, including the new governor, Hiram Johnson, bent on curbing the power of the Southern Pacific Railroad in the state. The idealism behind these 'reforms' supported the idea that government would now be back in the hands of the 'people.' However, in examining California's experience over the last three decades with the initiative and referendum (and the recall for that matter), it is clear that the will of the people is just as beholden to special interests and big money and corruption as are legislators. As an example, Schrag cites the recent election of a state insurance commissioner (by 'the people')—an election in which the winning candidate, Chuck Quackenbush, received 70% of his campaign money from the insurance industry. In addition, there is little oversight or scrutiny from the public once officials are elected to these positions, giving them virtual free reign. In another example cited by Schrag, the California Lottery, sold to the state's residents as a boon for public education, has really only benefited the company that backed it—Scientific Games—who have earned their initial investment back several times over while the schools have received only 3% of their total revenue from lottery money. Again, the public remains blissfully ignorant of the real beneficiaries of this system and questions the schools when they ask for more money by saying 'but what about all of that lottery money?' As UC political science professor, Elisabeth Gerber noted:

> Voters perceive government as unaccountable so they pass initiatives to restrict its actions. This constrains government and prevents it from responding to the

state's pressing demands, which further angers voters and provokes them to pass even more stringent constraints[35]

And, perhaps, the most striking impact of California's long experiment with direct democracy is increased voter alienation, evidenced through a steady decline in voter participation rates.

Many of the initiatives passed seem trivial, but others deal with major issues of public policy such as criminal sentencing, taxation, environmental regulation, civil rights, regulation of smoking, transportation policy, alien exclusion, etc. These initiatives cannot be altered by the legislature before going to ballot and, therefore, policy-making with its short-and long-term impacts is being left to the untrained public. The result has been a series of poorly written, mean-spirited initiatives, some whose goals have been more about 'sending a message' to certain groups than about crafting good policy. Some of these recent initiatives include: Proposition 84, the three-strikes law, Proposition 187, the no public services for illegal immigrants law (thrown out by the courts), Proposition 209, the end of racial preferences in college admissions or public contracts, and Proposition 140, establishing term-limits for legislators which has prompted a "farcical" game of musical chairs among state officers.

The net result of the initiative process has been the "steady shift in balance of social benefits" with a large chunk of services taken from the poor and "delivered to the middle class." As voters pass initiatives—to guarantee minimum funding for schools, acquire parkland, protect animals, and fund anti-smoking campaigns— the mandated tax and expenditure limits imposed by Proposition 13 and its successors have created a system with no give, a system grinding to a stop. Schrag describes this cycle:

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[35] Elisabeth Gerber as cited in Schrag. 216.

...the California pattern: first, a search for a quick-fix autopilot remedy for
perceived legislative failures—a self-enacting political solution that exempts
citizens and voters from the need to engage themselves in individual elections;
second, a tangle of unintended consequences; and third, further exacerbation of
the tension between reform and frustration, and between the voters and the courts
(Schrag, 253).

Schrag links this breakdown to the creation of artificial landscapes to substitute for the

'real' California (the 'lost' California). For Schrag this coping mechanism is epitomized

in the theme-park California Adventure opened by Disney in the late 1990s. This

"shrunken, hypersecure" rendition of California has, according to Schrag, "reduce[d] the

California dreaming to a sanitized absurdity [while] render[ing] it invisible" (Schrag,

274). Schrag's nostalgia for the 'old' California is clear, "...even the wax-museum

image of California is an extraordinarily pale shadow of what the real thing was not much

more than a generation ago" (Schrag, 275). But it is unclear by the end of the book

whether or not that state of perfection ever truly existed for California, or whether

California Adventure is a figment of a collective imaginary.

The true California has always been a landscape of contestation. Is the new California
landscape that Schrag bemoans any less real than the California he nostalgically
remembers? More than ever in California's history, ethnic diversity (and economic
disparity) are shaping new social, political and economic landscapes. While it is most
likely true that these new dynamics will little resemble the images of California that
carried it through the first half of the twentieth century, they may be agents for significant
change and models of success for other regions. As California's population nears 40
million in the twenty-first century, it may be forced to make difficult choices that will
ultimately return it, not to a state of exalted glory, but of functional realism.

Elizabeth Lobb
HIST 681
May 6, 2008

Prostitution in Gold Rush San Francisco:
Re-Shaping and Re-enforcing Relationships of Gender, Class, and Race

California's Gold Rush set in motion social and economic processes that shaped the

state for the decades that followed. As California's population ballooned in size, a re-

negotiation of the social landscape occurred. Because most of the migrants to California

during this period were men, the women who did enter Gold Rush California found

themselves integrated into the social and economic landscape in surprising ways. Men

and women traveled from all over the world to participate in the rush to riches in

California during the mid-nineteenth century. The smaller number of women entering

California during this period, however, meant that even traditional roles for women took

on new dimensions. Although women served many important economic functions during

the Gold Rush Era—washerwomen, cooks, cleaners, wives—it was the role of prostitute

that was essential to the maintenance of the male-dominated economic system in

California during the mid-to-late nineteenth century.

Traditional accounts of women working as prostitutes in the frontier west and in the

mines of the Sierras portray lives of destitution and desperation. Most of these accounts

place these women as unwitting victims, forced into prostitution by economic necessity.

As Albert Hurtado describes, "prostitutes lived dreary lives that were shadowed by

violence, disease, alcoholism, and crime."[36] Other authors, such as Herbert Asbury, have

documented the horrors of prostitution vividly:

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[36] Hurtado, Albert L. (1997). When Strangers Met: Sex and Gender on Three Frontiers. *Writing the Range: Race, Class and Culture in the Women's West.* Jameson, Elizabeth and Armitage, Susan, editors. Universrity of Oklahoma Press: Norman. P. 136.

...the girls were given real liquor and compelled to drink it...But regardless of the number of glasses which they poured down their throats, they were not permitted to leave the dance-floor or the stage...consequently they wore diapers. If one of [the] pretty waiter girls or performers became unconscious from liquor, as frequently happened, she was carried upstairs and laid on a bed, and sexual privileges were sold to all comers while she lay helpless in a drunken stupor.[37]

Published in 1913, a book entitled *From Under the Lid*, supposedly detailed the experiences of former prostitute, Lydia Taylor, who wrote, "I could tell you stories of girls' lives that are so horrifying you would scarcely believe me."[38] On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that the experiences of prostitutes, particularly in San Francisco during the Gold Rush, were as varied as the cosmopolitan nature of the city.

Although women performed the frequently devalued task of servicing men as prostitutes and as paid mistresses in Gold Rush San Francisco, they were often actively engaged in challenging traditional social roles and developing new attitudes of female liberation and autonomy. The benefits of such challenges and re-negotiations, however, were not felt equally. While some women in 1850s San Francisco were able to use prostitution as a means to social legitimacy and acquisition of tremendous wealth, other women who engaged in prostitution found little respite from the rigid roles of race and gender and found their material lives little changed. During Gold Rush San Francisco, prostitution's opportunities were determined by race, class, professional experience, and often sheer luck. Professional prostitutes, arriving from France and the United States during the beginning of the Gold Rush were able to use their skin color, experience and early arrival to their advantage, carving out economic niches within the city. Most

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[37] Asbury, Herbert. (1933). *The Barbary Coast*. Capricorn Books: New York. P. 115.
[38] Taylor, Lydia. (1913). *From Under The Lid:An Appeal to True Womanhood*. Portland: Glass and Prudhomme. 10

Chinese and Latina prostitutes however, found a very different set of opportunities awaiting them in mid-nineteenth century San Francisco.

