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There's a Skid Row Everywhere, and This is Just the Headquarters: Impacts of Urban Revitalization Policies in the Homeless Community of Skid Row

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THERE'S A SKID ROW EVERYWHERE, AND THIS IS JUST THE HEADQUARTERS:
IMPACTS OF URBAN REVITALIZATION POLICIES IN THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY
OF SKID ROW

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Abstract

This dissertation tracks the historical shift from containment strategies for managing homeless populations in Skid Row to current strategies of using police and the penal system to periodically sweep the street of these unwanted bodies. This shift hinges on the construction of homelessness as a crisis requiring immediate and ongoing intervention. First, the state produces and reproduces homelessness as a state of crisis by withdrawing or denying support and public services and disallowing alternative, subsistence modes of survival. Then, it issues the performative utterance of the area as unclean or unsanitary. Developers and city officials mobilize the police to erase a visible presence of homeless bodies from the area. The "crisis" of homelessness, variously constructed as an issue of urban aesthetics, public health, and crime, enables public policy to be made on the fly. These policies have uniformly favored economic development at the expense of the needs of homeless persons and communities. The performative state needs the homeless to legitimate state intervention on behalf of developers.

In this dissertation, I demonstrate how the racialized rhetorics of thanatology and revitalization have been used to construct homelessness as a crisis for the city in a manner that positions the homeless as threats to the life of the city. According to this rhetoric, it is cities that have economic vitality worth protecting and homeless people who act as an unwanted and degenerate economic species threatening their financial fitness, health, and well-being.

I argue that the performative state produces homelessness as a material state of crisis and rhetorically constructs homelessness as a crisis legitimating intervention on the part of the state. The dissertation is organized according to the various ways in which homelessness has been constructed as a crisis warranting intervention: urban aesthetics, homelessness and practices of poverty as an eyesore (Chapter 2), public safety and crime prevention à la the broken windows

theory (Chapter 3), and the economic vitality of the international city (Chapter 4). This dissertation seeks to explore the stakes across various constructions of the existence of the homeless population and their practices of poverty.

Chapter One
Skid Row

How I Arrived at Skid Row

When I was in seventh grade, my mother was involved in a serious car accident that broke her back. My father's crack cocaine addiction increased from just recreational usage to full-blown addiction. A month before I graduated eighth grade my family lost our house. That year was marked by a missed Christmas, missed birthdays, missed meals, and abject poverty. The home that my family had lived in was the result of hitting the ghetto lottery. Two months before I was born, my father, a manager at a Jack-n-the-Box, was shot in the foot by LAPD officers during a robbery at his store. The cops, attempting to shoot at the robber, completely missed and hit my father in the foot, causing severe damage in his foot that remains today. My father won a settlement with the LAPD six years after the shooting. The result was a small amount of money, but it helped my family move into a large four-bedroom house in Gardena, California.

We moved away from what was then the epicenter of urban blight and the crack epidemic of South Central Los Angeles, Crenshaw Boulevard. My family lived in that house in Gardena for over six years before we were kicked out. One day I came home from school to find all of the doors of our house with deadbolt locks attached to them. My father had to break into the house to retrieve our furniture and hastily got a moving truck and put our furniture there until we were able to find a new apartment. My mother and my two younger siblings went to live with a friend of hers. I went with my father to look for new housing.

My father and I walked the streets of Los Angeles for five days looking for an apartment for our family. We were unable to find housing. My father's family had temporarily disowned

him for his addiction, incessant lying, and stealing from them. My father was left to rely upon his friends, fellow crack addicts. For five days we stayed in seedy motels and apartment rooms with stains on the walls and carpets. Rooms of piss, shit and vomit, of smoke and moans, of screams and pain. I remember the voices and sounds and smells to this day. For five days I would wake up late at night and leave wherever we were staying and just walk around the streets of Los Angeles. I would walk to figure out my surroundings. I would walk for no reason. Eventually, my father was able to find a small one-bedroom apartment in Inglewood, California.

For four years my family would live in this location. My father and mother's relationship deteriorated to the point at which physical violence or its threat was a daily occurrence. My father's addiction became worse, and my mother became withdrawn from the family. I was left to take care of my brother and sister. I remember days of coming home with no electricity. We would have to make dinner by candlelight and stolen electricity from our neighbors. For two years we did not have access to a telephone, so I became used to having to walk or take buses to friends and relative's houses just to communicate. I would just walk. I walked for hours and miles with nowhere to go. I walked to become invisible, to become visible, to find reason, to find a past, to find an alternative, to find an identity. I would just walk.

Eventually, my mother kicked my father out of the house during my senior year of high school. My father returned the next day and physically assaulted my mother and tried to take my two siblings with him. Cops were called, and my father was put in jail. My father served a two-month sentence in the Los Angeles County Jail while I graduated from high school and left for college in San Francisco. Six years ago my father gave me a call; he congratulated me on the birth of my daughter. I was unsure of how to take the message. The pain of the anger was still present. Through lots of therapy and open conversations with my mother, I eventually reached

out to my father to establish a relationship. My father told me to come visit him. He lived on Skid Row in a single room occupancy hotel.

During our first meeting I asked my father why he was living on Skid Row. He said that this is where the LAPD dumped him off after he got out of jail. He was given a card with a number for social services and his clothes from when he was first locked up. After talking to many of my father's friends, I would find out that this was standard practice. My father told me that when he first arrived he would walk for days and nights on Skid Row. Walking was the way he could figure out his surroundings for safety and to think. My father would walk all around downtown and think, think of family, past mistakes and the future.

I began taking these walks with my father as I continued visiting him through the years. I noticed that my father would feel comfortable walking in Skid Row but would become physically and emotionally tense whenever we crossed into the downtown area. I asked him about this, and he said that the cops were stopping folks from Skid Row from walking downtown. A border, enforced by the LAPD, separated Skid Row from the downtown L.A. area. His friends and acquaintances were now being arrested for jaywalking, drinking in public, and taking their belongings out of their shopping carts. All of these things went unpunished when he first moved into the area but were now being strictly regulated.

Through the years the areas that the people in Skid Row were able to walk became smaller. The amount of services provided to this population became less. The amount of police on duty in the area exploded. Skid Row was never a happy and safe community. But it was a community in which the residents felt some capacity in social relations and capable of caring for themselves, given a little help. The increased police presence isolated the community from the larger Los Angeles community and from each other since congregation was then limited. These

residents were not just homeless but people with families and histories. The increasing regulation

of mobility and practices were having the effect of leaving the community and its residents as-is.

They were homeless and treated as such. They are treated as people without histories,

connections, or futures. People in a cycle of state, and increasingly private corporate, control

over their bodies, practices, and ultimately freedom.

I began my initial study of Skid Row at this juncture of community and spatial transition.

At first, my interest in Skid Row revolved around narratives in how the community defined itself

and individuals' personal connection to this community. I was interested in this element of Skid

Row because I viewed Skid Row as a space where homeless individuals came to find economic,

spiritual and physical resources (housing, food, and medicine) in a community of individuals in

the same socio-economic class. Through the course of researching Skid Row, I discovered that

the inverse was true. Skid Row represents a social service ghetto[1] that was intentionally

constructed to contain this particular community (read: homeless). Instead of finding this area by

their own initiative, individuals on Skid Row were *put* here by various institutions, including

mental healthcare facilities, drug rehabilitation programs, local and state jails and prisons.

One of my first interviews was with a ten-year Skid Row resident who illustrated this

dynamic of individuals being placed on Skid Row without prior knowledge of its existence.

Douglas: Can you describe Skid Row? The community?

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[1] Cooper, Amy. "Time Seizures and the Self: Institutional Temporalities and Self-preservation among Homeless Women." *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 39.1 (2014): 162-85. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 28 Feb. 2016, 165. Cooper defines social service ghettos as sites where social service organizations abound, but such organizations fail to coordinate the provision or timing of services, producing an incoherent multiplicity of offerings and schedules.

"Ronald": Me personally, I see Skid Row for what it is, we all made mistakes in our life. A lot of people see Skid Row as people being homeless, broke, and always begging. And usually you'll find some people like that, but everyone ain't the same. And Skid Row to me, is if you mind your own business you can make it. If you can survive on Skid Row you can make it anywhere in the world.

Douglas: Why do you say that?

"Ronald": Because, like I said before. I can only speak for myself. I know when I came down here I messed up in the neighborhood cuz I got a record. But Skid Row is not who I really am. And so, I got a job, I pay my rent, I doing just like I would be doing at home. You know some people choose to beg, some people choose to look the way they look. Here on Skid Row you have all the necessities to get up on your feet.

Douglas: What do you mean by necessities?

"Ronald": They have, they got places like the missions where you can go and take showers, you can take a bath, and they give you a change of clothes. Everything. And they got facilities like taking computer classes. Anything you want they offer that on Skid Row. Where you can't get that anywhere in the neighborhood without paying. Everything is more or less--everything is free.

Douglas: Did you know about those services before moving here?

"Ronald": I knew nothing about it until I got here and that's why I stay here. If I go back to the neighborhood to get the kind of services that I get here, I would have to pay for it. But everything is free. It don't cost you nothing.

Douglas: Could you describe the place you're living in right now?

"Ronald":   Right here on 6th and Alameda, I love it, I love it. Because we don't see all the riff raff like down in the heart of Skid Row. You see the drugs, you got the alcohol, whatever it is you gonna find it down there. Over here, it's just like home away from home. It's nice and quiet and everybody low class and everything around that. We got people retired and those that ain't retired got jobs and go to work every day.[2]

Within this interview, I saw that initially, Skid Row is a place of possibility for people, the chance to create a new existence. The construction of and membership in the transitional community is something that comes later in a resident's time in the area. As a site of possibility, as a place for second and third chances, Skid Row is a fragile community, sustaining precarious processes of self-transformation and new forms of relationality. In addition to its internal vulnerabilities, Skid Row has been the site of increasing law enforcement surveillance, but the individuals on Skid Row have been subject to intense media and social encroachment. Skid Row is *the* site of media representations of moral crises in Los Angeles. Media representations of Skid Row show images of bodies in mass that suffer from drug addiction, homelessness, mental illness and poverty taken from the homeless community that live on the streets of Skid Row.

Residents of Skid Row have also become accustomed to short-term, do-gooder tourists of their neighborhood. In addition to being subject to intensive surveillance and policing, the area is periodically the site of Skid Row middle class piety and charity. Thanksgiving and Christmas mark a routinely exceptional time of the year when the population of Skid Row contains more

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[2] "Ronald" (Skid Row resident of 10 years) in discussion with the author, June 2013.

volunteers than actual Skid Row residents. Many of the food serving missions and shelters have

waiting lists of volunteers that reach into the thousands on these dates. At these holiday meals

there are menus developed by world famous chefs, servings by movie, sports and popular

cultural icons and gifts and donations that reach into the millions. Thanksgiving and Christmas

mark days of a societal gluttonous purge of goodwill. Holiday goodwill has hit such a crescendo

that members of several of the biggest missions and shelters have written op-eds and blog posts

attempting to sway people from volunteering on these days. During my first winter studying Skid

Row, a critical call directed to people looking to volunteer during Christmas was posted on the

Midnight Mission Facebook page which stressed this growing feeling:

> This week from Wednesday through Sunday, thousands of people from all over
> Los Angeles will descend on Skid-row. There will be tens of thousands of meals
> handed out by the shelters, groups, and individuals who want to celebrate
> thanksgiving by sharing food with the homeless.
>
> There will be so many volunteers that you won't know who from who on Skid-
> row and there will be so much food given out that a lot of it will go to waste. As a
> friend who used to feed on thanksgiving told me:
>
> "Finding a homeless man who hasn't eaten on thanksgiving is like finding gold!"
> Please don't get me wrong. I don't see anything wrong with sharing food with the
> homeless or anyone. Far from it as I'm writing this Monday Night Mission has
> gone to Skid-row 234 days so far for 2013 just to feed the homeless. The problem
> I have is the fact that there is so much emphasis on giving on Thanksgiving but
> then magically nothing afterwards.[3]

The Skid Row community has made efforts to protect itself from what it views as

invasions from without that are outright hostile in the case of policing and unintentionally

disruptive and conveniently ignorant in the case of holiday charity blitzes. Growing

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[3] Gallegos, Emma G. "The Problem with Volunteering On Skid Row on Thanksgiving." LAist. November 27, 2013. Accessed March 06, 2016. http://laist.com/2013/11/27/the_one_problem_with_serving_skid_r.php.

encroachment into the space of Skid Row has resulted in strict restriction of all recording devices inside service, business and housing sites.

Given the various encroachments into the space of Skid Row described above, it is not surprising that many of the residents with whom I spoke over the course of this study were initially skeptical of me and my questioning. Residents of Skid Row are hesitant in granting any interviews with anyone they do not have a formal personal connection to. This fear is due to this media overrepresentation but also due to many people on Skid Row looking to remain invisible on Skid Row due to criminal activity or strained family and personal relationships. It is within this delicate and suspicious environment that my initial study progressed. Those willing to talk to me repeatedly raised the issues of the Skid Row as unsafe, unclean and its media representation repeatedly came up in conversations with Skid Row residents and service providers addressed in my three years at the site. In one interview a Skid Row resident spoke about how other communities might view Skid Row residents:

Douglas: How do you think the outside folks view this community?

Tony: Some folks look at us like animals. Everybody look the same to somebody driving. You know one down here and one down there, they all the same. Some people see it like that, but the people who are educated gonna look at it different.

Douglas: How do you think they differentiate the two people?

Tony: You're a thug or drug dealer

Douglas: We talked a little bit about the white folks moving in, what do you think about that change?

Tony: It's alright to me. I talked to them and like a lot of them that live and walk around

here, they stop and talk, but the ones with the car, they don't stop and mess

around with you. They get in their car and go back to the loft. [4]

As reflected in Tony's comments, many residents of Skid Row construct the area as outside of and completely removed from the larger society. This spatial understanding of Skid Row is indirectly communicated via the ahistorical quality of residents' stories about Skid Row. In residents' stories of Skid Row, the site of Skid Row remains unchanged. It is the relatively static setting in which residents make profound changes in their own lives (or not as the case may be). People move in and out, around and inside of Skid Row, but Skid Row never changes. Depictions of Skid Row as a setting for the drama of lives-in-crisis support personalized yet formulaic narratives of redemption. Through my four years on Skid Row, most personal narratives followed a distinct script. Person does drugs, person gets in trouble, person loses it all, goes to jail, comes out of jail and is taken to Skid Row, placed in some kind of rehabilitation/job program, goes back to the drugs, goes back to rehabilitation/job program, insert some religious transformation, life turns around, finds a job, becomes the person you see today. I draw attention to the formula not to make light of the issue or to diminish the intimacy of how these narratives are lived by the people who have helped shape this study, but to share my experience of an eerie repetition across these stories. That is not to say the stories were impersonal for me as a listener. In fact, it was after interviewing my own father, that I became aware of a common trope of redemption across residents' personal narratives of crisis and transformation.

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[4] "Tony" (Skid Row resident) in discussion with the author, June 2013.

Douglas: How did you get here?

Dad: I could have went anywhere, but it was all because of you guys, the kids, you guys. I wanted to be there, be a father. A father image. But the time came and the police told me to come and don't come back and that said a lot.

Douglas: Could you talk a little bit about that?

Dad: Yeah, I was drinking that night, me and my wife got in trouble, an argument, fighting. I get kicked out of the house because of my past record. So, I don't know how it happened. I had a choice to go to Lancaster or to come downtown. And I said if I go to Lancaster I wouldn't be able to see you guys, you know. And I said I'm too far from my kids, and I asked if they got a place downtown. A matter of fact it was social services, I remember. And she told me, they got a place called Salvation Army, downtown, I said whereabouts' on downtown and she said 5th and Central. I said wow, I could still go to the program and be close to my kids, if need be. So that's why I chose to go down here instead of going to Lancaster. So, when I got out, I stayed there for 6 months, and nobody knew where I was at, you know I was mad within myself, I said I'm not gonna let nobody know where I'm at. Because I felt bad for being down here. I said "damn I end on Skid Row?" I didn't have the slightest idea what Skid Row was. Until I looked out the window of Salvation Army one morning, I see people shooting up and the police passing right by them and ain't even stop em. They just lighting up, smoking their crack, so I'm looking out the window one morning, and the counselor said, "You like what you see?" I said man Skid Row ain't got nothing on this. She said, "you know where you at?" I said "the Salvation Army", he said "this is Skid Row,

welcome to Skid Row." I said "wow." Then I said "how can I get off of here?" And things added up the longer I stayed in the Salvation Army. I started seeing opportunities, that I can grow and get better, you know. And get my life together. You know we go to meetings, still watching, like you here, and I look at all the services and things they providing for people. I mean you either gonna take advantage of what people give you, or you're gonna reject it. So I took full advantage of mine. I ain't doing badly at all, I mean I could've had everything, but you know that material things, it don't impress me. But as long as I'm living comfortable, and close so if somebody needs me, I can reach out, I would do that. And that's why I'm still here. And I don't have plans of moving, I don't care what people say, as long as I'm comfortable in myself.

Douglas: Could you give me one story that kinda symbolizes Skid Row? For someone who doesn't know about Skid Row.

Dad: I'm glad you asked that question. It could get real spiritual too, this is what is really keeping me grounded right here (picks up tattered bible). You know we-I was always raised up in the church, and I always believe in god, he's my number one. For somebody who never been here, it would scare them to death. Because what you see and what you hear. I mean seeing is believing.

These narratives provide a spiritual and perhaps therapeutic discourse that residents find healing if not also empowering through what Horgan (2009) identifies as "salvation narratives."[5]

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[5] Horgan, Benjamin P. "Salvation Narratives: Alcoholics Anonymous, Storytelling, and the Logic of Gift Exchange." Master's thesis, Bates College, 2009. Accessed March 6, 2016. https://www.academia.edu/2010846/Salvation_Narratives_Alcoholics_Anonymous_Storytelling

Allusions to God are not a means of handing over control to the divine. Rather, these narratives place agency in the hands of the speaker, where their past and most importantly their presents and future are also in their control. This type of narrative is predominately seen in self-help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous. In his study of personal narratives in Alcoholics Anonymous, Humpreys[6] (2000) states that "during meetings, successful affiliates tell the story of their recovery. In the course of helping new members through difficult times, sponsors frequently tell parts of their own or others' stories to make the points they feel a neophyte A.A. member needs to hear."[7] Since most of the service centers on Skid Row deal mainly with rehabilitation efforts for its population[8], "salvation narratives" that are mainly found in these institutions are taken by its members, rehabilitation or otherwise, and utilized to explain their presence on Skid Row. Within these "salvation narratives" there are different types[9] of tropes but the redemptive framework remains the same.

Because the residents with whom I spoke told me about cycles of addiction and then breakthrough moments of transcending out of the cycle—all of this happening against the backdrop of Skid Row as an environment capable of enabling people to bottom out and then

_and_the_Logic_of_Gift_Exchange. Horgan in his study of personal narratives used in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings states that members use salvation narratives in a variety of A.A. practices to ritualize their transformation from a state of addiction to a state of sobriety.

[6] Humphreys, Keith. "Community Narratives and Personal Stories in Alcoholics Anonymous." *Journal of Community Psychology J. Community Psychol.* 28, no. 5 (2000): 495-506. Academic Search Complete.

[7] Ibid pg. 496

[8] Service centers like the Salvation Army, LA Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Hope Gardens, The Midnight Mission, Volunteers of America and Weingarten all provide either housing, job centers, or food coupled with A.A or other drug treatment programs as the heart of their services.

[9] Ibid pg. 499

recover, residents did not relay much in terms of the history of their neighborhood and community. In the narratives of redemption told to me, the actors changed, but Skid Row and its residents never seemed to age. Residents did not discuss how Skid Row had changed over the years unless I prompted them to do so. Their initial narratives never factor in these changes. While these absences of the changing nature of Skid Row may be due to an actor-focused narrative, it suggests that Skid Row and its residents are treated by policy makers and financial stakeholders of downtown Los Angeles as inconsequential.. Or perhaps it reflects a limited sense of agency where a person might enact personal change by getting sober but does not understand him or herself as capable of enacting broader social and historical changes. The political limitation of these narratives is arguably in the Christian story of the redemption of Christ. Skid Row is the site of personal transformations but is only seen as such on the negative slope of a person's life even if that person found their transcendence in the same environment. In some narrative moments, Skid Row is a place full of junkies, garbage, rats, and mental illness. In other moments, it is the site of second and third and fourth chances and miraculous recoveries. Over the course of their narratives, residents portrayed Skid Row as full of temptation and opportunities to fall off the wagon *and* the only place where some people can overcome their addictions and make a life for themselves. I think this is what Ronald meant when he said: "If you can survive on Skid Row, you can make it anywhere in the world." It is like a haunted mirror image of mythic New York City: "If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere, it's up to you New York, New York." Within a Christian framework, Skid Row is the ultimate test of individual will power and self-discipline: If you can withstand temptation here, you will be free of your addiction anywhere.

As a student of performance historiography, I was frustrated by the disconnect between residents' narratives of temptation and redemption and broader historical forces and factors shaping this neighborhood and community. I found this disconnection troubling. It wasn't until I interviewed a man named General Dogon that the research problem began to crystalize for me. General Dogon is a community activist for the Los Angeles Community Acton Network (LA CAN), a non-profit organization comprised of community activists, journalists, and lawyers that work towards affordable housing and non-criminalization of Skid Row's homeless or poor population. I was directed to LA CAN by members at the Midnight Mission and after reading about the work that they were doing in this community I was excited to see how they viewed the work of non-profit organizations in the community and how these non-governmental organizations (NGO)'s fit into the past, present, and future of these communities. Within the first thirty seconds of my interview with General Dogon, he articulated what had been a disconnection for me between residents' stories and the history of Skid Row.

General Dogon: They don't want us here. These white people don't want us homeless

                    people here.[10]

General Dogon has been a Skid Row resident for sixteen years and an activist for the last ten. General Dogon is an energetic and passionate speaker, chain smoking and going off on tangents without waiting for any interjections from his listener. I walked the streets of Skid Row and its corresponding border with the shopping district of downtown Los Angeles. He would point out the new animal salons that have popped up in the last three years with the new "stationary" exercise bikes that are placed in front of new cafes that are sprinkled throughout the "new and

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[10] General Dogon (Skid Row activist) in discussion with the author, July 2014.

improved" shopping district. General Dogon stressed how there were two different existences in downtown Los Angeles. There was Skid Row, where police presence has increased significantly in the last five years, amenities and resources were low, and people were dying and getting locked up in jail. And then there was the other downtown, where people were smiling, walking down the street while drinking their expensive coffee.

General Dogon is loud. As we walked down the streets of downtown, General Dogon would talk about how many new white faces he sees around this area. I can see how uncomfortable he makes the white bodies we encounter. They lower their heads and avert their eyes. *We* gaze upon their bodies. Their bodies and his presence are present in this space. As we will discuss later in this project, law enforcement has restricted the mobility of Skid Row residents into the greater downtown area. General Dogon's body and voice disrupt this consumer space, echoing off the brick walls of newly redeveloped lofts.

As we continue walking, I ask General Dogon how he came to Skid Row. General Dogon states that he became addicted to crack cocaine as a teenager. After years of addiction and robberies to support this addiction, General Dogon was sent to prison for 18 years for 36 counts of armed robbery. In prison, General Dogon met a man called "Magic" who introduced him to African liberation philosophy. It was in prison where General Dogon claimed to have his Malcolm X moment, where he entered into prison as an uneducated addict and left reading over a hundred books in a year, able to reevaluate and change his life. After prison, General Dogon was sent to Skid Row and placed and signed up for the Skid Row Housing Trust and began seeking drug rehabilitation services. As General Dogon told me this story, he seemed to be completely removed from this narrative, almost as if he was reading off a script that he had read

hundreds of times. It wasn't until he described his initial involvement with activism when his energy picked up.

General Dogon: When I got out I knew I wanted to do some social justice work but didn't know what. I was in my room one day and I heard this woman scream. I ran outside and saw a purple shirt. Private security guards. They were twisting her arm up. I ran up on them and told him to let her arm go. He was like "she got a cocaine pipe." I said "you're going to break her god damn arm because she got a cocaine pipe?" And she was like "I ain't got no damn pipe." And when she opened her hand up she had a fucking eyeliner. So I got into an argument with the dude right then. I said these mother fuckers are out of control. I went to LA CAN to basically file a complaint and get some soldiers to come and ride on this place. So I was at LA CAN and was telling them what I saw and what had happened. I met Bilal Ali, he gave me a camera and a clipboard and go get some information. We don't talk about it we be about it out here. So I went out and took pictures of the pigs jacking folks up. Taking down statements, getting witness statement. Came back and we talked and we decided to build a community watch program. We created a community watch program that goes out in the community and monitors the behavior of the private security guards and the LAPD.[11]

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[11] Ibid

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Some members of this community are actively and intentionally shaping the history of the neighborhood and community in manner that protects it as a site of transformation and possibility for newcomers. Some residents undergo additional transformation from getting sober to becoming active members of their community. These active members eventually become a type of activist that works to sustain the community. They work for the survival of the site of opportunity. They work to preserve what enabled them to get sober. A gentrification movement that began in the early 1980s and is currently changing the architecture, demographics, economy and culture of downtown Los Angeles threatens the transformational and sustenance work performed by community members. As middle-class individuals embark to live in a downtown that was previously labeled inhospitable to them due to crime, lack of commerce and housing, the city of Los Angeles and real estate developers are changing this perception by removing and containing the cultural symbol of this inhospitably, the homeless population. Real estate developers began this process by repurposing old dilapidated hotels and office buildings into new modern condos. The previous tenants of these hotels were the homeless community of Skid Row who paid monthly rent.

Hotel owners began to hire private security guards to help evict these residents. Once evicted, these individuals with no housing were ticketed for loitering and their property was deemed trash by the LAPD. Their property was subsequently taken or destroyed. It is this historical moment of eviction and hostile law enforcement from which activists like General Dogon emerge. The protection of transformative space and rights becomes a defining narrative for Skid Row activists.

General Dogon: So that is that is the thing about it, that's the reason why we're still here

                                after the attempt in 2006 Safer City Initiative which brought an extra of

110 police which made it the most highly policed area in the whole world.

That came after we had won, we had won a housing moratorium to stay on

the land. So this is the thing, you see them hotels (he points to several

large hotels a block away), Hotel Barkley, its two around the corner, it's

the Cecil, the Huntington. They call it the for-profit hotels. So the for-

profit hotels, they can make money, they not SRO's, they not Skid Row

Housing trust, but these hotels were just full of po' folks, low income

folks before this gentrification shit we got took over. And what happened

was, there was this guy named Tom Gilmore, like he was the first

developer to get the idea downtown to take some of these old office

buildings, like these right here (points to several old office buildings

directly ahead of us), and they was gutted.

You know white flight? Right after the Watts riots, they was too close, so

they ran out to the San Fernando Valley, Van Nuys, Canoga Park and all

that. And so this guy came up with the idea of taking these old buildings,

kicking a hole in the wall, put a sink and toilet in there and call it a loft,

charging $1500 or a $1000 for rent. So when the other for-profit hotels

found out about this then they tried to illegally evict all the residents on

Skid Row. Now let me tell you something about the tenants, the majority

of the folks living in this hotel were poor folks, low-income folks with

subsidized income with SSI disability, whatever the situation may be.

They didn't make more than about a $1000 per month and that's it. So you

can't afford to go out into the city and other parts of the town because the rent would just kill you, so these hotels would run you 3 to 500 bucks right? So you could pay $400 for rent and still have some change in your pocket, so folks would stay at these homes, but it's like I say, when the other landlords found out about it, they was like "Oh, yall got to go." There was one hotel, you probably read about it on the wall, the Bristol. This guy hired armed security guards to come in the building and in one hour, told everybody in the hotel to get they stuff out and get the hell out. These were security guards, he hired private security guards![12]

In this narrative alone, issues of migration, race, restorative architectural policies, privatization of urban areas, law enforcement, economics, and cultural and physical practices of homeless residents all contribute to the making and remaking of Skid Row visible today. General Dogon's narrative describes how the greed of a few urban developers creates a housing crisis for residents of Skid Row. This history troubles media representations of residents of Skid Row as hopelessly dysfunctional and therefore permanently in crisis. This narrative exemplifies how external forces directly contribute to and play upon the precarious status of Skid Row residents. This narrative tells us in great detail how Skid Row is a changing, rather than a static, site of transformation and that its transformation is embattled. After talking with General Dogon, I wanted to know more about the complex histories of Skid Row. I wanted to know what forces were threatening and working to protect this site of possibility for people like my Dad.