The timing of a woman's arrival in San Francisco had a great deal to do with how much success she would enjoy as a prostitute/entrepreneur. Those professional women arriving in the early days of the Gold Rush capitalized on the scarcity of women to carve a place in San Francisco's economy and many of them held that niche through the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1852 a Protestant missionary, Henry B. Sheldon, upon arriving in San Francisco described the prostitutes as "aristocracy" that rode in "the most splendid *carriages* and on the most showy studs."[39] Even early Chinese prostitutes were able to establish themselves as brothel owners and develop small empires of prostitution within neighborhoods in San Francisco. Chilean professional prostitutes who arrived early on the scene also found some success in bettering their circumstances (both material and social), as the report of Robert Cornejo in May of 1849 noted: "several [Chilean] women from the red light district of Valparaiso have married here [San Francisco] and even enjoyed the luxury of choosing among their suitors."[40] However, for those arriving late in the 1850s, many of the opportunities for individual success had vanished and late-arrivers tended to be incorporated into the industry as indentured prostitutes or brothel workers, rather than brothel owners or independent prostitutes.

There is no question that the experience of prostitutes in San Francisco during the Gold Rush and the decades that followed was shaped by both race and class. In addition to these variables, professional experience also played an important role in affecting

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[39] Henry B. Sheldon to My Dear Friends, July 26, 1852, Sheldon Collection, as cited in Hurtado, Albert L. (1999). *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender and Culture in Old California*. University of New Mexico Press: Albequerque. 82.
[40] Robert Cornejo to Dear Mother, May 1, 1849, as cited in Levy, Joann. (1990). *They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush*. Archon Books: Hamden CT. p. 152.

successful outcomes for women. As with the thousands of men that flocked to San Francisco and the Sierras for the promise of instant wealth, many professional prostitutes boarded ships in the Eastern U.S., in Chile, in Australia and even in France to come to San Francisco and profit from the Gold Rush boom. The one large exception was the many hundreds of Chinese women brought unwillingly to San Francisco during and after the Gold Rush as indentured prostitutes. The Chinese women who worked as prostitutes in San Francisco through the mid to late 19th century were not professionals; most of them were girls sold into prostitution by rural peasant families, or girls kidnapped and brought to San Francisco to work in the profitable prostitution rings managed by the tongs. Other Chinese women ended up as prostitutes to pay off the debt of their passage—a type of indentured prostitution.

Ultimately, some groups of prostitutes were well integrated into San Francisco society and saw their wealth and status increase substantially, while other groups found that their material conditions were little improved in their new city and that insurmountable barriers existed preventing their integration into the social and economic structures of the region. In San Francisco from the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the intersection of prostitution with race, class, professional experience and even luck created great variability in the experiences of women involved in the industry. The nuanced experiences of prostitutes, considerably more complex than previous studies have led us to believe, both challenged and re-shaped social relationships while simultaneously reinforcing hierarchies of race and class to create a complex urban landscape of Gold Rush women in San Francisco.

II Prostitution in the Frontier West

Social and economic changes in the United States and in California during the 19th century contributed to the growth of prostitution. As John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman pointed out, prostitution in the U.S. grew "with commercial and urban growth in the early industrial era"[41]. As cities became the centers of economic activity, and as processes of industrialization displaced workers in the countryside, prostitutes "provided a reminder of the increasing class stratification that occurred in late-eighteenth century cities, for they came from the newly formed ranks of urban poor"[42]. As single men migrated to cities, or to the Western frontier, their presence created "a market for sexual services" that was filled by poor urban women who found domestic work both poor paying and undesirable[43].

Prostitution also supported the maintenance of a young, male workforce in the newer U.S. territories. Discouraging men from migrating with their families supported a workforce, whether in the mines of the Sierras or in the docks of San Francisco that was more easily exploitable. Therefore, the overwhelmingly young, male and unattached workforce in mid-nineteenth century California created one of the dynamics by which women were integrated into economic and social structures throughout the western U.S. and in San Francisco specifically. As Lucie Cheng notes, "California in the mid-nineteenth century was a fast-developing frontier society. The sexual imbalance and the youthfulness of the male population had particular consequences for women"[44].

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[41] D'Emilio, John and Freedman, Estelle B. (1997). *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 135.

[42] Ibid. 51.

[43] Ibid. 138.

[44] Cheng, Lucie. (2002). Chinese Immigrant Women in Nineteenth Century California. *Women and Power in American History, Volume 1 to 1880.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. 253.

Prostitution, then, was central to the particular war that women were integrated into San Francisco's economy.

The Gold Rush offered the potential not only for wealth accumulation, but for an elevation of social status that was not possible in the more rigid social hierarchies of the eastern U.S. These opportunities attracted men from throughout the Western Hemisphere, but their potential was not lost on women. Women who were professional prostitutes in New York or New Orleans, came not only seeking wealth, but social reinvention in Gold Rush San Francisco—in San Francisco a common 'whore' could become a 'courtesan.' "Flocks of courtesans abandoned New Orleans on the first ships pointed toward the Isthmus."[45] Upon arrival, these professionals capitalized on the extreme shortage of women in San Francisco. Taking advantage of the abundant male population and its inevitable loneliness, early arriving prostitutes from the U.S. achieved considerable economic and social success in San Francisco.

In this context, the prostitutes of early Gold Rush San Francisco were able to mix with San Francisco's high society. These 'high society' prostitutes were included in major social events, including grand balls. In 1856, there is a record of a 'prostitute's ball' was held, attracting some of the city's wealthiest and most respected residents. In addition, these prostitutes were often looked to as the most elegantly dressed women in the city, setting the style for all the 'ladies' in the city.[46] . Along with their fashion and social respectability, many of these early professional women were able to amass considerable wealth. Traveler, Edward Ely, noted in October of 1851:

> There is a house here owned by a young woman from New Orleans…she must
> be worth a hundred thousand dollars. It could scarcely be otherwise considering

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[45] Levy. 150.
[46] Barnhardt, *Working Women.*

the high price of everything in California... To speak plainly one night's enjoyment of the society of the charming mistress of the house, costs the man the moderate sum of one hundred dollars, and the same indulgence with the girls, fifty dollars.[47]

The elevated status of professional prostitutes may have been due to the sheer scarcity of women in San Francisco at the time of the Gold Rush. Herbert Asbury in his 1933 account of San Francisco's vice district *The Barbary Coast* notes that:

> There was such a dearth of females in the San Francisco gold-rush days that a woman was almost as rare a sight as an elephant... It is doubtful if the so-called fair sex ever before or since received such adulation and homage anywhere in the United States; even prostitutes, ordinarily scorned and ostracized by their honest and respectable customers, were treated with exaggerated deference... whenever a woman appeared on the street, business was practically suspended. She was followed through the town by an adoring crowd, while self-appointed committees marched ahead to clear the way and to protect her from the too boisterous salutations of the emotional miners.[48]

The scarcity of women also placed a higher value on their labor. Multiple first-person accounts of Gold Rush San Francisco note the high cost of goods and services and even women's labor benefited from inflated prices. Author J.S. Holliday relays another similar account from a San Francisco miner:

> Women here are doing full as well as men. They can get for cooking sometimes as high as $30 per day, and for washing they can get even as high as $50 to $60. One young lady who came in last fall now has over $3,000 clear. Another... is worth today $10,000.[49]

Women's labor, then, whether as cook, seamstress, or prostitute was given a relatively high value in Gold Rush San Francisco, allowing for financial independence for many of the early professional prostitutes.

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[47] Edward Ely as quoted in Levy. 160.

[48] Asbury. 32.

[49] Allcott letter, January, 1850 as cited in Holliday. 355.

The most savvy of these early prostitutes foresaw a time when more women would arrive (which they did by the late 1850s), increasing competition and impacting their business and they sought to establish themselves as madams and brothel owners. Barnhardt writes:

> As the city began to stabilize both physically and socially after 1851, with more permanent structures and a less transient population, the more practical and far sighted prostitutes secured what permanency was available to them while conditions were favorable."[50]

Stability for many of these professional prostitutes came in the form of marriage, or as kept mistress. However, those women able to establish their own parlor houses found themselves at the top of the industry's hierarchy. These successful madams were able to establish themselves as respected business owners and few were ever bothered or harassed by authorities.

Many of these madams sustained their high standing and fortune even after the Gold Rush—Eleanor Dumont ran a profitable parlor and gambling house in Nevada City, CA that was sustained through the late nineteenth century.[51] A visitor to Nevada City in August 1850 wrote to his brother at home in Iowa of the high status of houses of prostitution:

> The best house in this place is a two-story frame house about 30 by 40 and will be occupied as a whorehouse. It is looked on as an honorable business and a man goes into that as he would any other speculation. In fact, the whole business of the inhabitants of this country is to make money, no matter by what means.[52]

The opportunity for social advancement for early professional prostitutes was as important to many of the women as the potential for economic success. A common

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[50] Barnhardt, *Working Women*. 82.

[51] D'Emilio. 135-140.

[52] Clark W. Thompson letter, August 24, 1850 as cited in Holliday, J.S. (1981). *The World Rushed In: The California Gold Rush Experience.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 355.

theme among many first-hand accounts is that women who would have been looked down up on as common 'streetwalkers' in their old home towns were now seen as part of high society in Gold Rush San Francisco. According to Herbert Asbury, the prostitutes were even favored as escorts to San Francisco's important social functions:

> Because of the lack of virtuous women, the prostitutes, especially those who dwelt in the elegant bagnios on Portsmouth Square, took an active part in the social life of early San Francisco. They were in particular much sought after as partners at the fancy-dress and masquerade balls with which the frolicsome miner sought to divert himself.[53]

Far from being hidden away as part of an 'underworld,' San Francisco's most successful madams even played host at their own parlor houses, welcoming the public through "notices in the newspapers, and by placards posted in the streets and public houses"[54]. Social events held at the parlor houses not only served the function of maintaining the madams' social standing, but they also offered the opportunity to generate revenue. At the parlor house events, madams introduced 'new girls' to the party goers, and served alcohol to their guests. Alcohol became one of the most important ways that parlor houses generated income. In addition, as a legitimate business activity, the sale of wine and champagne secured the parlor houses' acceptance in general society. However, the alcohol sold at these events was offered at outrageously inflated prices as was noted in one account of an elaborate party that levied a charge of $10 for a single glass of champagne. For the most part, the sale of alcohol was accepted by the authorities, in part because of the paying of graft and the share in profits that many officials benefited from. Occasionally, however, it was seen as necessary to harden the stance toward the

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[53] Asbury, 35.
[54] Ibid.

sale of alcohol at parlor houses as this account in the *Alt California* in September of 1851 noted:

> WOMEN AND WINE.—A whole bevy of women who live in what they call "respectable boarding houses" in this city were brought up before his honor, Judge Waller yesterday morning, on a citation issued from the Court, charging them with selling champagne without a license. A number of witnesses were summoned, who stated that they had heard of such things being done, had even heard that eucre and other short games had been played for wine, but that none of them had ever been so unfortunate as to "get stuck" at the game, and had therefore never been called upon to fork over the necessary ten dollars which they had heard was the price of the champagne.[55]

Perhaps the most famous madam of San Francisco's Gold Rush era was the woman known as Clara Belle Ryan (also known as Arabelle Ryan). In many respects, Belle Ryan's experience as a professional prostitute in early Gold Rush San Francisco, is illustrative of the opportunities available to such women. Her store, though, also illustrates the often precarious position of prostitutes, even within 'liberated' San Francisco of the 1850's. Belle Ryan became a prostitute after working in a dress shop in her home town of Baltimore. At her shop she met several girls who convinced her that there was much greater money to be made 'entertaining' English sea captains at a place known as The Lutz: "The girls [had] discerned that profits lay not in fashioning fancy dresses, but in wearing them".[56] Belle Ryan eventually left Baltimore for New Orleans pursuing her career as a professional prostitute and it was in New Orleans that she and her lover, Charles Cora, a hustler and gambler working the many gambling houses of New Orleans, were lured west to California. The couple arrived in San Francisco on December 22, 1849 via the Isthmus of Panama.[57] Although no account exists of her specific arrival in San Francisco, it is evident from the account of many travelers, that

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[55] *Alta California*, September 11, 1851 as cited in Levy. 161.
[56] Ibid. 135.
[57] Levy. 149-172.

there were "women of disputed virtue" (and presumably men, too!) arriving on the ships from Panama.

Belle Ryan and Charles Cora had a varied and successful career in California. Although not legally married, she became known as Belle Cora and they jointly owned gambling houses in Sacramento and Marysville, and for some time Belle managed and owned a small brothel in the southern mining town of Sonora. After amassing considerable wealth the two returned to San Francisco where she owned a house on Dupont Street. Her wealth and prominence were noted in a notice published in the *Alta California* in November of 1852—a burglary occurred at her residence on Dupont Street, striking in the amount of wealth that was stolen:

> A BOLD THIEF. On Monday evening last, the house of Miss Bella Cora on Dupont street was entered by some daring thief who succeeded in getting richly rewarded for his trouble. He entered the room of Miss Florence Wetmore, and helped himself to a diamond cluster pin, a plain gold chain, a gold waist belt and money to the amount of $120, making the value of all at $185. A gentleman *sleeping* in the same house also lost a gold watch and chain, overcoat, dress coat, vest, pistol, pants and cash to the amount of $45. His loss in all is $350. The amount of property and money stolen amounts to over $800. [58]

Madams, and women who worked for them at parlor houses, were considered the elite of the prostitution industry. There were many women, however, who occupied the lower ranks of the profession, working for much less in brothels, dance halls or as street walkers. This stratification in services became increasingly pronounced as the female population increased and competition rose. Barnhardt argues that prostitution in San Francisco was losing its initial uniqueness by the late 1850's and the institution began to "divide itself more clearly along the lines found in most major cities in the nineteenth century. As members of the profession separated into more traditional categories, places

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[58] *Alta California*, November 17, 1852 as cited in Levy. 160.

of employment and range of economic opportunities also changed" for the working women of San Francisco.[59]

Parlor houses maintained their elite status in San Francisco, however, well into the late 19th Century. Many of these parlor houses lined Dupont Street and were extravagantly furnished. Prostitutes working at parlor houses were expected to use the better portion of their income on clothing—"girls wore rich clothes, made up their faces, trained in seductive arts"[60]. The parlor houses were geographically separated as well. By locating on Dupont Street, these high-class prostitution houses were separated physically, and, therefore psychologically from the low-class brothels, cribs and dance halls of the emerging Barbary Coast. Parlor houses' association with the vice district of the Barbary Coast (in what is today's North Beach community) would have detracted from the "elegant and refined image they projected."[61] Parlor house girls also tended to be younger and prettier than their colleagues in the lower class establishments and were continually replenished by girls "without education or intelligence" from middle and lower class families from the "villages and towns" of the San Francisco's South and East Bay[62]. After they lost "their youth and beauty" they were demoded to streetwalkers, crib workers, or many committed suicide.

Prostitutes in parlor houses paid a 'rent' of $20 - $40 a week and were allowed to keep all earnings beyond that. In some parlor houses the arrangement was that prostitutes could keep 25-50% of the earnings, although they relied on the house mistress for fair

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[59] Barnhardt, *Working Women*. 82.

[60] Martin, Mildred Crowl. (1977). *Chinatown's Angry Angel: The Story of Donaldina Cameron*. Palo Alto: Pacific Books. 80.

[61] Barnhardt, *Working Women*, 85.