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[12] Ibid

Methodology

When I began this project, I intended to do a critical ethnography.[13] In my conversations with residents, they did not provide me with their history of Skid Row. They told me their individual stories. Every resident had an origin story, which usually begins with being dropped off there, finding community, finding hope. Residents frequently resorted to the religious trope of redemption. This made sense to me because many of the NGOs working in the area are religious organizations. What was troubling to me was that the residents were not able to provide a history of the neighborhood or community or space. They didn't know this history. And they didn't seem to be missing it.

I wanted to know more, so I set out to research all I could find on the history of the neighborhood. In the process of reading primary and secondary sources on the history of Skid Row, I discovered that many of the battles of law enforcement, trash and housing have persisted for nearly a hundred years in the area. While these issues remain, the ways in which these issues are classified as crises and the subsequent solutions to these crises differed considerably, all to failing results. Failing refers to the elimination of these crises to the impacted homeless community. These issues have remained without considerable improvements. Given this reality, the study became less a critical ethnography and more a critical history of how these crises and

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[13] The work of Dwight Conquergood greatly influenced critical ethnography as it is practiced in performance studies. He argued for a deeper reflexivity and dialogue with interlocutors within ethnographic accounts. For Conquergood, ethnography should move past a textual impetus and should engage with populations whose voice is silenced in society. Conquergood states that the ethnographer operates in a liminal space, betwixt and between the academy and the community of her interlocutors. This is an important tenet in critical ethnography as it situates the ethnographer as not completely removed from the interlocutor but also is not the subject. The ethnographer effects and is affected and the work should show this multiple influence through the act of reflexivity.

so-called improvements have been framed rhetorically and subsequently performed members of the community and outsiders. Different tropes emerged. Instead of redemption, I found trash, mobility, law enforcement strategies, housing, public space and ultimately rhetorics of death.

Trash refers not merely to the refuse of material objects and substances but expands to include bodies, temporalities, and practices. Trash becomes performative through *sanitary practices of the street*, which refers to bodily and consumer practices performed with used matter in public spaces. In this case, it is matter that is being reused or repurposed and becomes externalized when performed on the streets by certain gendered and racial bodies. An overt example of sanitary practices of the street is the use of shopping carts by homeless individuals. What once was an article confined to a certain purpose (carrying of food and/or consumer items) or location (shopping mall, grocery store) is now repurposed as a semi-permanent mobile container of supplies and personal objects.

Issues of *mobility* and immobility are influenced by historical constructions of identity, migration and physical capacity. Mobility has always been an issue of homeless populations, resulting in limitations of mobility for economic, hygienic and cultural rationales. Law and order mechanisms developed to police Skid Row have created a de-territorialized system of cyclical incarceration and strict regulation of mobility and immobility beyond prison walls based on petty offenses that are, in practice, survival strategies employed by a population with little to no infrastructural support.

Three *law enforcement* initiatives highlight the current issues of Skid Row. The first is Operation Healthy Streets, a 2012 initiative by the city of Los Angeles that created a task force to implement "cleanup sweeps" in Skid Row. These sweeps attempted to remove waste from the streets in areas downtown, as well as limit the causes of the sanitization issues, the practices of

the homeless population. Second is Safer Cities Initiative implemented in 2003 by the Los Angeles Police Department which transformed the way law enforcement engaged with downtown Los Angeles and Skid Row, resulting in increased police presence and regulation of homeless practices. The Safer Cities Initiative is influenced by the Broken Windows Theory policing strategy. This policing strategy focuses on the correlation of crime with neighborhood disorder.

In order to have any substantial discussion regarding Skid Row one must address the issue of homelessness. Homelessness shapes the rhetoric, visual representations and history of Skid Row. Through studying this history of Skid Row, I realized the issue of homelessness is not defined merely as the lack or want of housing. Many residents of Skid Row have permanent or semi-permanent housing through housing trusts, single room occupancy apartments, work programs *and* the personal choice of wanting to sleep on the streets instead of standard dwellings. The homeless had homes. A simple yet difficult question emerges, how is it possible to be considered homeless and still have a home? This is due to the fluid definition of homelessness. The definition of homelessness has changed based upon political eras and which institutions define it. These definitions point toward a classification that meets certain institutional needs. For example, in the 1980s the federal government changed its definition of homelessness to include specific time frames of non-permanent or temporary housing of over three weeks for individual to be accepted into homeless housing programs. This new definition which put a period of time as a defining marker of homelessness reflected a disinvestment of social welfare programs by the federal government. It was now harder for homeless individuals and families to meet program standards without falling into abject poverty.

Through viewing these regulations and definitions, I realized that homelessness is a physical reality for Skid Row residents but also serves as an important political and cultural marker for certain populations that fall outside of traditional economic workforces and living practices. Historical representations of the homeless from the early twentieth century "hobo" all the way down to the junkie of today's homeless representation reveal a construction of individuals who do not fit within a particular class, social and capitalist's workforce. Homelessness is not just about the lack of a home but a cultural identifier of individuals who live on the edge of our economic and political society. Homelessness is physical condition and a social position that is constantly being redefined.

The changing classification of homelessness and ultimately Skid Row as a place of homelessness can be more readily seen in the issue of housing. Housing serves as a visual marker for political and economic constructions of downtown Los Angeles. Skid Row has an important place in these conversations due to the fact that the question of "what to do with the homeless population?" is essential in any new configuration of the downtown landscape and social economy. Increases and decreases of housing stock for the Skid Row population reflect the changing attitudes about the existence of Skid Row and it's place in the future of downtown Los Angeles. The current gentrification movement and subsequent elimination of previous Skid Row residents' housing stock reveals a strategy of elimination against the Skid Row population.

The issue of space and who gets to occupy it becomes an important issue in Skid Row. The narratives of the Skid Row residents point to a sense of agency of their bodies and also the space of Skid Row. Skid Row has become a place where certain groups and individuals can claim access to when they don't have access to other spaces in society. Skid Row serves a function as a rehabilitative space. What has interested me throughout this project is the access of

this particular space. Who can come and who cannot leave this space? I can come in but many Skid Row residents are disallowed from walking out of this space due to law enforcement artificially constructed borders, where police physically block the movement of certain Skid Row residents. If these borders now exist, can a rehabilitate space coexist with an encroaching economic space? Or is it all or nothing? Skid Row is a part and apart from downtown Los Angeles. With growing economic and legislative pressure to make downtown Los Angeles into a larger cultural space where consumers and visitors can inhabit, what does it mean for the residents of downtown Los Angeles who don't fit within these particular consumer bodies? What does it mean to be a public space if only a certain population of the public can be there? The reality is that these unwanted bodies and the space that they do occupy are deemed unwanted and are under threat.

The rhetoric of death constructs Skid Row as dying and in need of rescue from without via economic revitalization. It is a performative utterance in which saying an urban area is dead or dying is supposed to make it so. This rhetoric is an important discursive act that both ignores those living in Skid Row and directly and adversely influences the Skid Row residents that live there. This dissertation tries to draw attention to the moments of struggle in which officials pronounce an area dead and residents and activists fight for the right to stay in a place where they have the best chance at survival as individuals and as a community. Skid Row is a site where the performance of these crises becomes highlighted.

My conception of performance is greatly indebted to Elin Diamond (1996) who defines performance as "both a practice and a site where cultural norms as values are maintained, reproduced, and challenged. The politics of performance emerges out of the contingencies and possibilities that arise when and where a particular performance comes up against the cultural

conventions framing our interpretations of that event. In that "risky and dangerous negotiation between a doing and a thing done…we have access to cultural meanings and critique."[14] Performances of crises on Skid Row are challenges and possibilities of space, bodies and identities that contain and undo cultural and historical meanings and materialities. From the repurposing of discarded boxes and underused hotel rooms by homeless residents to create temporary and semi-permanent housing, to the business interests use of an era of government disinvestment of urban areas to expand their commercial space and interests to these locations, to the proliferation of tickets for daily practices of homeless residents such as loitering by law enforcement to justify the proliferation of an expanded police force, and to the rhetoric used by real estate developers of a never ending housing stock shortage to gain acceptance for a perpetually rebuilt city center, performances of crises define Skid Row as a space and directs this project.

This study provides a history of performances of the city and Skid Row in crisis. These performances extend from the performative utterance that something must be done to intervention and policing efforts. Through analysis and critique of the various ways that homelessness gets constructed as a crisis, this project provides histories of these constructions and maps how they change over time and how practices of intervention change accordingly. The overall arc of the intervention is to track the historical pattern of the abandonment of communities and denial of services. Additionally it looks at the rhetorical construction of a neighborhood in crisis, and subsequent practices of intervention as a means of complementing the religious, cyclical rhetorical residents use to narrate their individual histories.

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[14] Diamond, Elin. *Performance and Cultural Politics*. London: Routledge, 1996, 5.

What's at stake within this tension is the issue of agency for individuals in the Skid Row community. Narratives of redemption provide a sense of agency to residents living in a society that does not afford them a sense of agency. Even within this narrative a larger recognition of their agency remains absent. This project proposes that a broader historical picture of the neighborhoods' cycles of crisis and embattled services and developments can constitute a recognition of their historical struggles with Los Angeles in a manner that further enables the residents' and communities' sense of agency and purpose.

General Dogon said: "They don't want us here." He might have said, they don't see us as part of their picture of the city. We don't factor into their vision for the city's future. What is at stake across these various constructions of homelessness is the visual culture of the city and the unwanted or otherwise troublesome appearance of homelessness and practices of poverty within the urban landscape. This study is a critical history of intervention strategies used to regulate *and* visual strategies and practices used to resist these regulations. The optics and visual performances of the city play an important role in the constructions of homelessness internal to the community and those that are imposed from without.

One of the important things a move to critical history allows is that it inverts the affect economy of discursive and performance analysis. Through witnessing the "salvation" narrative occur again and again, I realized that these narratives act as a currency for restorative services. In order to get the necessary services, you need to show the body, show the scars, and show the blood. Most of the rhetoric regarding the interests of Skid Row residents starts by showing the body of the people effected by policies. In order to talk about the institutions and state power that have inflicted pain upon this particular community, we must show their blood. This rhetorical strategy, while effective and in many cases well meaning, reifies a progressive march towards

futurity where institutions and the state march towards a future vision of the city from which these scarred bodies and blighted neighborhoods disappear.

One of the key arguments of this project is that there is no "future" being marched towards. Within governmental and business discourses, urban progress is defined by the outcomes of state- and economically-generated crises. An analysis that begins by only focusing on homeless bodies (particularly poor, gendered, black and brown bodies), unknowingly utilizes those bodies as a type currency that is used to create and critique service and punitive institutions. Analysis of presenting the bodies of the homeless before addressing macro institutions indulges in a fantasy of a more progressive state that doesn't really exist.

This project takes a step back to look at how for-profit and non-profit institutions rhetorically invoke stereotypical images and circulate mediated portrayals of bodies- and neighborhoods-in-crisis, or visibly marked by the threat of death and decay, *in order to* call for: public sanitation reforms, increased police presence, the razing or renovation of not-for-profit housing into for-profit housing, stricter regulations on the mobility of homeless and poor people in order to increase the range of mobility for affluent consumers, and shrinking public spaces via the city's incremental privatization.

This critical history is based on primary interviews, secondary literature, and field research that began in the spring of 2012 and concluded in the winter of 2014. Through this time in the field, I conducted over eight usable[15] hours of interviews with various interlocutors ranging from residents that live in and on the border of Skid Row, local politicians, law enforcement, real estate developers, local businesses, and workers in various NGOs. Fieldwork

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[15] Many of my interviews took place in a building that disallowed recording devices and urged that communication inside these institutions remain confidential.

began with introductions to various residents through personal connections with individuals currently living in Skid Row. From there the network of possible interviewees expanded to non-profit workers in the area. Cold calls for interviews were directed to local businesses and real estate entities. Interviews with local politicians were enabled through attendance at weekly Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council meetings. I collected eight hours of recorded interviews and added additional smaller interviews with community members contained in field notes.

Skid Row

Skid Row is a ten-block area located on the eastern side of downtown Los Angeles, California. Los Angeles County is the homeless capital of the United States with over 29,000 homeless individuals in 2015 with Skid Row consisting of 3,463 of that population, making it the largest concentration of poverty in a geographical area.[16] Skid Row is the home of over 30% of the city's shelter beds and contains a majority of the city's homeless services. The population of Skid Row is predominately African American and male. In addition, the rates of mental disability and substance abuse are nearly twice the rate found in other areas in Los Angeles County, marking the individuals of Skid Row as a vulnerable population.[17]

Since the 1900s, the area of Skid Row has been the site of transient populations. Beginning as an agricultural hub, the area saw an explosion in population comprised of Central

[16] "2015 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count - LAHSA Documents." Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. May 2015. Accessed March 16, 2016. http://documents.lahsa.org/Planning/homelesscount/2015/HC2015CommissionPresentation.pdf.

[17] Reese, Ellen, Geoffrey Deverteuil, and Leanne Thach. "'Weak-Center' Gentrification and the Contradictions of Containment: Deconcentrating Poverty in Downtown Los Angeles." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34, no. 2 (2010): 310-27.

American, South American, and Midwestern residents willing to work the fields and factories in the hopes of permanent residence. Los Angles was billed as a "new city," which differed from the factory and industrial cityscapes that marred much of the Northeast and offered a significantly better climate for agriculture and relaxation than its Midwestern and Southern counterparts. This vision of Los Angeles expanded with land speculators in the early 1920s. These developers envisioned Los Angeles as a decentralized city with populations disbursed throughout surrounding areas with the hope of limiting blight in the downtown area. With assistance from land speculators and national advertisement through the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, developers fostered a real estate boom in Los Angeles. New residents were promised a safe and quiet retreat from the hustle, bustle, and noxious fumes of large Northeast cities.