[62] Asbury. 243.

and accurate accounting.[63] Parlor houses also received a significant portion of their profit from the sale of alcohol at exorbitant prices. Much of the income earned from the sale of alcohol went to the local law enforcement officials in the form of graft. In fact, the elevated status of parlor houses provided protection for most madams in San Francisco—they were rarely arrested, and by the late nineteenth century, "wealthy madams blended well with San Francisco society as long as they didn't flaunt their lifestyle."[64]

Despite the apparent acceptance of prostitutes in San Francisco society, as the population of women in the city began to increase, social attitudes toward these professional women became more complicated. The excitement in the early years of the arrival of professional prostitutes is evident in this May, 1850 account in the *Alta California*:

> ENLARGEMENT OF SOCIETY—We are pleased to notice by the arrival from sea Saturday, the appearance of some fifty or sixty of the fairer sex in full bloom. They are from all quarters—some from Yankee-land, others from John Bull country. The bay was dotted by flotillas of young men, on the announcement of this extraordinary importation.[65]

The notice express not only a sense of good will toward the professionals, but euphemistically refers to them as "the fairer sex in full bloom." As social attitudes toward prostitutes in San Francisco began to change, the language that was used to describe these women also shifted. In the early Gold Rush, prostitutes were referred to with euphemistic, but complimentary phrases such as "the fairer sex in full bloom" or "ladies in full bloom" or "fair but frail." Later in the decade, however, this language gave way to harsher labels. Barnhardt notes that by the late 1850s, these professional women are being referred to largely as prostitutes, Cyprians, harlots, or whores, reflecting

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[63] Ibid. 234-249.
[64] Barnhardt. 102.
[65] *Alta California, May, 1850* as cited in Levy. 150.

a shift in social attitudes toward the profession. As the population of women in San Francisco increased through the late 1850s, there was increased anxiety surrounding the profession and the need to differentiate between respectable women and those of 'ill repute' became increasingly necessary.

By the late 1850s through the 1870s, the arrival of more women and an increase in competition in the sex trade—often from foreign workers—meant that the position of even parlor house madams became more precarious. A well known parlor house madam, Irene McCready was so accustomed to traveling within the elite of San Francisco society that when she was asked to leave a party that had been organized by a group of church ladies at which clients' wives were present, a confrontation ensued. The incident reflected the "view prostitutes had developed of their position in San Francisco society" and the changing views of San Francisco society toward these professionals.[66] Public ambivalence was reflected in the newspaper accounts of prostitution as well. Just four months after the *Alta California* published the announcement of the arrival of many women of "the fairer sex in full bloom," an editorial commented, "We must confess our regret at the perfect freedom and unseemly manner in which the abandoned females... are permitted to display themselves in our public saloons and streets."[67]

A description of Irene McCready's notorious expulsion from high society is found in Sarah Royce's memoir. She describes the arrival of Irene at a party with a prominent businessman that leads to her banishment from San Francisco's respectable society:

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[66] Barnhardt, 102.
[67] *Alta California* September 11, 1850 as cited in Levy. 151.

There entered the room a man, prominent for wealth and business-power, bearing upon his arm a splendidly dressed woman, well known in the city as the disreputable companion of her wealthy escort...in a few minutes he was called aside...to say that they declined to receive as an associate, or to have introduced to their daughters one who stood in the relation occupied by his companion...it was reported that he had previously boasted that he could introduce "Irene" anywhere in San Francisco, but the events of that evening proved...that while Christian women would forego ease and endure much labor, in order to benefit any who suffered, they would not welcome into friendly association any who trampled upon institutions which lie at the foundation of morality and civilization.[68]

Thus, as San Francisco society began to stabilize, the position of prostitutes changed and the discourse of "morality and civilization" become essential to the separation of 'proper' women from those of 'ill society.'

In many ways the final fate of Belle Cora is also a reflection of the contradictory attitudes and inconsistencies toward prostitution growing in San Francisco by the later 19th century. Although Belle Cora was perhaps the most notorious of the successful parlor house madams, maintaining a visible public presence, she too eventually found herself outcast from high society. Her defiant public presence was noted in the writings of Hubert H. Bancroft:

Like Cleopatra, she was very beautiful, and, beside the power that comes of beauty, rich; but oh so foul; Flaunting her beauty and wealth on the gayest thoroughfares, and on every gay occasion, with senator, judge, and citizen at her beck and call, and being a woman as proud as she was beautiful and rich, she not infrequently flung back upon her stainless sisters the looks of loathed contempt with which they so often favored her.[69]

Belle's confrontation with 'respectable' society came at a theater where she was accompanied by her lover, Charles Cora. At the theater a U.S. Marshall and his wife were in attendance and the wife recognized Belle Cora as a member of the demi-monde.

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[68] Royce, Sarah. (1932). *A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California.* Ralph Henry Gabriel, editor. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 114.
[69] Hubert Howe Bancroft *Popular Tribunals, Vol 2* (1887) as cited in Barnhardt, *Working Women.* 103.

When the Cora couple were challenged and asked to leave by the U.S. Marshall, they refused and even the theater's manager ignored the complaints of the Marshall and his wife. Later in the week Charles Cora and U.S. Marshall Richardson confronted each other in a saloon and Charles Cora shot and killed the Marshall. Charles Cora was immediately arrested and held on murder charges. Rather than admitting defeat, Belle Cora remained defiant and used her considerable wealth to mount an aggressive defense for Charles Cora, which included bribing witnesses. Although no jury could agree on a verdict, Charles Cora was 'tried' by the Vigilance Committee, headed by Mormon Sam Brannan, and hanged. Belle and Charles were married moments before his death.

In May, after Charles Cora's hanging, the Vigilance Committee presented numerous letters from respectable women in San Francisco requesting that Belle Cora be banished from the city:

> TO THE VIGILANCE COMMITTEE: Allow me to express to your respected body our high appreciation of your valuable services so wisely and judiciously executed. You have exhibited a spirit of forbearance and kindness that even the accused and condemned cannot but approve. May Heaven continue to guide you.
>
> But, gentlemen, one thing more must be done: Belle Cora must be requested to leave this city. The women of San Francisco have no bitterness toward her, nor do they ask it on her account, but for the good of those who remain, and as an example to others. Every virtuous woman asks that her influence and example be removed from us.
>
> The truly virtuous of our sex will not feel that the Vigilance Committee have done their *whole* duty till they comply with the request of
>
> MANY WOMEN OF SAN FRANCISCO[70]

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[70] Letter to the vigilance committee as cited in common-place.org. http://www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-04/san-francisco/

Thus, despite the wealth and stature she had achieved in San Francisco, ultimately, Belle Cora was an outsider. Much of her eventual banishment from respectable society has been forgotten and she has become part of the city's romanticized past. San Francisco's pioneering past holds a romantic nostalgia and the glamorous life of San Francisco's madams "are just as much a part of that romance as anecdotes of empire building, overnight millionaires, or of a city itself that could be raised six times from the ashes like a Phoenix"[71].

While the stories of successful Anglo professionals fill the annals of San Francisco history, the profession was by no means white-dominated. Women from all over the world swelled San Francisco's red-light district, making it "larger than those of many cities several times its size."[72] During the first six months of 1850, approximately 2000 women (most of them "harlots") arrived in San Francisco from "France, other European countries, from the Eastern and Southern cities of the United States."[73] San Francisco's red-light district reflected the cosmopolitan nature of the city itself, and "by the end of 1852 there was no country in the world that was not represented in San Francisco by at least one prostitute."[74]

Despite the exciting nature of these descriptions, race (and class) intersected with the economic dynamics of prostitution in San Francisco to create varying experiences for different groups of women. This intersection created opportunities for some women, while it reinforced existing structures of abuse and marginalization for others. American prostitutes were not the first (nor, as Barnhardt points out, the highest paid) to ply their

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[71] Barnhardt. 112.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Asbury, 34.
[74] Ibid.

trade in San Francisco. Most accounts indicate that Mexican and other Latin American women were the first prostitutes in San Francisco. There are, however, several accounts of prostitution among Native American women, but none on the scale of the organized prostitution that evolves in San Francisco at the time of the Gold Rush. Accounts of Native American prostitution are largely anecdotal; William Swain in letters to his wife, Sabrina, noted that some had seen "more than one white man pay a squaw and start for the bushes."[75] In addition, Albert Hurtado notes that "In California, the booming gold-rush economy spawned a growing prostitute population that included Indians and other women of color."[76]

However, for California Indian women (and for some of the other non-white groups engaged in prostitution), the act of exchanging sex for money was not part of a larger professional structure and usually evolved out of desperate conditions and was conducted primarily in rural, mining areas. Few, if any, California Indian women engaged in prostitution in San Francisco. Hurtado writes:

> Not surprisingly, California Indians were among the first prostitutes in the mining districts. Like other women of color, they were believed by most Anglo miners to be racially inferior and acceptable only for temporary sexual gratification…native women took it [prostitution] up in the most desperate circumstances…starvation, Indian wars, and sexual assaults shaped their sexual lives.[77]

It is unlikely, though, that prostitution was to blame for these women's desperate lives. Instead, the larger structure of colonization and its subsequent alienation and dislocation of indigenous populations created situations in which California Indian women found

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[75] William Swain, quoting the diary of McKinstry, May 17, 1850 in his diary, as cited in Holliday. 122.

[76] Hurtado, Albert L. (1997). When Strangers Met: Sex and Gender on Three Frontiers. *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West.* Jameson, Elizabeth and Armitage, Susan, editors. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 134.

[77] Hurtado, 135.

themselves sexually exploited. In addition, the price that California Indian women were able to get for sex was usually so low that it had little material effect on their lives.

Women from Latin America—especially Mexico and Chile—however, were integrated into formal structures of prostitution very early in San Francisco's Gold Rush era. A small percentage of these women made the voyage to California (via Mexico or Chile, or parts of Central America) as professional prostitutes. As with their colleagues from the eastern and southern cities of the U.S., these women anticipated the high value that women offering sex in the frontier environment might have.

The Valparaiso *Mercury* published an article on California's developing gold mines in November, 1848 that prompted miners and fortune seekers in Chile to board ships by the thousands and head for San Francisco and more than 5,000 Chileans arrived in San Francisco during the first six months of 1849.[78] Rosa Montalva was one of the few female passengers on a ship from Chile to San Francisco; Vincent Perez Rosales wrote home to his mother about her presence on the ship. Rosales describes how Rosa narrowly avoided having her passage denied, as the ship's officials questioned her status as an 'honest woman.' With cajoling she was able to remain on board and Rosales describes her journey:

> Rosita has outfitted herself for business with a magnificent silk dress, a cape, and a cap... She had won the good will of everyone on board... everyone on board had dealings with her... All except us, that is. We alone were virtuous, chaste... The truth is one would have to come to this country and spend days and nights seeing men and only men before he could find the sight of this charming siren tolerable.[79]

Some of the prostitutes from South America were able to prosper in their new city. One man, Robert Cornejo, noted in May, 1849, that several Chilean women "from the red

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[78] Levy, 151.
[79] Vincent Perez Rosales, Letters to Mother, 1849 as cited in Levy. 151.

light district of Valparaiso have married here and even enjoyed the luxury of choosing among their suitors, but otherwise, the record remains silent regarding successful Latina brothel owners.[80]

However, no account exists that matches the success and infamy of the Anglo prostitutes Belle Cora and Irene McCready. The majority of Latina prostitutes found themselves consistently on the lowest steps of the institution's hierarchy. Mexican, Central American and Chilean prostitutes were collectively referred to derogatorily as *Chilenos*. Upon disembarking from the ships in San Francisco's harbor, most of these women ended up in tents and shanties at the base of Telegraph Hill, where they plied their trade along the waterfront. This community of the least expensive and least desirable prostitutes was known derisively as "Little Chile." The devaluation of Latina women, however, was not a function strictly of race. Most Latin American women were too poor to pay for their own passage to California and upon arrival they were immediately drafted into a form of indentured prostitution as a means to pay off their passage debt. Bancroft noted in his work *History of California*:

> In 1850 more women began to come in, although composed largely of loose elements. The preponderance in this class lay, however, with Hispano-Americans. Hundreds were brought from Mazatlan and San Blas on trust, and transferred to bidders with whom the girls shared their earnings."[81]

The poverty of Latina women left them few options. In addition, most of the Latina women arrived with little professional experience. The combination of class and experience left Latina prostitutes in degraded circumstances—living in tents and shanties in destitute conditions, often indentured to brothel owners or ship captains who then sold

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[80] Roberto Cornejo, May 1849, as cited in Levy, 152.
[81] Bancroft, Hubert H. (1888). *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft: Volume XXIII: History of California, Volume VI: 1848-1859.* New York: McGraw Hill. 232.

them to brothel or crib owners.[82] The limited amount of control Latinas had over their position provides some explanation of their vilification. The extreme poverty and degraded living conditions of Latinas in San Francisco determined their integration into one of the lowest and least valued positions within the prostitution industry in the city.

Although conditions in California may have been better than in their home country, for most of these Latinas, their arrival in San Francisco meant a loss of control over their employment, their clientele, and ultimately a loss of control over their social and economic circumstances. The indentured nature of their work "kept them from becoming part of the independent and individualistic society that was so much a part of the new community and led to the economic and social improvements so many others enjoyed."[83] Many women boarded ships without money and made arrangements with the ship's captain to have their fare paid upon arrival in San Francisco. In San Francisco there were 'middle-men' waiting at the docks to 'purchase' these women and pay the ships' captains the fares owed. In some cases a brothel or crib owner had a contract with a ship's captain to recruit and bring women, guaranteeing the fare of the women and offering a commission to the captain. This proved a highly lucrative business for both ship captains and for the guarantors. "Women, as an importable cargo, offered higher profits and less risk than 'tacks' or perishable food."[84] Once indentured, these women were required to work-off their debt of passage as prostitutes, usually for a minimum of six months. Even after the end of the indentured period, most of the Latina prostitutes remained within the

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[82] Cribs were the lowest, and least reputable of the places of prostitution in San Francisco. Asbury describes the crib as "a small, one-storey shack some twelve feet wide and fourteen feet deep, divided into two rooms...occupied by two to six girls...the only entrance to the crib was a narrow door, in which was set a small barred window." Asbury. 176.

[83] Ibid. 117.

[84] Barnhardt. 116.

area known as Little Chile as 'free' prostitutes. This meant little material improvement, however. Even after achieving their independence, Latina prostitutes were referred to in derogatory terms such as "greaseritas" and were associated with "disgusting lewd practices."[85]   It is this stretch of Little Chile that evolved into the most notorious stretch of the Barbary Coast—San Francisco's red-light district (along Kearny and Pacific Streets).[86]

The only other group that shared with the Latin American women such a low social and economic standing were the Chinese prostitutes, "and in their case the initial factor of being indentured became the equivalent of enslavement."[87] Unlike the Anglo American or even Latina prostitutes, it was very rare to find professional Chinese prostitutes make their way to San Francisco seeking fortune. Except for the accounts of two or three highly successful Chinese prostitutes (some of whom came with professional experience) who were able to elevate themselves to the status of madam, most Chinese prostitutes worked in one-room cribs for the lowest wages in the industry. By the mid-1850s, Chinese prostitutes were part of a well-orchestrated and lucrative trade in young women and girls. Often sold by their parents from rural areas in China, or kidnapped and forcibly sold, the trade in Chinese girls for prostitution was tightly controlled by a small number of syndicates. As a result, it became increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for Chinese women to work as independent prostitutes in the city, greatly limiting opportunities for Chinese women in San Francisco.

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[85] Examples of derogatory references to Latina prostitutes in the *Courier*, July 9, 1850, *Evening News*, Nov. 4, 1853 as cited in Barnhardt. 118.
[86] Barnhardt. 188.
[87] Ibid. 121.