Running somewhat counter to this narrative, industries were promised a vacant industrial city waiting to be built, and businesses were promised an eager and educated workforce.[18] The downtown area of Los Angeles shifted from a primarily agricultural hub to a manufacturing base. In 1914, the Ford Motor Company opened the first auto assembly plant to assemble Model T Fords in downtown Los Angeles followed by McDonald Douglas establishing his aviation manufacturing base in the area.[19] As the suburbs of Southern California expanded, downtown Los Angeles was being built as *the* commercial and business district of the area. This dual vision in the 1910s of Los Angeles as suburban paradise and emerging dense metropolis would come to

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[18] Klein, Norman M. The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory. London: Verso, 1998.

[19] "Los Angeles Almanac - Demographics, History, Statistics." Los Angeles Almanac - Demographics, History, Statistics. 2012. Accessed March 16, 2016. http://laalmanac.com/.

a head in the 1920s. The concept of what constituted the "city" expanded in Los Angeles due to its large amount of undeveloped land, which allowed commercial and residential interests to create their own unique communities. Due to population growth in the exurbs and suburbs in Los Angeles, downtown businesses and real estate suffered. The downtown area was not seen as a vital space for commerce like in other large cities. During the 1920s, single room occupancy hotels (SROs) began to spring up, and hotels that used to be occupied by middle-class tourists in the early part of the century turned to blighted properties that serviced the emerging transient populations looking for work in the emerging industries and factories in the nearby areas.

In the 1930s, business leaders attempted to revitalize the downtown area, but they were unsuccessful. During the Great Depression migrants from the Midwestern Dust Bowl moved to downtown Los Angeles in hope of obtaining work in the remaining factories and fields. The state government began, and later abandoned, a program to construct camps for these migrants in 1935, at which time the Resettlement Administration took over the project. "Even with the assistance of the Federal Government, Californians feared the additional expenses for welfare relief and public education. As a result, Los Angeles 'declared war' on these many emigrants by implementing the 'Bum Blockade' in February, 1936. Usurping California's state powers, Police Chief James E. 'Two-Gun' Davis, with the support of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, many public officials, the railroads, and hard-pressed state relief agencies, dispatched 136 police officers to 16 major points of entry on the Arizona, Nevada and Oregon, with orders to turn back migrants with 'no visible means of support'."[20] At the California-Nevada line near Reno, a white

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[20] Weiser, Kathy. "The "Bum Blockade" - Stopping the Invasion of Depression Refugees." The "Bum Blockade" - Stopping the Invasion of Depression Refugees. May 2013. Accessed March 16, 2016. http://www.legendsofamerica.com/ca-bumblockade.html.

billboard showed a baton-wielding, blue-uniformed cop with his palm thrust out near an imposing red "STOP!" sign and the phrase "Los Angeles City Limits."

The Dust Bowl migration policy marks a continuation in a series of large-scale immobilization campaigns waged in the earlier part of the 20th century. Directed towards transient groups, these campaigns began in response to the "Great Migration" of African Americans from the South to the Midwest. Local citizens forced businesses to reach out to interstate officers to stop the migrating African Americans from entering their cities and gaining employment in emerging industries. As city centers began to emerge, the interests of local business communities in accordance with municipal interests of ethnic homogeneity impacted interstate migration inside and outside formal jurisdiction. What makes the "Bum Blockade" unique is that this supposed jurisdiction reached beyond city borders to state lines. The city's border is no longer based on geographical lines but is expanded when necessary to meet local needs. Urban centers and their interests are tied into larger national and transnational migration and economic movements. Issues of economic stability and population heterogeneity become factors that impact visions of how the city should be constructed and who gets to populate it. These issues of who gets to populate the city intensified in the following decades and influence the political and cultural struggles of downtown Los Angeles today.

Downtown Los Angeles began to transition to a hub for the commerce and entertainment of the city. This revival would last for ten years until the interstate freeway was constructed through the downtown area allowing for the growing car culture of California to move populations further out into the Los Angeles Valley. The downtown once again became a site of low-level factory work, attracting a growing transient community of white men looking for work. What had been a relatively small community of poor and transient residents since the

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1920s expanded in the 1960s with the population boom in California. Since the 1920s, temporary shelters, single room occupancy hotels (SROs), and poverty-centered social services had been in existence.[21] Community organizations and churches hoping to serve the growing population established service centers, temporary housing, and rehabilitation centers.

During the 1960s, the area known as Skid Row turned from a small population of poor white males to a large, ethnically diverse community characterized by politicians and urban planners as a symptom of urban blight, non-existent industries, and limited social policies geared towards the poor. At this time, national discourses about "urban blight" began to influence the way local interests were perceived in downtown Los Angeles. The 1960s concept of "downtown" moved from a vision of local construction to a larger national conversation that placed "downtowns" as hubs of transnational business and interstate tourism. Unique among North American cities, downtown Los Angeles would become an important site where local residents would challenge the creation of a space shaped by the discourses promulgated by transnational business interests, interstate migration, and tourism.

With an influx of new jobs and industries in the region in the 1970s, Los Angeles embarked on its largest revitalization movement in the downtown area since post-World War II to assert itself as a world class city with a world-class downtown center.[22] This commercial and economic boom corresponded to a need to bring in more suburban white residents into the downtown area. In the 1960s, Los Angeles experienced significant "white flight" from its urban center to suburban enclaves in the Valley after the Watts Riots. This exodus from the city

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[21] Spivack, Donald R. "History of Skid Row Series, Paper 1." LeRoy Neiman Center. September 15, 1998. http://leroyneiman.ucla.edu/camilosr/essaysr.htm.

[22] Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. London: Verso, 1990.

corresponded to the large-scale national migration of whites to homogeneous suburban areas. This migration was a response to large black migrations into cities in the 1950s and desegregation in the 1960s. This shift in demographics from a predominately white base to a mixed race urban region alarmed city politicians, commercial businesses, and downtown developers. Downtown LA embarked on a "revisioning" of its urban past, specifically the image of a 1920s urban center of entertainment and commerce. Architecture from this '"classical" period was highlighted in local magazines, new large-scale renovations to dilapidated theatres began, and a push for local tourism to the downtown area was forged. These efforts were used to craft a specific aesthetic that appealed to suburban white families. Developers and city planners began working in combination to make money and whiten the neighborhood's composition. One of focal points of this revitalization was eliminating signs of poverty and the visibility of low-income individuals that then populated the downtown area.

Vision of Urban "Revitalization"

Revitalization is a term used by Stacey Sutton[23] to reference the place-based people strategies and people-based place strategies utilized by governments, developers, and local actors in efforts of inner city redevelopment and urban renewal. Place-based people strategies focus on improving the lives of residents within a designated area through investment incentives, local hiring clauses, empowerment zones, and beautification projects. People-based place strategies, also called gentrification, refers to how the behaviors of people are altered with the goal of

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[23] Sutton, Stacey A. "Rethinking Commercial Revitalization: A Neighborhood Small Business Perspective." *Economic Development Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (2010): 352-71.

increasing the value of a place.[24] Sutton notes that people-based place/gentrification strategies are a tenet of revitalization that has increased in the post-industrial era in the United States. The increased use of this strategy can be seen in increased home ownership programs in urban cities and the inducement of artists to move into a neighborhood as "pioneers" to make that neighborhood more appealing to wealthier households, thereby increasing rents and property values. Revitalization is an umbrella term that connotes the use of gentrification and place-based strategies of redevelopment by state intervention in poor and "blighted" inner cities to provide optimal conditions for the private development of property.

In the US, revitalization is linked to efforts that began in the post-war years when older cities began to lose residents and employers to the suburbs. This shift occurred due to "new modes of transportation, an influx of poor migrants, and the unprecedented competition from the suburbs that now placed these older urban centers at a disadvantage in the struggle for business and residence with more in taxes than they required in services."[25] During this period, southern blacks moved into urban areas looking for work in industries, while white, middle-class, and affluent residents, employers, and employment opportunities increasingly moved out. Central city leaders sought to bring back their previous tax bases and blamed the emergence of black blighted neighborhoods for the lack of investment in downtown areas. These leaders looked to tear down many of these blighted neighborhoods and called for funding for highways that linked downtown areas to the suburbs and tax breaks for businesses to reinvigorate these downtown neighborhoods. This process of reaching out to a former white tax base and blaming new

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[24] Ibid pg. 356.

[25] Teaford, Jon C. The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

migrants and racial groups has become a familiar rhetorical cycle in revitalization efforts. In short, revitalization hopes to bring back a mythical white affluent class to its downtown area as residents and employers. Urban revitalization is a thanatology[26] of a city with race, class, gender, and income serving as quantifiable aspects that determine a city's vitality or its failure to thrive. Revitalization signals state-based strategies used to reverse a city's death. Just as the death of cities has been racially coded in the US, revitalization strategies are designed to alter the racial and ethnic composition of cities.

Existing scholarship on gentrification focuses on the ways that people-based place strategies enact social and cultural change in affected urban communities.[27,28,29,30,31] The consensus among scholars is that gentrification is a process involving four main elements[32]: reinvestment of capital, social upgrading of locale by incoming high-income groups, landscape change, and direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups. Three main branches of

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[26] The rhetoric of death gets used to frame the biopolitical governance of homeless populations in a neoliberal era characterized by brutal neglect and displacement.

[27] Deener, Andrew. "Commerce as the Structure and Symbol of Neighborhood Life: Reshaping the Meaning of Community in Venice, California." City & Community 6, no. 4 (2007): 291-314.

[28] Lloyd, Richard D. Neo-bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City. New York: Routledge, 2005.

[29] Patch, Jason. ""Ladies and Gentrification": New Stores, Residents, and Relationships in Neighborhood Change." Research in Urban Sociology Gender in an Urban World, 2008, 103-26.

[30] Tissot, Sylvie. "Of Dogs and Men: The Making of Spatial Boundaries in a Gentrifying Neighborhood." City & Community 10, no. 3 (2011): 265-84.

[31] Zukin, Sharon. Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

[32] Lees, Loretta, Tom Slater, and Elvin K. Wyly. *Gentrification*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2008.

research have emerged in critical analyses of gentrification: the role of government bodies in revitalization efforts, dispersal of local communities, and "revanchist" cities.[33]

State interventions have historically played a significant role in assisting incumbent communities through public housing and rent stabilization policies that emerged in the 1970s.[34] Due to increased development and a real estate boom in urban areas in the first decade of the 2000s, local governments have moved away from providing assistance to incumbent communities. Instead, they favor strategies of wholesale demolition of high-rise public housing followed by mixed-income developments.[35,36] The new strategies encourage the inclusion of higher-income groups and increased housing subsidies for middle-income groups to move into these areas.[37] As gentrification increases in urban areas, scholars have placed heavy emphasis on the role of governments as key facilitators in these urban revitalization movements. Hackworth and Smith[38] argue that government intervention has increased due to the devolution of federal activity onto the states, which in turn makes them pursue redevelopment. In addition, due to

[33] Smith, Neil. *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. London: Routledge, 1996.

[34] Newman, Kathe, and Elvin Wyly. "The Right to Stay Put, Revisited: Gentrification and Resistance to Displacement in New York City." *Urban Studies* 43, no. 1 (2006): 23-57.

[35] Hackworth, Jason. "Public Housing and the Rescaling of Regulation in the USA." *Environment and Planning A Environ Plan A* 35, no. 3 (2003): 531-49.

[36] Wilson, William J. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York: Knopf, 1996.

[37] Wyly, Elvin K., and Daniel J. Hammel. *Islands of Decay in Seas of Renewal: Urban Policy and the Resurgence of Gentrification*. New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 1999.

[38] Hackworth, Jason, and Neil Smith. "The Changing State of Gentrification." *Tijd Voor Econ & Soc Geog Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 92, no. 4 (2001): 464-77.

costs of real estate and infrastructure, local governments take on the economic risks of gentrification as it is beyond the means of individual capitalists.

Local governments' emphasis on stimulating economic population change has led researchers to analyze the ways that the dispersal of incumbent communities is utilized in gentrification efforts. Scholars of urban planning have named this gentrification strategy exclusionary displacement.[39,40] Hyra[41] (2014) identifies displacement as "changes of residence which are foisted on people, which they did not seek out on purpose, for which they may lack the social and economic coping resources." Displacement is fueled through "reimaginings" of cities by local governments and businesses in which poor, and often minority, residents are seen as barriers to economic and social progress through their occupation of the "prime" real estate of urban centers. From this vantage point, poor and minority residents must be removed in order to remake cities along higher economic and class lines. This approach was adopted in many large cities in the United States during the 1980s when a shift occurred in public policies that explicitly called for a dispersal of extreme poverty areas, particularly in large minority-dominated inner cities, by encouraging the inclusion of higher-income groups and housing subsidies.[42]

[39] Clark, Eric. "The Adventure of Generic Gentrification." *Global Gentrifications Uneven Development and Displacement*, 2015, 453-56.

[40] Slater, Tom. "The Eviction of Critical Perspectives from Gentrification Research." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research Int J Urban & Regional Res* 30, no. 4 (2006): 737-57.

[41] Hyra, Derek. "The Back-to-the-city Movement: Neighbourhood Redevelopment and Processes of Political and Cultural Displacement." *Urban Studies* 52, no. 10 (2014): 1753-773.

[42] Smith, Neil. "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy." *Spaces of Neoliberalism Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe*, 2012, 80-103.

The projected impact of these policies was the decentralization of poverty in these cities and a move from industry-based economic centers to a symbolic economy based on cultural production and consumption.[43] There is a correlation between poverty deconcentration policies and gentrification, with gentrification serving as a valued outcome of these state-subsidized strategies to remake cities along higher economic class and racial lines.

Gentrification relies on historic preservation. Urban areas located in central city districts are deemed as "historically significant" with architecture seen as a locus in which a city's heritage and its "past" are exalted and reified. Herzfeld[44] argues that the designation of a neighborhood as "historically significant" activates gentrification and residential dispersal policies. Historic preservation movements tend to favor a nostalgic version of the historic city as ethnically homogenous (read: white), composed of higher-income populations and visited by middle-class tourists and consumers. In so far as historic preservation efforts embrace a whitewashed version of the city's past, they frame minorities and lower-income residents as interlopers on this heritage in a manner that resonates with the revanchist city with its vengeful attitude toward poor and minority residents.