There was, however, a brief period at the beginning of the Gold Rush in which

Chinese women were able to compete in a more open prostitution market. Lucie Cheng

identifies this free period from 1849-1854 and those Chinese women who emigrated

during the early years of the Gold Rush found "the Golden Mountain...an opportunity

and migrated under individual initiative."[88] The social and economic conditions of this

early period of open competition—the scarcity of women and the affluence of the men—

"made it possible for prostitutes of different nationalities...to amass a small fortune in a

short period of time."[89] Many of the Chinese women who had been professional

prostitutes at home were able to affect real change in their lives—both economically as

well as socially. After accumulating sufficient capital, many Chinese prostitutes in the

early days left the industry altogether while others married Chinese men in California and

entered into 'respectable' lives. Others were able to save enough money to return to

China with their wealth and these experiences often became the material for popular

stories and legends within China. For instance, a popular Chinese novel of the time

featured a Cantonese prostitute, brought to San Francisco by her American lover at age

18 who returned seven years later with over $16,000, married a Chinese laborer, and with

the business acumen she acquired in California, opened a successful import store in

China.[90] In another piece of Chinese fiction, a popular author, Sui Sin Far portrays a

Chinese prostitute so happy with her position in life that she resists all efforts of her

brother to 'rescue' her from her life of immorality. Instead, this fictional prostitute is too

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[88] White-Parks, Annette. (1997). Beyond the Stereotypes: Chinese Pioneer Women in the American West. *Writing the Range: Race, Class and Culture in the Women's West.* Jameson, Elizabeth and Armitage, Susan, editors. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 267.
[89] Cheng, 240.
[90] Cheng, 243.

enamored with the material benefits that the wealth of prostitution has bestowed upon her to follow her brother back to China and seek respectability in marriage.[91]

In addition to the accounts found in popular Chinese fiction, there is the larger-than-life figure of Ah-choi, the second Chinese woman to arrive in San Francisco and the most successful Chinese prostitute of her time. Ah-choi (she is known by several variations of this name, including Ah-Toy), arrived in San Francisco in late 1848 or early 1849. Although no concrete evidence exists, speculation was that she was a prominent madam in Hong Kong, familiar with both the trade and with white clientele as well as able to speak English, prior to her arrival in San Francisco. Within two years of her arrival in San Francisco, Ah-choi had accumulated enough capital to open her own brothel, which was said to have attracted "lines of men a block long, who...would pay a full ounce of gold [about $16] simply to look on her face."[92] However, her fees were not exorbitant—it was not uncommon in the early Gold Rush days, for a miner to wash or dig up 100 ounces of gold a day and Ah-choi simply charged the prevailing rate for her services.[93] By 1850 Ah-choi had accumulated sufficient capital to make frequent trips to Hong Kong and Canton to import more Chinese girls for her business. In 1852 she moved her brothel from its first location off of Clay Street, to a larger facility on Pike Street. Ah-choi maintained a near monopoly on Chinese prostitution in San Francisco until the mid-1850s. According to Lucie Cheng, in 1852 of the 11, 794 Chinese in California, only seven were women; of these seven women, two were independent prostitutes and two worked for Ah-choi. Ah-choi's patrons were both Chinese and Anglo men, but as Elisha

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[91] White-Parks, 264.
[92] White Parks, 267.
[93] Cheng, 240-254.

O. Crosby wrote in his journal, she was "quite selective in her associates, [and] was liberally patronized by the white men, and made a great amount of money."[94]

The potential for economic success through prostitution was not lost on Chinese businessmen, and by 1854 Chinese entrepreneurs developed a highly organized structure for Chinese prostitution, importing young women (often forcibly) from Canton and Hong Kong to the entire west coast of the U.S.—from Seattle to Los Angeles. According to Lucie Cheng a complex international business network evolved. In China the network began with men who worked to procure young women. These Chinese girls usually came from rural areas and were often sold to the traders by their families, although sometimes they were kidnapped against their will. Documents support the claim that the majority of the young girls coerced into prostitution were from rural, impoverished areas in China. However there are a few accounts of young women from higher castes being kidnapped as well. The network of businessmen continued as those working on ships brought the cargo of young women into the United States, often under the guise of importing furniture, dishes, or clothing. With increased scrutiny from customs officials in the United States and later with the passage of the Chinese Exclusionary Act in California in 1882, most of the importation of young Chinese girls for prostitution was carried out surreptitiously, and accounts of young women being boxed into crates labeled 'dishware' or other dry goods were common. Many of the young women were smuggled into the U.S. as boys and often through very circuitous routes, through Canada or Mexico.[95]

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[94] Elisha O. Crosby, "Statement of Events in California," 124 as cited in Tong, Benson. (1994). *Unsubmissive Women.* 9.
[95] White-Parks, 258

Once these young women arrived in the U.S. they were disseminated to brothels. In San Francisco, the newly arrived prostitutes were immediately sent to *barracoons* where they were inspected for sale for anywhere from $300 to $3000 depending on age and beauty. Some of the young women were sold as wives to Chinese businessmen in San Francisco, and others were sold as prostitutes. Similar to prostitutes from Latin America, the 'sale' of Chinese girls was also legitimized as being re-payment for the debt they owed for their passage. Most of these young women were required to sign a document confirming their commitment to work for a period of time to pay off their passage fare. These contracts were clear that if the young woman missed a day's work for any reason it would be added on to the contract years, so often sickness, pregnancy, or even menstruation meant that Chinese prostitutes had little possibility of ever completing their years of service and remained in the position of indentured prostitute in perpetuity.

At a variety of levels, there were many who benefited financially from the trade and sale of Chinese prostitutes. Although precise records are difficult to come by, Lucie Cheng undertook to estimate the financial revenue from Chinese prostitution by estimating that at the very lowest end, Chinese prostitutes earned 25-50 cents per customer. Each girl usually saw 4-10 customers a day and most girls were in contracts that bound them to this work for a minimum of four years. Therefore, working about 320 days a year, the average low-end prostitute could bring about $850 a year or $3404 over four years to brothel owners.[96] If the costs to maintain the brothel (and the prostitutes themselves) are subtracted from this revenue, Cheng estimated that a brothel with nine prostitutes would earn a profit of more than $5,000 in the first year.

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[96] Cheng, 240-254.

Brothel owners and the traders who captured and imported the young women were not the only financial beneficiaries of this system. Within San Francisco a thuggish syndicate, known as the Tongs, provided protection for the brothels and their managers as well as serving the function of re-capturing any Chinese prostitutes who attempted escape. Besides the Tongs being on the payroll of Chinese prostitution, white police and government officials also benefited in the form of graft and "white Chinatown property owners [also benefited] who leased their land and buildings for exorbitant rents."[97] Thus, the system of Chinese prostitution and indentured servitude served Chinese business as well as legitimate city interests financially. It was, therefore, in the best interest of the San Francisco legal community to support the Tongs when the Chinese young women attempted to escape their dismal conditions. When a young woman escaped from a Chinese brothel or crib, the Tongs would file a claim of theft against her, and the U.S. court would mandate her return, when found, to the brothel and therefore, the "tongs kept the local police on retainer to keep the women from escaping."[98] To support the syndicate of Chinese prostitution, a 'Special Police Force' was established in San Francisco's Chinatown that received no wages from the city; instead, their wages were entirely generated by the graft paid them by the prostitutes and brothel owners (usually 50 cents a week from each prostitute) in exchange for protection from arrest, or, in the case of brothel owners, in exchange for the safe return of any escaped prostitute.[99]

Population census data for San Francisco in the 1850s-1880s indicates the high percentage of Chinese women working as prostitutes. In 1860 it was estimated that 85-

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[97] Cheng, 250.
[98] Cheng, 252.
[99] Ibid.

97% of the Chinese female population were working as prostitutes.[100] In the 1870 census, approximately 2,157 of the 3,536 Chinese women living in San Francisco were listed as prostitutes.[101] However, by the late 1870s and 1880s, the number of Chinese women listed as prostitutes began to decline. In 1870, 795 of the Chinese women in San Francisco were listed as prostitutes and that number had declined to only 28% in 1880.[102] What accounts for this decline is the growing anti-Chinese sentiment that made importing Chinese girls increasingly difficult. In addition, there is some evidence that some of these Chinese prostitutes were able to transition to 'legitimate' activities—primarily through marriage. Although 'prostitute' was listed as the number one profession among Chinese women in the 1860 and 1870 census, by 1880 it had dropped to number two as some of the Chinese prostitutes were able to marry Chinese men. Chinese women who were able to escape prostitution were not considered outcasts by the Chinese community; instead, they were often seen as having fulfilled family obligations by entering into prostitution and this enabled their acceptance in the Chinese community in San Francisco.

The significantly lower social status of Chinese prostitutes than Anglo or even Latina prostitutes was a function, then, of the intersection of several processes. Unlike the Anglo prostitutes, Chinese women were recruited into a system of enslavement that was "the most widely known secret in the American West."[103] The practice of enslavement persisted because of the system of mutual benefits it created for both Chinese and Americans.

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[100] Yung, Judy. (1995). *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco.* Berkeley: University of California Press. 30.
  [101] Cheng, 251.
  [102] Ibid.
  [103] White-Parks, 267.

The system had roots in the culture of the homeland China where prostitution contravened the most essential aspect of law and was possible only through the continued connivance of American officials who amassed fortunes in graft.[104]

In addition, larger structures of race and racism created an environment ripe for the important of Chinese women as prostitutes. Judy Yung notes:

> Race and class dynamics created the need for Chinese prostitutes in America, while gender and class made poor Chinese daughters the victims of an exploitative labor system controlled by unscrupulous men denied gainful employment in the larger labor market.[105]

Yung, and others, argue that the need for a mobile male labor force "unencumbered by women and families" brought large numbers of single men to San Francisco. In combination with this, American immigration policies discouraged the immigration of Chinese women, while desiring Chinese men for their inexpensive labor, forcing many Chinese immigrants "to live a bachelor's existence."[106] Anti-miscegenation attitudes, and eventually laws, compounded the problem and contributed to the rise of an organized trafficking in Chinese women for prostitution which "continued in full force in San Francisco's Chinatown right up until the 1920s."[107] Thus, racism against Chinese men in California intersected with patriarchal systems and rural poverty in China to create a system whereby Chinese women were integrated into San Francisco's economy with the least autonomy and most degraded conditions of any group of prostitutes.

However, the image of the passive, broken Chinese prostitute is not a complete picture, either. Chinese women were often able to change their fate, moving beyond just survival tactics. Although they faced large barriers to liberation—the lack of family ties, racism—Chinese prostitutes did find a number of escape routes. Some actively resisted

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[104] Gray, Dorothy. (1976). *Women of the West*. Milbrae: Les Femmes Press. 72.
[105] Yung, 35.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Gray, 73.

their enslavement. Two young women, Mah Ah Wah and Yoke Qui refused to accept the bail that had been paid for them after their arrest at the San Francisco harbor for arriving for 'immoral purposes.' Bail had been paid by the Tongs and rather than agreeing to their release from jail the two young women told officials that their purpose was, indeed, for immoral purposes and they were deported.[108] In some cases the line between free will and independence appeared to be quite blurry. The case of Lalu Nathoy reflected some of the complexities in the relationship between enslavement and individual resistance that permeated the Chinese prostitution underworld. Lalu Nathoy was won by Charlie Bemis in a poker game in San Francisco and he brought her to his rural home in Idaho, where, as his wife, she became known as Polly Bemis. Before their marriage, Charlie Bemis granted her freedom, but she chose to stay and married him anyway.[109] After his death in a house fire she inherited the mining claim they had worked together and she became one of the most successful mine owners in her town. In the case of Lalu Nathoy, Chinese slave prostitution intersected with a quintessential story of Wild West success.[110]

The example of the infamous Ah-choi, successful Chinese madam and the first Chinese woman in San Francisco is also representative of the complexity of the intersection of race, gender and prostitution. Despite being Chinese and a prostitute, Ah-choi was successful in using the U.S. legal system regularly to her advantage. There are frequent reports of lawsuits filed on her behalf against men who defaulted on payments to her. She also successfully fought numerous complaints and charges filed against her for being a 'public nuisance.' Finally, she successfully sued a prominent Chinatown leader

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[108] Yung, 26-37.
[109] Differing accounts exist as to how Lalu Nathoy came to be married to Charlie Bemis. For an alternate version see Tong, Benson. 22.
[110] White-Parks, 270.

for unfair taxation arguing that the taxes being levied against her and other Chinese prostitutes was an attempt to limit their business and competition. Ultimately, Ah-toi returned to Hong Kong, but not after leaving her mark on the city and not without her Anglo husband.[111]

For most Chinese prostitutes, the opportunities present for escape from indentured prostitution were far less glamorous than those pursued by Ah-choi. Far more common than achieving monetary and social mobility, addiction to opium, suicide by drowning and mental or physical debilitation were the escape routes for many young Chinese women. By the late nineteenth century protestant mission homes offered another alternative for young Chinese women. By 1870, two mission homes were established in San Francisco as refuge for the Chinese 'slave' girls. The most important of these mission homes was the Presbyterian Mission Home at 920 Sacramento Street founded and run by Margaret Culbertson from 1877 – 1897. In 1897, Donaldina Cameron, a young woman from the Los Angeles area, was persuaded to join and take over the running of the mission and she is credited with having rescued more than 3,000 Chinese girls from slavery.[112] Donaldina Cameron faced continued threats from the Tongs, and was referred to as the "white devil." Rescue of the young Chinese prostitutes also proved very difficult as they were usually kept hidden deep within the maze of rooms that were part of the brothels and cribs of Chinatown. In addition, girls who did run away from

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[111] Levy, 155.

[112]Martin, Mildred Crowl. (1977). *Chinatown's Angry Angel: The Story of Donaldina Cameron.* Palo Alto: Pacific Books. 80.

their brothels were easily returned to their 'owners' when a claim of theft was filed

against them, assuring the U.S. legal system's assistance in their return.[113]

There was public support for the rescue of the Chinese prostitutes and the terrible

conditions under which they worked were well documented:

> The girl slave's life was cruel to the extreme. Of course they got neither payment
> for their sale or debauching, nor any of the income from their prostitution. They
> went out a few times a month under heavy guard to "take the air." The rules were
> like those of a medieval prelate's prison. Beatings were common, and burning
> with a hot iron was done, but since that would mark the merchandise it was only
> for extreme cases. Failure to please a customer of any kind and in any condition
> brought starvation, flogging...Some people who have studied the condition have
> stated that a crib girl lasted from six to eight years at her degrading task. The
> frugal owner, when a girl became diseased, broken-minded, senile before her
> time, often made her "escape" to the Salvation Army; thus avoiding the problem
> of disposing of a worn-out item. If the owners of slave girls had to end the career
> of a crib inmate themselves, they provided what were called "hospitals."[114]

However, the dynamic of 'rescue' was problematic for many of the Chinese women.

The protestant missionary women were driven by an agenda that sought to establish a

"female moral authority in the American West" and to rescue "female victims of male

abuse."[115] Missionary women saw Chinese women as the "ultimate symbol of

powerlessness" and, as a result, the Chinese women had little agency in relationship to

their brothel captors nor to their rescuing angels. [116] While many young women were

saved from dismal, short lives, the new relationships of rescue were problematic. Peggy

Pascoe's *Relations of Rescue* identifies some of these problems as including the

infringement on the civil rights of the Chinese women, the promotion of Victorian codes

of morality and culture as superior, and the insertion of new, equally confining gender

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[113] Gray, 68-74.
[114] Newspaper accounts cited in Gray. 68. Gray credits Stephen Longstreet's *The Wilder Shore*, 1968, Doubleday.
[115] Yung, 36
[116] Ibid.

roles that emphasized female purity, piety and Christianity.[117] However, Pascoe goes on

to say that the Chinese women were neither entirely powerless nor passive in these rescue

relationships. Instead, many of the Chinese women entered the missions with their own

desires and agendas—some did so to marry the man of their choice rather than participate

in arranged marriages, some sought only temporary refuge and some did it to "gain

leverage in polygynous marriages."[118] In addition, most of these rescued women never

converted to Christianity.

Perhaps the situation of Chinese prostitutes in mid-to-late nineteenth century San

Francisco is the most complex of any group engaged in the profession. Nineteenth-

century writers tended to characterize these women as degenerates, or helpless. Other

depictions of these women have emphasized their exoticness or inherent immorality.

Even Chinese writers have "tried to counter [these depictions] with exaltations of a few

upper-class or highly educated women."[119] The reality was, though, that most of these

early Chinese immigrant women were trying "to survive within a complex structure

characterized by racial antagonism, sexual oppression, and class exploitation."[120].