Gentrified cities are marked by a dramatic shift in urban policing strategies that target "undesirable" populations through zero-tolerance policies. For example, revanchist strategies strengthen the territorial authority of the police[45] and reinforce the exclusionary logics of arrest and incarceration. New York City is just one example of the proliferation of these policies in the

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[43] Zukin, Sharon. *The Cultures of Cities*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995.

[44] Herzfeld, Michael. "Engagement, Gentrification, and the Neoliberal Hijacking of History." *Current Anthropology* 51, no. S2 (2010).

[45] Herbert, Steven Kelly. *Policing Space: Territoriality and the Los Angeles Police Department*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

1980s and 1990s. Atkinson[46] (2003) argues that revanchism is now a part Britain's urban policies

that deal with public space issues on control and safety; MacLeod[47] (2002) and Swanson[48]

(2007) describe policies that deal with homeless populations in Scotland and Ecuador,

respectively, and bear a striking resemblance to revanchist policies in the United States. A

favored strategy in the US is the criminalization of activities associated with poor and minority

groups.[49] These studies point to a shift from a containment strategy that confined certain

populations in urban spaces away from highly-trafficked areas to police practices that focused on

dispersal of these populations from urban centers. As a result, urban spaces undergoing

gentrification become contested grounds where visions of future and past collide; practices,

movements, and bodies struggle to produce, inscribe, and erase the city.

Skid Row as Contested Space

1970s downtown revitalization aimed at containing poverty and the homeless population

in a small geographical area downtown. A major tenet of these policies was the concentration of

low-income housing near the Skid Row community.[50] In the 1980s, containment policies

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[46] Atkinson, Rowland. "Domestication by Cappuccino or a Revenge on Urban Space? Control and Empowerment in the Management of Public Spaces." *CURS Urban Stud. Urban Studies* 40, no. 9 (2003): 1829-843.

[47] Macleod, Gordon. "From Urban Entrepreneurialism to a "Revanchist City"? On the Spatial Injustices of Glasgow's Renaissance." *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 602-24.

[48] Swanson, Kate. "Revanchist Urbanism Heads South: The Regulation of Indigenous Beggars and Street Vendors in Ecuador." *Antipode* 39, no. 4 (2007): 708-28.

[49] Healy, Gene. *Go Directly to Jail: The Criminalization of Almost Everything*. Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 2004.

[50] Goetz, Edward G. "Land Use and Homeless Policy in Los Angeles." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 16, no. 4 (2002): 540-54.

increased with the establishment of the SRO Housing Corporation by the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and a higher concentration of the city's social services of rehabilitation centers, shelters, and free kitchens. These policies act as what Reese, DeVerteuil, and Thatch identify as spatial fixes.[51] Spatial fixes are movements of capital into areas of concentrated urban poverty. Spatial fixes refer to new investments in upper-income residential housing and large commercial developments, increased nightlife, and entertainment capital. When new incoming capital is greeted by long-standing poverty, there is increased pressure to contain or disperse the poor and reinvent the area as one that is more congruent to the economic interest of developers, business, and landlords to the detriment of poor residents. Containment of poor residents and the aesthetics of poverty are isolated to specific areas of the urban space, with increased street cleanings and trash removals in areas with influx capital and the lack of these services in containment areas. The creation of authorized zones of commerce are essential to spatial fixes. To quote my mother, "Big money and no money don't mix."

New urban center investments rely on the physical and economic geographies that surround them. Harvey[52] (1982) argues, "specific sites can command a premium land rent precisely because of their privileged location relative to previous investments, especially those considered the most desirable by those with the most income and capital — and their distance from other undesirable elements."[53] Skid Row acts as a barrier to economic interests of

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[51] Reese, Ellen, Geoffrey Deverteuil, and Leanne Thach. "'Weak-Center' Gentrification and the Contradictions of Containment: Deconcentrating Poverty in Downtown Los Angeles." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34, no. 2 (2010): 310-27.

[52] Harvey, David. *The Limits to Capital*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982

[53] Ibid pg. 68.

profitability. It is within this contestation of interests between residents, non-profit organizations, businesses, and developers that a compromise was made to contain Skid Row and increase the amount of housing and social services in the community. This increase of services in the community corresponded with a shift of the demographics of Skid Row from traditionally white to African American. In a personal interview with a long-standing Skid Row resident and service worker, this demographic shift is articulated:

Jeff Diedrich: The effects of civil rights transformed that so that what happened is, the majority of people on Skid Row became black male—young black males. And the drug of choice, the recreational drug of choice, was no longer alcohol, but it was crack. And because of civil rights, now black people have the right to be in the same places as poor white people, so they could avail themselves of the services of the missions and other services that were available in this area.[54]

This narrative documents an alternative history of the downtown area and even Skid Row itself. Segregation policies were engrained within the community of Skid Row. Larger macro forces of segregation and micro-level practices of racial borderization altered the demographic makeup of Skid Row and the mobility of residents within the area. The proliferation of crack cocaine in inner city Los Angeles in the early 1980s further changed the area with an influx of homeless and chemically-dependent African-American men. This influx, coupled with the

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[54] Dietrich, Jeff. "LAPD Interviews Catholic Worker's Jeff Dietrich." Interview by Kathy Shepard. Los Angeles Poverty Department. 2011. Accessed March 2013. http://lapovertydept.org/wordpress/jeff-dietrich/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=55&Itemid=1.

increasing availability of services for various populations, led to a dramatic spike in individuals residing in Skid Row. The slow rate of development of new shelters and an increasing population led to a dramatic standoff in 1984. The Homeless Organizing Team put up circus tents and housed 400 people across the street from LA City Hall while demanding housing and jobs for LA's homeless population. The protest brought attention to the exploding problem of homelessness. The Homeless Organizing Team was made up of Skid Row residents and staff and volunteers from the Inner City Law Center and the Catholic Worker. The housing and economic problems of Skid Row were now expanding into the larger downtown area.

Developers and businesses joined with residents and non-profit organizations in an uneasy alliance to propose policies that would make Skid Row a self-contained community. For residents and non-profit organizations there was hope for greater access and supply of necessary resources. For developers and businesses there was an assumption that Skid Row and its residents would be contained and not spill into the Historic Business District, allowing for a spatial fix that would maximize their new investments. Politics, and cultural visions of urban futurity are maintained and constructed through the use of spatial fixes that create artificial geographic community boundaries. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) supported these policies by enforcing laws and ordinances to keep the homeless population isolated within Skid Row and out of the developing downtown area.

In the 1990s, these policies shifted from containment to deconcentration/displacement when the homeless population of Skid Row exploded due to a decreased amount of low-income housing in California in the midst of a real estate revival in downtown Los Angeles. Many of the old hotels that used to house residents of Skid Row were converted into high-rise condominiums for a growing business class looking to work near the downtown area. In addition to this change

in the neighborhood, in the early 2000s, county supervisors adopted a deconcentrated regional

plan to develop shelters and provide additional assistance and services to homeless people.[55]

Rather than locating new shelters and drop-in service centers in Skid Row, they planned to locate

them away from downtown LA, in neighboring cities, such as El Monte, Glendale, Long Beach,

Pasadena, and West Covina. The new policies that address poverty and specifically the homeless

population attempt to move this population into other areas of the city. But due to the creation of

the service center ghetto[56] of Skid Row in the 1970s and 1980s and the maintenance of

community identity, there remains a strong (albeit smaller) presence of this population and the

governmental and social agents that '"assist" this populace. This has led to a reemergence of

police containment strategies to isolate homeless residents from the larger downtown area while

deconcentration policies in Skid Row are being implemented. A personal interview with a Skid

Row resident highlights this issue of physical and discursive isolation:

> Now the desire to disappear Skid Row is starting up again. And
> I'm pretty fearful of where's it's gonna go. They're splitting up
> Skid Row. I think that the key is to try to save the housing. I think
> that they wanna get rid of it as fast as they can. But, you know, the
> thing we have going for us is their mistake, is that they've allowed
> everybody to come down here—in a very small area—and nobody
> else wants us, and nobody else wants the services or the people,
> and short of machine-gunning everybody down here or sending
> them to the gas chambers, which I don't think they're gonna do,
> we're gonna be here one way or another. And they're gonna have
> to deal with us. There's nothing that--the people here are resilient.
> And the people here know how to suffer. And I think that is
> powerful. I don't think we're gonna build Nirvana down here. I
> don't think they're gonna destroy us. So that's what I would say. I

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[55] Streisand, Betsy. "Homeless Sprawl." *U.S. News & World Report*, December 2006, 14th ed., sec. 23.

[56] Dear, Michel J., and Jennifer R. Wolch. *Landscapes of Despair: From Deinstitutionalization to Homelessness*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987.

> look to the strength and the resiliency and the willingness of the
> people to suffer. [57]

An examination of the authorized and unauthorized historical records and oral histories of Skid Row demonstrates that the apparent progress of the urban center of Los Angeles was not progressive but contingent, random, and politicized. Progressive histories suggest a forward movement toward the general improvement of people's condition; if so, then an absence of improvement suggests a lack of progress. An interrelational view of history, society, environment, embodied performances, discourse, and institutions provides an opportunity to explore the origins and consequences of those historical shifts, social structures, and institutional developments in terms of the gaps, discontinuities, and politics that have shaped and influenced their emergence.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter Two begins by analyzing the construction of trash. This chapter is devoted to the formulation of trash as a political concept. I argue that within the context of urban city centers "trash" refers not merely to the refuse of material objects and substances but expands to include bodies, temporalities, and practices. This chapter looks at the historical construction of trash in Los Angeles' downtown and attempts to demonstrate the degree to which the concept of "trash" has been used to frame homelessness in a manner that links certain bodies and identities to materiality and practices of waste removal and management or the lack thereof. Trash becomes linked to issues of urban squalor and prompts discourse into the necessities of revitalization. The

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[57] Dietrich, Jeff. "LAPD Interviews Catholic Worker's Jeff Dietrich." Interview by Kathy Shepard. Los Angeles Poverty Department. 2011.

presence of trash becomes a mechanism for the revitalization of downtown Los Angeles by business and real estate interests.

Chapter Three tracks the shifts of strategies of containment to resident dispersal to the current law enforcement strategy of arrest and release ad infinitum. It chronicles the recent history of policing policies in the Skid Row area and maps this effort with larger national and transnational movements of homeless and urban center policing. The efforts in Skid Row are informed by the crime prevention "success" in New York City in the 1990s of the broken windows theory of crime and its correlation with neighborhood disorder. I argue that Skid Row represents a site in which the aftermath of the application of the broken windows theory, a criminological theory that argues for crime prevention strategies aimed at curtailing neglect and signs of neglect (which differs from it as a theory[58]) and the criminalization of the homeless creates a new citizen subjectivity, one that is defined by constant surveillance, limited mobility through the creation of borders, and economic and social precarity developed through criminal status. Issues of incarceration, location-specific containment of crime, mobility of citizens, and criminality of particular practices and citizens are part of a correctional strategy that expands from the interiors of correctional institutions to urban streets. This chapter articulates the symbolic and concrete connections of correctional mechanisms that have led to Skid Row, downtown Los Angeles, and other urban spaces becoming battle grounds on issues of the life and death of the city and also the life and death of those that work, visit, and live in these urban areas.

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[58] Barton, Michael. *An Exploration of the Importance of the Strategy Used to Identify Gentrification*. Urban Studies. *Forthcoming*.

Chapter Four examines the failure of contemporary neoliberal revitalization programs in Skid Row and downtown Los Angeles and the impact that this has had on housing. The chapter will move from this event and look at the articulations and impacts of urban gentrification in the area and connect it to residential concerns over the elimination of affordable housing and eviction processes. This chapter examines how the rhetoric of death and disease is mobilized to make way for revitalization in the form of a "revisioning" of downtown Los Angles. This "revisioning" utilizes rhetoric and discourse of death and disease to frame economic and political divestment issues of downtown Los Angeles. This chapter argues that policies of housing act as a focal point in this rhetoric. Control of housing quantity and quality is at the forefront in reshaping the area's class and ethnic makeup to appeal to consumers and potential middle-class residents.

In the concluding chapter, I articulate major ideas in the previous chapters, pointing to relevant pathways of research beyond the scope of this study. In the chapter, I place into conversation major concepts of trash, law enforcement and housing. In doing so, I begin to map historical conflicts and rhetorical strategies that have contributed to our current understanding of Skid Row as a place and community. Analyzing these moments of conflict I argue that Skid Row is made through moments of crises in which these issues come to the forefront as important issues in the revitalization rhetoric of the downtown urban center. Revitalization rhetoric utilizes the performative utterance of casting an area of a city as dead in order to justify the existence of new real estate and economic policies. In this chapter I look at how revitalization rhetoric frames the issue of homelessness, homeless peoples and practices as markers of the vitality an urban center. The existence of homelessness and its practices is used as a justification of new development. I conclude the chapter with a reflection of the development of the study in terms of

its contribution to studies of rhetorical and visual strategies of gentrification, revitalization and homelessness.

Through chapter-long considerations of trash, law enforcement and housing policies, this dissertation works to argue that Skid Row is defined by historical visual and rhetorical strategies that have continuously maintained, transformed and defined the space. It is through this analysis that we can see that the issue of homelessness and homeless bodies has been an ever present and generative presence in the development and redevelopment of Los Angeles.

Chapter Two
Trash

Indigent transients heading for California today were warned by H. A. Carleton, director of the Federal Transient Service, "to stay away from California."

Carleton declared they would be sent back to their home States on arrival here due to closing of transient relief shelters and barring of Works Progress Administration work relief in the State to all transients registered after August 1.

"California is carrying approximately 7 percent of the entire national relief load, one of the heaviest of any State in the Union," said Carleton. "A large part of this load was occasioned by thousands of penniless families from other States who have literally overrun California."

Carleton estimated the transient influx at 1,000 a day.

Los Angeles Herald-Express, August 24, 1935

"A wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay, does not signify death. In the presence of signified death—a flat encephalograph, for instance—I would understand, react, or accept. No, as in true theater, without makeup or masks, refuse and corpses show me what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being."

Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection*

In 1984, my aunt Hazel, with her husband John, opened up a group home in South Central Los Angeles. My aunt was the head academic counselor for Locke High School in Watts for over 20 years, and John had just recently established a Baptist church with himself in the role of pastor. They stated they wanted to do "the good work" in the community. The 1980s represented a dramatic increase in child welfare cases and foster care placements in California due to a growing number of incarcerated mothers and an increased exposure of children to substance abuse.[59] A majority of these children were

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[59] Chipungu, SS, and TB Bent-Goodley. "Meeting the Challenges of Contemporary Foster Care." National Center for Biotechnology Information. Winter 2004. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15072019.

African-American males between the ages of 6 and17. These were the children that were unadoptable. In its 20 years of operation, the group home housed no less than 10 boys a day with many staying for over 5 years.

The group home became the central hub of my family with nearly every one of my aunts and uncles working there in some capacity, and it being the location for all Thanksgiving dinners. I spent most of my childhood afternoons here playing with the boys. It was an eight-bedroom labyrinth with a large staircase in the back of the house that led to a door the let you out right in the heart of Crenshaw. It was the place that I got into my first fight, where I learned to cook, where I met my first friends, brothers Anthony and Jimmy. From the ages of 4 to 9, these were my best friends. A pair of half-brothers, they were placed together in any foster home they went to. Their mother and father were both addicted to crack cocaine and were arrested for possession. They were in the child welfare system since they were 2 years old. Jimmy was named after Anthony's father and attempted to be protective of his brother.

I remember times when they were forced to fight on that back staircase by the other boys. There, fists flinging into each other's skin, their limbs vibrated on contact with each bounce off the stairs. They would hug each other after every fight, their bodies in close contact as their heads faced the door. In 1989, the boys left the group home. I remember being allowed to go with my father to drop them off at their sister's house. They were going to finally be reunited with the rest of their family. Three years ago I saw Jimmy again. My father introduced him to me at the Midnight Mission in Skid Row. He

had been in and out of jail for the last ten years and was going to try to get clean and better in Skid Row.

When our paths crossed yet again last month, Jimmy was just getting out of jail again and was in the Weingarten program and excited. I asked him about Anthony. He said that he hadn't seen his brother since 1999. He said that when we dropped him off in 1989 his life went to hell. In that same house his older sister's husband would go on to molest his youngest sister for 5 years. When he and his siblings finally had the opportunity tell someone, their sister disowned them, and they were put back into child welfare but this time separated. When they turned eighteen, they were put out of the system and had to find their own way. After being arrested for drug possession, Jimmy was sent to jail and was released into Skid Row in the late 90s. Since then, he has been back and forth from jail and Skid Row for a majority of his adult life. When asked again about Anthony, he simply stares forward, shakes his head, and says, "When they kicked us out, we had nowhere to go; we had nothing. Everyone treated us like trash. I have not seen or heard from my brother since 1999. I think he died a long time ago and no one even cared."

This chapter is devoted to the formulation of trash as a racial, gendered, and political concept. I argue that within the context of urban city centers, trash refers not merely to the refuse of material objects and substances but expands to include bodies, temporalities, and practices. This chapter looks at the historical construction of trash in Los Angeles' downtown and attempts to demonstrate the degree to which the concept of trash has been used to frame homelessness in a manner that links certain bodies and identities to materiality and practices of waste removal and management or the lack

thereof. The performative utterance of declaring a place or practices or particular bodies unsanitary (trash) is a rhetorical strategy of neoliberalism, which then enables the area to be "cleaned up" and, in the name of cleaning it up, appropriated by developers and city officials interested in using those areas of the city to promote for-profit ventures. I argue that sanitary practices of the street inspire laws designed to eliminate those practices from public view.

I begin with a discussion of the issues of human dumping on Skid Row. Human dumping is a byproduct of "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) policies in which mental health institutions, correctional facilities and homeless services physically bring unwanted individuals (parolees, mental patients, drug addicts) to Skid Row and leave these individuals without resources. To understand how this activity came to be, I examine the historical construction of Skid Row as a place for homeless and unwanted bodies. I do this by looking at the historical construction of homelessness beginning with the 19th century "hobo," then the Hooverville and Dust Bowl homeless communities that emerged during the Great Depression. Eventually, I turn to examine how immigrants, people not in the workforce and drug addicts became included under the homeless/unwanted umbrella. I map these histories to show how issues of homeless subjectivity influence current homeless policies in Los Angeles resulting in Operation Healthy Streets, a public service campaigned aimed at "cleaning" up Skid Row by removing property of the homeless residents. Through my interactions with members of LA CAN I learned of the concept the "Dirty Divide." The "Dirty Divide" is a term developed by LA CAN to explain how there is divide and inequality of sanitary resources available for residents of Skid Row compared to the rest of downtown LA. The chapter

builds to a theorization of trash and how practices examined in this chapter influence this new conception, one that addresses materiality, practices, and temporality. The chapter concludes with current architectural and policy changes in downtown LA that attempt to physically alter the urban environment to exclude homeless residents and their practices.

I define *sanitary practices of the street* as traditional bodily and consumer practices performed with used matter in public spaces. In this case, it is matter that is being reused or repurposed and becomes externalized when performed on the streets by certain gendered and racial bodies. An overt example of this is the use of shopping carts by homeless individuals. What once was an article confined to a certain purpose (carrying of food and/or consumer items) or location (shopping mall, grocery store, etc.) is now repurposed as a semi-permanent mobile container of supplies and personal objects. An item that is inherently a vehicle of consumerism and one-time use becomes an object closely linked to personhood, survival, and reuse.

The (re)use of shopping carts, clothing items, open-air bartering spaces, hygienic materials, and bedding are examples of items and practices that are performed on the streets by homeless individuals and become identified as sanitary practices of the street when done outside of traditional spaces like the home of work space. These practices are part of the larger category that I name *visible practices of poverty*. While we tend to think of these practices as "dirty" or idiosyncratic or "crazy" or otherwise socially inappropriate, embarrassing, or shame inducing, I name them sanitary practices in order to acknowledge the agency of these people and their capacity for self-care despite the lack of infrastructural support.

Homeless Dumping on Skid Row

> Doctors at College Hospital diagnosed Steven Davis as suffering from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and schizoaffective disorder. Doctors at the Costa Mesa mental institution prescribed him numerous drugs to deal with paranoid delusions that had led to an earlier suicide attempt.
>
> But that didn't stop the hospital from hauling Davis into a van and driving him more than 40 miles north to downtown L.A., where they dropped him off outside the Union Rescue Mission. When mission officials complained to the hospital, the van returned and drove Davis a few miles south to another shelter. Davis wandered away without ever entering.
>
> Davis turned out to be the key to uncovering what Los Angeles prosecutors described as the largest case of homeless dumping they've investigated to date.
> In a settlement announced Wednesday, the L.A. city attorney's office said that College Hospital had dumped more than 150 mentally ill patients on skid row -- long a magnet for the region's most vulnerable citizens -- in 2007 and 2008.[60]

As the city of Los Angeles engaged in a housing and policing strategy that attempted to undo the containment policies of homelessness in the downtown since the late 1980s, mental hospitals, juvenile facilities, and state-run incarceration centers still treated Skid Row as a place to send their unwanted. The ultimate irony is that these institutions serve as places where the unwanted of society are sent. In 2014, a Glendale hospital agreed to pay $700,000 in civil penalties to settle a lawsuit accusing it of dumping a homeless patient on Skid Row.[61] Another 2014 lawsuit alleges that a woman with a history of mental and physical health problems was dumped in front of the Union

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[60] DiMassa, Cara Mia, and Richard Winton. "College Hospital to Pay $1.6 Million in Homeless Dumping Settlement." *Los Angeles Times*, April 09, 2009. http://articles.latimes.com/2009/apr/09/local/me-homeless-dumping9.
[61] Holland, Gale. "Glendale hospital to pay $700,000 in skid row patient-dumping suit." *Los Angeles Times*, August 27, 2014.

Rescue Mission on Skid Row from a hospital van with the name of Tri-City Regional Medical Center. That's the former name of Gardens Regional Medical Center, a fully accredited, not-for-profit acute-care hospital. The patient was allegedly dressed in paper hospital clothes and had no money, identification, or medication, and no arrangements were made for shelter.[62] In 2007, the broadcast journalism show *60 Minutes* investigated several cases of homeless dumping, detailing narratives of patients dropped off in the middle of the night in Skid Row with only a hospital gown and no forms of identification or means to contact family.

As the cases above and the narrative at the beginning of this chapter attest, Skid Row serves as a grounds in which moral, health, gendered, sexual, economic and racialized abject bodies are placed through the means of NIMBY politics. NIMBY, an acronym for "Not in My Backyard," describes the phenomenon in which residents of a neighborhood designate a new development (e.g. shelter, affordable housing, or group home) or change in occupancy of an existing development as inappropriate or unwanted for their local area. NIMBY politics are simply containment and exclusion strategies for unwanted abject bodies and practices[63].

In *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva[64] (1982) examines the concept of abjection and how it has been utilized to describe the societal exclusion of certain bodies and identities from spaces and discourse. The abject is the repressed and literally unspeakable

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[62]Abram, Susan. "Hospital accused of dumping mentally ill woman on Los Angeles' Skid Row." *Los Angeles Daily News*, April 29, 2015.

[63] http://www.homelesshub.ca/solutions/affordable-housing/nimby-not-my-backyard

[64] Kristeva, Julia, and Leon S. Roudiez. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

force that linger inside a person's psyche. The abject serves as a contrast to Lacan's

"object of desire." The object of desire allows a subject to coordinate his or her desires,

thus allowing the symbolic order of meaning and intersubjective community to persist,

whereas the abject is radically excluded and represents the place where meaning

collapses."[65] It is neither object nor subject; the abject is situated, rather, at a place

before we entered into the symbolic order. The abject is situated at a place of the primal

or animalistic. For Kristeva, abject bodies are bodies that represent death and waste and

are symbolically and physically removed from society.

Feminist and Queer theorists have taken this concept to examine the practices and

discursive ways feminine and queer bodies have historically been what Barbara Creed[66]

(1993) states as "constructed as 'biological freaks' whose bodies represent a fearful and

threatening form of sexuality." This positioning of women and queer bodies as abject has

important implications for not only the construction of identities but the material

boundaries imposed on these bodies. Judith Butler[67] (1993), in *Bodies that Matter,*

describes how bodies are subjected to a normalization process that never fully reaches the

essence of the norm itself, in that case, "sex," This oxymoron of an ideal norm is actually

inherent to the status of the norm itself as it corresponds to both a social construction

describing a majority of behavioral and material characteristics and an ideal in the sense

that nobody can actually incarnate absolutely the norm. Butler uses the notion of

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[65] Ibid, pg. 2.

[66] Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous-feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge, 1993.

[67] Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

abjection to describe "those 'unlivable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life that are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject." The abject constitutes precisely this excess considered as waste by a system that can find an economy with it.[68]

Sexual and racialized bodies are excluded from society and placed in the zone of abjection, which is Skid Row. The LGBTQI community is adversely affected, with 70% of the homeless youth served by agencies identifying as LGBT (Williams Institute, 2012). 60 % of Skid Row residents are African-American males. In addition Skid Row also is the home of sizable populations of the mentally disabled, the drug-addicted, parolees, and former members of the child welfare system. These are populations that other communities refuse to house and, in turn, place in Sid Row. Due to lack of resources these bodies must perform sanitation practices visibly. Practices of these individuals are considered abject, and any abject practice these bodies perform (shitting, pissing, bleeding, etc.) further alienates them from "normal," "clean" society.

The homeless body is a political and historical construction that is now aligned with trash-based practices. These bodies begin as migratory subjects that are excluded due to perceived economic, racial, physical, sexual, cultural, and moral contamination. Historically, homeless individuals represented agentic migrant workers who were unwanted and turned away, and this view and subsequent policies of homelessness have transformed homelessness into a construction of non-agentic populations who are de-

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[68] Lambert, Leopold. "# PHILOSOPHY /// Normative Bodies vs. Abject Bodies: A Small Reading of Judith Butler." The Funambulist Magazine. July 19, 2012. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://thefunambulist.net/2012/07/19/philosophy-normative-bodies-vs-abject-bodies-a-small-reading-of-judith-butler/.

institutionalized and dumped in Skid Row. Issues of agency and mobility are thus seen as an inherent enemy to the creation of a homogenous city center. When these excluded bodies become fixtures in these centers, they serve as visible reminders of "otherness" present in the construction of the city.

Los Angeles tried to contain these bodies through isolation policies centered on the creation of service center ghettos as suburbs, exurbs, and institutions sent their unwanted persons to be contained in Skid Row. Skid Row became a human dump yard. As resources dwindled in Skid Row, the sanitation practices of these individuals became more visible. Abject practices of shit, dirt, and reuse of objects became aligned with these bodies. These bodies remained. As the Los Angeles downtown shifted towards a constantly moving consumer body, these bodies remained.

The homeless body represents an immobile body, a body that represents long-forgotten practices of the city. A city that smells. A city that has dirt. A city that has non-human animals that aren't house trained cats and dogs. A city that is used and is reusable. The homeless body becomes a body that uses the city. Anybody. The homeless body represents a body that must be regulated and cleaned. It is a historical body marked by its temporality. Loitering laws and acceptable city practices are directed at homeless individuals. Any individual that attempts to use the city in a non-regulated way risks becoming a homeless body, a criminal body. The city now represents static constant movement, a picture on a grey 99 cent postcard of blurry limbs and no faces with a large building backdrop. It is not meant to be used, only to be played with and in. The people that use it are trash that must be cleaned. Historically, city governments and urban police forces have criminalized these practices in order to control the mobility of certain racial

and economic classes. Anthony still has not been found. No one even cared; he was meant to be lost. The city, I think he died a long time ago, and no one even cared.