A significant number of French women also filled the ranks of prostitutes in mid-to-

late nineteenth century San Francisco. Unlike many of their colleagues, French

prostitutes brought with them a sense of cultural superiority that translated into financial

success. French prostitutes displayed a level of "cultural pride" that demanded "greater

respect than even the American prostitutes" received.[121] French prostitutes did not arrive

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[117]Pascoe, Peggy. (1990). *Relations of Rescue: the Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West.* New York: Oxford University Press. 100.
    [118] Ibid.
    [119] Cheng, 253.
    [120] Ibid.
    [121] Barnhardt, 134.

in San Francisco in significant numbers until after 1850. Although as early as October

23, 1850, Hubert Bancroft noted that the *Pacific News* announced "Nine hundred of the

French demimonde are expected" to arrive by ship and to reside on Stockton and Filbert

Streets. Much to the disappointment of the men of San Francisco, the actual number

turned out to be less than fifty.[122] Herbert Asbury also notes this greatly anticipated

shipload of French prostitutes and that miners in San Francisco were "eager to determine

for themselves if the ladies were as adept in the practice of their profession as was

popularly supposed."[123]

Like China, Chile, and other countries, France also sought to partake of the

possibilities of wealth that accompanied gold's discovery in California. Conditions in

France made travel to California especially attractive—civil upheaval and an economic

depression prompted more than 4,000 French citizens to come through San Francisco

from November of 1849 through April of 1851.[124] By the end of 1853 it was estimated

that California's French population was more than 30,000. In addition to the pull of gold

and riches and the push of poor economic and social conditions at home, the French

government actively encouraged this emigration. A government-sponsored give away of

gold bars paid for the passage of many of these fortune-seekers. Despite the suspicions

of the U.S. government that the French government was motivated by a desire to remove

undesirables from their society, French prostitutes were "universally popular."[125] French

prostitutes were even credited with improving the manners and dress of San Francisco

society.

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[122] Bancroft, 232.
[123] Asbury, 34.
[124] Levy, 162.
[125] Ibid. 163.

Most of the French prostitutes in San Francisco were professionals—they had been

prostitutes in France before their passage and most were accompanied to San Francisco

by their pimps, called *macquereaux*, which was shortened to "macks."[126] An account

from Frenchman Albert Benard reveals his reluctant pride in the superiority of the French

demimonde,

> Americans were irresistibly attracted by their graceful walk, their supple and easy
> bearing, and charming freedom of manner, qualities, after all only to be found in
> France; and they trooped after a French woman whenever she put her nose out of
> doors.[127]

However, not much further into his account, Benard acknowledges that for most of these

French women the success they enjoyed in San Francisco could never have been

achieved at home:

> Nearly all of these women are streetwalkers of the cheapest sort. But out here, for
> only a few minutes, they ask a hundred times as much as they were used to
> getting in Paris.[128]

Benard's comments parallel the experience of the American prostitutes, able to capitalize

and profit from the dearth of females and the socially open nature of San Francisco

during the Gold Rush. Many of the French prostitutes were able to earn enough money

to return to France, within the first few years, some women were able to earn enough in

one month to return to France very wealthy.[129]

Unlike the Anglo prostitutes who needed luxurious parlor house to fetch high prices,

the French prostitutes were considered the elite in whatever setting they worked in.

French prostitutes led in fashion in the demimonde society of San Francisco with even

"respectable" women copying their style. It is not immediately clear why French

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[126] Asbury, 35.
[127] Albert Benard de Russailh. *Last Adventure in San Francisco in 1851*. Translated by Carkson
Crane. San Francisco: Westgate Press. 1931, as cited in Levy. 162.
[128] Ibid as cited in Levy. 163.
[129] Holliday, 413.

prostitutes were so elevated in Gold Rush San Francisco. First hand accounts, such as that of Albert Benard indicate that they did not come from a higher class in France. Barnhardt argues that the very superiority with which French prostitutes arrived contributed to their elevation. In addition an American fascination with everything French assisted in setting the women apart as superior. Finally, the French were less willing than other non-American groups to assimilate by adopting American fashions, or even language. As a result, they developed and maintained "an image that other members of the institution of prostitution could not equal."[130]

Perhaps the French, then, are the best example of the importance of self-determination in determining how different groups of prostitutes were integrated into San Francisco society. Those groups that had the most control over their circumstances—Anglo and French prostitutes—fared much better than the groups whose choices were limited by racism, class, and poor timing. Therefore, the experience of prostitutes in Gold Rush San Francisco was not strictly a function of attitudes toward the profession.

The experiences of women working as prostitutes in Gold Rush San Francisco were varied and complex and were determined by the intersection of a number of processes. The extent to which women enjoyed financial success and social mobility was determined largely by professional experience and the good fortune of arriving in San Francisco during the earliest Gold Rush period. Whether French, Anglo, or Chilean, women arriving in the early 1850s were able to capitalize on their sex's scarcity in the city and on the fluid social order of early Gold Rush days to procure both financial and social advancement. In addition, the means by which a woman arrived in the city also set the course for her experiences as a prostitute; those women who arrived free of the debt

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[130] Barnhardt, 143.

of passage were able to establish themselves as independent prostitutes and were able to move more freely in San Francisco society. However, for poorer women, the debt of passage constricted their ability to make choices about their clientele and working conditions and left them in indentured positions working for the lowest wages. For Chinese women, the burden of indenture was compounded by race. However, the experience of Chinese women was also more complex than many accounts have portrayed. There were cases of Chinese women able to avoid the patterns of debt and peonage, establishing themselves as madams, as wives to both Chinese men and Anglo men, and even as miners. Finally, the case of the French best illustrates the contradictions inherent in the experience of Gold Rush prostitutes. Despite their 'immoral' activities and association with the demi-monde, the French prostitutes were almost universally respected and coveted, illustrating the disconnect that existed between the 'profession' and the groups engaged in the activities. Thus, Latina and Chinese women were not devalued *because* they were prostitutes, but, rather, the circumstances surrounding their arrival and integration into San Francisco's social and economic structures limited their available opportunities. And, ultimately, Anglo and French prostitutes enjoyed success not so much because they were white but because they had the good fortune of arriving with professional experience at the right moment in time to capitalize on market demand. The varied experiences of prostitutes in Gold Rush San Francisco are reflective of the dynamic landscape of the city itself as it was shaped by social and economic change.

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Histo 681: Seminar in California History
Class Time: Tuesday, 4:20-6:50, SH268
Dr. Josh Sides /jsides@csun.edu/ Office Hours:
Tuesdays, 3:00-4:00; Wednesdays by appt.; Thursdays, 1:00-2:00

Welcome to History 681, a graduate research seminar in the history of California. Upon completion of the course graduate students should:

- Have familiarity with key works in California History
- Understand the most essential historiographical debates about California's past
- Have completed original, primary, historical research in California history
- Have written an original, 25-page, research paper, developed in consultation with the instructor

1. **Tuesday, Jan 22: Course Introduction and Discussion and Research Tips**
2. **Tuesday, Jan 29: Class meets in Whitsett Room for Job Talk, Andrew Kahrl (Paper Topic Due)**
3. **Tues, Feb 5: Monroy, Thrown Among Strangers**
   Discussion Leader:
4. **Tues, Feb 12: Almaguer, Racial Fault Lines**
5. **Tues, Feb 19: Haas, Conquests and Historical Indentities**
6. **Tues, Feb 26: Johnson, Roaring Camp**
7. **Tues, March 4: Brechin, Imperial San Francisco**
8. **Tues, March 11: Deverell & Sitton, Metropolis in the Making**
9. **Tues, March 18: NO CLASS SPRING BREAK**
10. **Tues, March 25: Nicolaides, My Blue Heaven**
11. **Tues, April 1: Gregory, American Exodus**
12. **Tues, April 8: Hurewitz, Bohemian Los Angeles**
13. **Tues, April 15: Robert Self, American Babylon**
14. **Tues, April 22: Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Golden Gulag**
15. **Tues, April 29: Peter Schrag, Paradise Lost**
16. **Tues, May 6: Reading TBA**
    Group Discussion and Presentation of Projects