Since 2007, a new public health sanitation framework has emerged. Public health officials monitor, inspect, and declare particular areas of the city "unsanitary." The declaration of particular neighborhoods as unsanitary carries the power of a performative utterance, initiating cleanup effort and urban architectural changes that limit the capacity and mobility of homeless residents. What is more, the designation of an area as unsanitary carries symbolic meaning with particular social implications. By framing the environment of Skid Row as a collection of unsanitary practices, it marks specific bodies as not having the agency to care for themselves. Because the working assumption is that residents do not have the capacity for self-care, they are denied the infrastructural resources to perform socially-accepted practices of sanitation. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. This line of thought has created a political environment in which Skid Row residents are forced to rely on city-issued cleaning services in the form of Operation Healthy Streets and are denied basic sanitary resources. This is an environment where the different permutations of trash, property, and being are performed on and through the bodies of the homeless residents. What I call sanitary practices of the street acknowledges the capacity of homeless populations to perform self-care, even if their practices do not uniformly reproduce socially-accepted ideas about and practices of sanitation and self-care.

Late 19th Century and Early 20th Century Construction of the Homeless Body

One of the major questions that followed me on this project was "why Skid Row?" What is it about this area that creates a space for homelessness to exist and not other spaces in the city, state or nation? Why is homelessness so condensed in this space and not spread out to other spaces in the city? In order to answer these question I realized I had to learn how Skid Row as a space of homelessness came into existence. While doing this research I realized that homelessness and the homeless identity as we currently view it, came to be through historical occurrences that seldom had any relationship to domicile living. In order to understand the construction of Skid Row, I needed to understand the historical and cultural construction of homelessness.

This section sets out to analyze the historical American construction of the homeless body and homeless subjectivity. Historically, homelessness has not been an issue of housing but of bodies that are transient and/or do not fit within a work force. This iteration of the productivity of the body and its relationship to homeless subjectivity has transformed into one that equates homelessness with issues of migrancy and its politics of physical and cultural contamination through the framework of dirt and sanitary practices. In the United States, the earliest iteration of what we may call homeless subjectivity appears in the early 19th century with the emergence of the railroad. Young men would find temporary work laying railroad tracks. When the work was done, they would illegally ride the trains from city to city looking for temporary work as farmhands in rural areas or factory workers in urban centers.[69] Originally called "hobos," these young men were defined by their constant mobility and limited existence in an emerging industrial

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[69] Bryson, Bill. *Made in America: An Informal History of the English Language in the United States*. New York: Avon Books, 1996.

economy that relied on worker fixity. This class of individuals were primarily composed of Civil War veterans who were unable to find work after the war. The railroad tracks became makeshift veteran's halls for men looking to replace a gun in their hand for a hoe.

Soon the population composition of the hobo began to change when in the late part of the 19th-century America suffered a severe economic meltdown caused by overexpansion driven by railroad speculation. Major companies such as the Northern Pacific Railway, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway declared bankruptcy.[70] A public panic to cash in paper currency for gold, a subsequent depletion in the country's gold reserve, and bankers calling in their loans to private industry as the value of the dollar continued to decline led to a domino effect in which home and business loans defaulted, resulting in the closing of 500 banks, taking their depositors' life savings with them. During this time unemployment soared. The nation's roads and railways were filled with the unemployed searching for a better life. The newly unemployed joined the hobos, panhandling their way across the country in search of jobs.[71] The hobos, and the subsequent response to them in the Progressive Era, mark the first instance of homelessness and transiency as a national issue.

The Progressive Era is noted as a period of political and social reform in the 19th and early 20th centuries. A response to the economic turmoil and political corruption that marked post Reconstruction America, progressive politics focused on the problems

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[70] Timberlake, Richard H., Jr. "The Panic of 1893." In *Business Cycles and Depressions: An Encyclopedia*, edited by David Glasner and Thomas F. Cooley. New York: Garland Pub., 1997.

[71] "Hobo 1894: Hard Times in America." Hobo 1894: Hard Times in America. 2014. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/hobo.htm.

caused by emerging industrialization such as poverty, women's suffrage, and moral ineptitude. To solve these societal ills, the movement focused on education, economic regulation that focused on disbanding business monopolies, and a movement towards efficiency in all sectors of society. It is this move towards an efficiency model that delineates 19th-century informal tactics of assisting transient populations to the regulating and formal systems of the 20th-century and 21st-century models. Efficiency in the Progressive Era is noted as a move towards modernization of the political structure but also the body of the worker and citizen. The industrial efficiency model of scientific management called Taylorism was lauded as providing a model in which performance of different areas in political, business, and social systems could be quantified and therefore judged on its efficiency compared to its counterparts. To fight the ills of industrialization, an industrialization model of production and management was used.

Until the 20th century, homeless and transient individuals were considered a local and often rural problem. But as cities began to grow and an influx of formerly rural citizens began to look for jobs in the emerging manufacturing industries, the issue of people living without shelter became an urban problem. To cope, the jailhouses of growing cities often allocated space for non-incarcerated individuals who needed shelter for the night.[72] The Progressive Era marks a city and industrial response to the formerly rural and now urban problem of transiency. This is an interesting change in spatial perspective as we will see later when we discuss how current issues of homeless

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[72] Kusmer, Kenneth L. *Down & Out, on the Road: The Homeless in American History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

populations are only noted as an urban issue with rural homelessness rarely acknowledged.

During this period, charitable organizations, mostly religious, built "lodging houses" to address shelter needs. "In exchange for shelter, food and prayer services, lodgers were required to perform what was known as a 'work test', consisting of several hours of manual labor, such as breaking stone or cutting lumber."[73] The application of work to housing served two functions of the Progressive Era efficiency model: economic and moral. The stone and wood produced would be sold and generate the funds necessary for the maintenance of the lodging. The "work test" was used to single out individuals whose work ethic and morality did not measure up to the new industry standards of sufficient worker labor.

Twentieth century industrialization marks an era when work ethic and moral fiber began to be linked. The dichotomy of "deserving" versus "underserving" began to emerge. The work test was believed to identify the "deserving," those willing to work but temporarily unable to secure employment. The "undeserving" were labeled as tramps and relegated to traveling illegally on railcars and lived in semi-permanent camps outside the legal and moral purview of municipalities. This group was looked down upon in disdain for what was understood to be a shunning of modern industrialized existence through a refusal to work.[74] During this period, housing insecurity resulted largely from economic

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[73] Ibid. pg. 74

[74] Ibid. pg. 75

insecurity and temporary marginalization from work and was understood in these terms.[75] The number of people seeking shelter at lodging houses fluctuated with economic downturns and upswings as well as with seasonal cycles of agricultural and industrial production. Lodging-house administrators were tasked to identify and eliminate those among shelter-seekers with morally inferior tramp sensibilities. By the beginning of the 20th century, municipal-run lodging houses emerged alongside those that were privately run. The system of placing individuals into the groups "deserving" and "undeserving" in regards to lodging would prove to be a defective yet oft-used model during the crises of the Great Depression.

The Great Depression and the Modern Construction of Homeless Subjectivity

I want to forego the oft-discussed geopolitical, economic factors and climate that comes with analysis of the Great Depression and present a non-hell-and-brimstone reading of this era of American history, one that focuses on the creations that arrive from this crisis. In this case we will look at the construction of informal community networks that were created during the Great Depression and instances in which the state, in a period of crisis, reifies and creates itself as a performative state. I argue that before Roosevelt's New Deal, which arguably helped the conditions of most Americans, there was a crisis-born potentiality of a new structure of American communities and that it is this form of potential community and personhood, which is in fact historically-rooted,

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[75] Rossi, Peter H. *Down and out in America: The Origins of Homelessness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

that the residents of Skid Row are attempting to continue.[76] This point will be made at

length in Chapter 4, but this current chapter will build the foundation of this critique.

It is during the Great Depression that sanitation and criminal activity began to be

linked, almost like a precursor to the broken windows theory. Hoovervilles were the sites

where this connection and the subsequent conflicts surrounding it were played out. These

communities were self-sustaining and provided an alternative living arrangement for

bodies considered unwanted by main stream society. The sanitary practices of the street

and ability to survive under ruthless conditions are similarities that Hoovervilles share

with the Skid Rows of today. Response by the state to withhold and deny resources is

also one of the key factors these communities share and will be discussed in depth later in

the chapter. What interests me about Hoovervilles and current homeless encampments is

the varying aggressive actions used by the state to disband these communities.

I argue that it was when late Depression-era Los Angeles economic policies

highlighted a push for tourism and industry by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce

that a contradictory and violent strategy began to emerge, a strategy that reflected a larger

national strategy regarding issues of poverty and poverty-based practices. An anti-

migrant strategy focused on limiting, criminalizing, and eventually forcing relocation for

Mexican-American, Asian-American, and Dust Bowl populations. These policies laid the

foundation for the environment that led to sanitation battles in the 1980s and 90s and

began to become articulated politically and physically in the *Lavan v City of Los

Angeles*[77] case. The continued push by the city for policing of sanitary practices of the

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[77] Lavan v City of Los Angeles (United States District Court for the Central District of California September 05, 2012).

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street is linked to the beginning of the revitalization movement in the downtown area in the early 2000s. Led by the city's new police chief, William J. Bratton, Los Angeles took steps to crack down on these practices by its homeless population.

The Depression of the late 19th century marks a beginning of a transient homeless population. The Great Depression of the 20th century marks a moment when transiency of the homeless population in America changes into an issue of fixity. It is this issue of fixity that is at the heart of the issue of homelessness and the city and one that caused the federal government to intervene during the Great Depression. Fixity reifies a spatial dynamic in which boundary and place are articulated in fixed performances of personhood in unfixed places. Fixed performances of personhood can be defined as normal, everyday personal behavior, emotions, and actions performed in spaces where such acts are socially and politically regulated. As we will see, the Great Depression created communities of these fixed performances in traditionally regulated spaces.

Hoovervilles

The Depression era impacted homelessness not only in sheer numbers but also demographically. Women, families, African Americans, and middle-class persons became vulnerable to mass homelessness. While single men gathered in previously established transient lodging houses and Skid Rows, newly homeless families had to build shanty towns on the outskirts of cities. The shanty towns were called Hoovervilles in cutting reference to Roosevelt's predecessor President Herbert Hoover. The largest

such Hooverville was in St. Louis, Missouri with as many as five thousand residents on the riverfront just south of the MacArthur Bridge, now site of the iconic Gateway Arch.

Hoovervilles were makeshift communities made out of discarded materials and non- economically viable work such as scavenging. Members of the community went into the city during the day to find food and odd jobs such as washing windows and picking up coal along the railroad tracks for heat for cooking or heat for keeping their homes warm. Their homes were tiny, sometimes made out of orange crates or crushed cars or wood. Members of these small communities relied on cooperation and a sharing of resources to secure survival. Some Hoovervilles received donations from markets and food suppliers and railroad companies who, in many cases, owned the land that Hoovervilles sprouted up on and allowed these communities to stay on the land. Often entire families lived in the Hooverville, and the children even attended community-created schools. These schools were taught by former teachers who had lost their jobs. Previous expertise and a sharing of goods were used to create a semi-egalitarian community that could be defined as communitas.

Victor Turner's concept of *communitas* is helpful in explaining the development and importance of the type of community that Hoovervilles represent. Communitas, according to Turner, is a relatively structureless society that is based on relations of equality and solidarity and is opposed to the normative social structure[78]. Communitas arises from a liminal period when society and identity are without structure. Victor Turner describes liminality as a threshold between two points of reference. For Turner,

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[78] Turner, Victor W. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure*. Chicago: Aldine Pub., 1969.

liminality represents a space and time that connects two physical, social, religious, or psychological constructs in everyday social drama or a culture's religious rituals.

The concept of liminality is drawn from the concept of rites of passage developed by Arnold Van Gennep.[79] Van Gennep describes the rites of passage as a three step process involving "separation, margin and aggregation[80]," a pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal stage. The pre-liminal stage represents an initial separation from social reality, a symbolic marking of distancing; the liminal stage represents an ambiguous phase in which it is connected to the past, present, and future but isn't connected to the past, present, or future, a place where social constructs are temporarily unstable; and the post-liminal stage represents the passage of states and a return to social reality and obligations.[81]

Turner utilizes Ganeep's theory and extends the concept of the liminal. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are both betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony.[82] Liminal beings are often marked as different. Liminal personage offers an interesting social dichotomy in that the liminal phenomena reveals a social bond that is gone and has not yet occurred and has yet to be fragmented and pulled apart.

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[79] Gennep, Arnold Van. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.

[80] Ibid. pg. 94

[81] Turner, Victor W. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York City: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982.

[82] Ibid. pg. 96

Social life is a type of dialectical process that involves successive experiences of high and low, homogeneity and differentiation, equality and inequality. Communitas gains it meaning through the deconstruction of this normative order. Communitas, according to Turner, is the ultimate vision of a culture. While ideal, this form of society is often temporary. For Turner, societies must maintain a balance between communitas and structure in order to survive. This balance generally takes the form of a cycle in which structure is temporarily suspended during rituals that reignite a sense of communitas in various ways depending on the type of ritual. For example, "religious vision becomes sect, then church, then a prop for a dominant political system, until communitas resurges once more, emerging from the spaces of freedom often found in betwixt-and-between situations."[83] Liminality and communitas are temporary and structurally limited, and according to Tuner, they both dialectically serve to reaffirm the existing social order.

Edith Turner[84] (2012) notes that the first example of communitas is the "spontaneous communitas." Spontaneous communitas is a feeling that comes unexpectedly and unites various individuals. "It defies deliberate cognitive and volitional construction and is at the opposite pole to social structures, that is, the role sets, status sets, and status sequences consciously recognized and regulated in society and closely bound up with legal and political norms and sanctions." After spontaneous communitas a cycle of communitas/structure/communitas ensues. Communitas can enter society through three phases: a liminal period of social change of status, such as the changing of

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[83] Turner, Edith, and Victor W. Turner. "Performing Ethnography." *The Drama Review* 26, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 32-50.
[84] Turner, Edith L. B. *Communitas: The Anthropology of Collective Joy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

job positions, adolescence, students, and people at times of disaster. Marginality, people who live near the edges of structured society whose group of origin, the so-called inferior group, they look to for communitas while live in the structured positions of society. Most activists, writers, artists, and philosophers reside in this category. The final category includes those from beneath structure who are labeled as 'inferior.' These are usually women, the poor, minorities, children, and native groups. Hoovervilles are examples of communitas that arise through the liminal period of the Great Depression in which economic change led to a change in stature and status for their inhabitants. It is in this liminal phase that Hoovervilles are created as egalitarian, structureless (or anti-structure) societies. Hoovervilles represent a diverse and complicated response to conditions of poverty and homelessness that point to potential alternative practices and communities.

I am making the claim that Hoovervilles are sites of potential communitas located in communal living spaces. I am hesitant to explicitly call Hoovervilles sites of communitas and wish to focus on their potentiality in that it represents an alternative egalitarian society based on subsistence needs. By focusing on this potential, we displace Hoovervilles and Hooverites as being historically-situated and can look at these communities as a set of performances and practices by their residents *and* the state. Hoovervilles are responses to a lack of social services with the *unhygienic* conditions of many of these sites due to intentional actions by local and state governments to provide resources to these sites, requiring their residents to enact sanitary practices of the street. The Los Angeles Hooverville was founded by the homeless on a five-acre vacant lot near Firestone Boulevard and Alameda Street, adjacent to the downtown. As we will see with

the current Hooverville-like conditions of current-day Skid Row, this Depression-era

Hooverville was torn down due to health reasons.

We are unable to make historical claims about the feel of these Hoovervilles due

to lack of personal narratives and slanted coverage of these communities by journalists

and researchers of the time, labeling the men and women living in these towns as dirty,

uncouth, and criminal. These descriptions were linked to the economic and racial

background of the Hooverville residents where fear of growing ethnic populations was

situated in communities' attitudes toward Hoovervilles. One example of this is seen in a

June 22nd, 1935 *Seattle Times*[85] article titled "Pair Stabbed at 'Houseparty' in

Shacktown," detailing a stabbing in a Hooverville community. The following is an

excerpt from Joey Smith's[86] (2012) analysis of Hooverville media coverage of the event:

> A "huge Negro with a gold tooth" stabbed two other black men on June
> 24th, 1934 at the climax of a "house" party. The author, while being
> hesitant on calling the shacks "houses," shamelessly gave a monstrous
> depiction of the black attacker and of "King George's Palace"—the home
> of the victim whom the author mocked through a liberal usage of
> italicization and apostrophes. These exaggerated, almost barbaric
> descriptions were central to the sensational journalism style that helped to
> widen the gap between white civilization and the rowdy blacks, who
> represented only a sliver of the Hooverville community at 29 out of a total
> 700 men in the spring of 1934.

Smith argues that violent and criminal exploits dominated coverage of

Hoovervilles with race serving as a key descriptor, which acted to distance Hoovervilles

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[85] "Pair Stabbed at 'Houseparty' in Shacktown." *Seattle Times*, June 22, 1935.

[86] Smith, Joey. "A Tarpaper Carthage: Interpreting Hooverville." Interpreting
Hooverville. Spring 2012. Accessed March 23, 2016.
http://depts.washington.edu/depress/hooverville_seattle_tarpaper_carthage.shtml.

and their residents from the rest of a city's citizenry. The effect of this is a racialization of class, where poverty and homelessness are situated along racial lines. Still, their exploits were heralded throughout the *Seattle Times*' coverage of Hooverville, with their race used to demonstrate their distance from white society and explain their propensity for a barbaric, homeless existence.

In addition to the racialization of class and homelessness, Hoovervilles were condemned for their unsanitary conditions. As discussed above, building material and goods were often reused or taken from the garbage, and toilets and sanitary practice spaces were limited. Cities refused to build additional bathhouses for homeless residents and slums. In addition to ceasing construction, cities discontinued maintenance on the public bathhouses that were available. Due to this lack of public service, Hoovervilles had no means of trash removal or sanitary spaces. Hoovervilles began to be overrun by trash and disease. These conditions helped to further the outlook of Hoovervilles as not just dangerous spaces but unsanitary spaces. To combat these conditions, many Hoovervilles developed local governments that addressed the needs of these communities and attempted outreach to the larger community to get these needs addressed.

In discussing Hoovervilles, it is important to note that not all of these communities were the same or utopian in nature, with issues of segregation, racism, sexism, and classism reflected in many of these communities. Hoovervilles are not linked geographically or historically to the Skid Row of today but are linked through specific practices, the capacity of their residents, and state-based actions against the continued existence of these communities.

The homeless population of this period differed from previous eras as single women composed a larger share of the homeless than in earlier eras. This was in part because of their increased participation in urban labor markets after World War I. When the war ended, single wage-earning women had a higher rate of unemployment then men in the early 1930s. In addition, homelessness among African Americans also increased during the Great Depression. Until World War I, black homelessness was relatively rare. This changed when 500,000 African Americans migrated from Southern States to the North for jobs in the emerging industries in urban areas. Racial discrimination in the North meant black workers were more vulnerable to economic downturn. As a result, blacks in the North suffered higher rates of homelessness in the general population, making up between 15 and 27% of urban shelter residence in 1931.

Even with high rates of homelessness and poverty amongst women and the African-American population, these issues were not addressed until media began documenting the plight of "respectable" white men who became homeless. The most famous instance of middle-class white male economic distress was the "Bonus March" and the subsequent creation of the largest Hooverville in the United States just outside of the federal core of Washington D.C in 1932. On June 15th 1932, 43,000 marchers— 17,000 World War I veterans, their families, and affiliated groups—gathered in Washington D.C to demand cash-payment redemption of their service certificates. Service certificates were awarded bonuses to qualified veterans based on a long-standing statute that awards veterans payment for the difference between what soldiers earned and what he could have earned had he not enlisted.

The roots of the march began on May 15, 1924, when President Calvin
Coolidge vetoed a bill granting bonuses to veterans of World War I, saying "patriotism...
bought and paid for is not patriotism." Congress overrode his veto a few days later,
enacting the World War Adjusted Compensation Act. Each veteran was to receive up to
$500 for domestic service and $625 for international service.[87] Amounts of $50 or less
were immediately paid. All other amounts were issued as Certificates of Service maturing
in 1945. This 20-year wait period was the rallying point of the march with Bonus
Marchers demanding immediate cash payment of their certificates. On June 15, 1932, the
House of Representatives passed the Wright Patman Bonus Bill, which would have
moved forward the date for World War I veterans to receive their cash bonus, but on June
17 the US Senate defeated the Bonus Bill by a vote of 62-18. For two months, the
marchers lived in a Hooverville on the Anacostia Flats, demanding action from President
Hoover. These Hoovervilles were tightly controlled, and in order to live in the camps
veterans were required to register and prove they had been honorably discharged.

On July 28, 1932, Attorney General William D. Mitchell ordered the police to
remove the Bonus Army veterans from their camp. When the veterans moved back into
it, police drew their revolvers and shot at the veterans, killing two. The U.S army
intervened the next day by marching on the Bonus Army with fixed bayonets and tear
gas. The U.S infantry entered the various erected camps in the city, evicting veterans and
their families. When the Bonus Army fled, President Hoover ordered the assault stopped.
General MacArthur, commanding the U.S infantry, chose to ignore the president and

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[87] Dickson, Paul, and Thomas B. Allen. *The Bonus Army: An American Epic*. New York:
Walker & Company. 2006.

ordered a continuing attack. In all, 55 veterans were injured. In the two years that the Washington D.C veterans' Hooverville existed, over 1000 veterans and 70 police officers were injured in various skirmishes.

While Hoovervilles represent informal responses to the national crises of homelessness, the homeless epidemic of the Great Depression led way to a more formal response in the economic and political expansion of local municipal services and charity organizations. In the early 1930s, rescue missions and wayfarers' lodges, the primary charitable institutions of Skid Row, were overpopulated and had to turn away thousands of individuals and families looking for services. Municipal authorities faced similar dilemmas and strains on their resources. Local municipalities scrambled for shelter space and also for new policies to accommodate the growing homelessness emergency. Vacant buildings were pressed into service, and most large cities provided case work and other services for the homeless in addition to food and shelter.[88] The formerly rigid and punitive policies that defined charities and homeless services in the earlier part of the century persisted in some places but in larger cities met resistance. In New York City, a statute that limited stay at a shelter to five days a month was changed after a thousand homeless and unemployed people marched in protest against the policy.

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[88] Levinson, David. *Encyclopedia of Homelessness*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004.

Figure 1. A depression-era soup line, shown in the 1930s. – Chicago Tribune archive photo

The Federal Transient Program

One of the biggest issues in addressing the issue of homelessness was the migrancy of many citizens attempting to find work and services in different states. Many laws entitled only legal residents of the state to receive any form of public relief. With the millions of persons crossing state lines during the Depression, homeless transients were in need of federally-funded relief. The Federal Transient Program (FTP) was established under the Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA) in May of 1932. The Federal Transient Program was designed to provide states with assistance for their growing transient

populations. The FTP defined transients as anyone who had lived in a state for less than one year. The local homeless were served under a state's general relief fund.

The initial FERA program was established under the Hoover administration and gave loans to the states to operate relief programs. The Federal Transient Program under Roosevelt was an expansion of FERA in that it allowed the government to run and finance municipal shelters. In smaller communities the federal government contracted with private charities, hotels, and restaurants to feed and house the transient community. FTP-run shelters and work camps provided recreation, education, medical care, and work relief. Single women and families were not permitted in these FTP-run shelters and instead were given private housing and apartments in hotels. Some of the key motives of FTP and later New Deal policies were the protection of women, the bolstering of nuclear family life, and the promotion of masculine breadwinning.[89]

In September 1935, the Roosevelt administration began phasing out the FTP and other direct relief programs under FERA in favor of a second New Deal that shifted policy toward public works, and policies directed at the unemployed, persons of old age, children, and the disabled. FTP was eventually eliminated due to arguments by opponents within the government that stated that the transient camps developed under FTP caused a disruption of the American nuclear family. Opponents argued that the camps separated men from their normal role of breadwinning in that men would become so well-accustomed to receiving money for limited labor that men would never return to their proper families and work. The move away from FTP policies to public works initiatives attempted to shift focus from alleviating immediate suffering to helping struggling

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[89] Ibid. pg. 188

households remain intact. Most cities and states in the US focused on reevaluating current policy and social welfare statutes and utilized the Federal Transient Act to deal with the burgeoning unemployed and homeless population with their citizens directed their frustration towards an inept federal government unable provide relief.

During the Great Depression, California represents an alternative timeline in which the state was equally affected but differed from its national peers through its use of two overt strategies, advertisement and jingoism. California attempted to mask the economic downturn of the Great Depression through increased national advertisement for tourism and relocation, offering those willing and able to relocate increased job offerings and better living conditions. In addition, California, Los Angeles specifically, enacted a local and state government-based jingoism that centered on linking the state's economic downturn to issues of out-of-state migrancy and immigration of Mexican-Americans and Asian-Americans with no consideration of the latter groups actual American citizenship.

During the early stages of the Great Depression era, entertainment and industry were increasing throughout California with Los Angeles being at the center of this boom. In fact, Los Angeles County was the most productive farming county in the US.[90] But as the Great Depression continued into the early 1930s, unemployment in the state rose. Of the 700,000 jobless people in California in June, 1932, fully half were residents of Los Angeles County.[91] In order to combat the growing economic downturn,

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[90] Leader, Leonard Joseph. *Los Angeles and the Great Depression*. New York: Garland, 1991.

[91] Surls, Rachel A. "From Cows to Concrete: A History of Los Angeles Agriculture." ANR Blogs. July 16, 2009. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=3050.

Los Angeles went on the offensive by attempting to market itself as the promised land of Depression-era despair.

Los Angeles attempted to showcase its economic resolve in the face of growing international turmoil by hosting the 1932 Olympics. This event is worth noting for its ostentatiousness due to the fact that no other city even made a bid to host the Olympics. Many nations and athletes were unable to pay for the trip to Los Angeles. In fact, fewer than half the participants of the 1928 Summer Olympics in Amsterdam returned to compete in 1932. Even US President, Herbert Hoover, skipped the event. In addition to this event, Los Angeles would go on to open, in a four-year span, LAX international airport, The Greek Theatre in Hollywood, and the Griffith Observatory as ways to further enhance tourism to the city.

Figure 2. 1930s Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce Advertisement

During this period national and state policies were framed around issues of securitization and economic and culture contamination in which transiency was the focus

that this strategy revolved around. The early stages of these policies began in 1931 when the Los Angeles City Council unanimously passed an ordinance that forbid begging in the downtown business district. The law was proposed by the Downtown Business Men's Association, the group that would later become the Central City Association.[92] Forbidden was "soliciting for alms," the wearing of "placards calling attention to ailments," the carrying of "cups or receptacles for the deposit of coins," and the blowing of "horns or instruments to attract attention," according to the LA Times. The maximum penalty for this misdemeanor offense was a fine of $500 or six months imprisonment. A much bigger change came on March 27, 1937, when Mayor Frank Shaw signed a revision that applied the anti-begging statute citywide.[93]

The Bum Blockade, Migrancy, and Immigration Restrictions

In the 1930s, business leaders attempted to revitalize the downtown area, but due to the Depression and Dust Bowl, an influx of Midwest migrants began to appear in California and took residence in and near the downtown area in the hopes of obtaining work in the remaining factories and fields. A program to construct camps for these many migrants streaming in to California was begun and abandoned by the state government in

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[92] Richardson, Eric. "79 Years Ago: L.A. Bans Begging Downtown." 79 Years Ago: Los Angeles Bans Begging in Downtown Business District. June 22, 2010. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://blogdowntown.com/2010/06/5444-79-years-ago-los-angeles-bans-begging-in.

[93] LAMC 41.59(b) forbids soliciting in an "aggressive manner," defined as approaching someone in a way that is likely to make them fearful or intimidated, intentionally touching them or their vehicle without their consent, blocking their path, using violent or threatening gestures, persisting in following them after they have said no, or using profane, offensive or abusive language.

1935 but was quickly taken over by the Resettlement Administration. "Even with the assistance of the Federal Government, Californians feared the additional expenses for welfare relief and public education. As a result, Los Angeles 'declared war' on these many emigrants by implementing the 'Bum Blockade' in February, 1936. Usurping California's state powers, Police Chief James E. 'Two Gun' Davis, with the support of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, many public officials, the railroads, and hard-pressed state relief agencies, dispatched 136 police officers to 16 major points of entry along the Arizona, Nevada and Oregon borders, with orders to turn back migrants with no visible means of support."[94] Visible means of support were classified as clean looking clothes, small family unit, and able-body. At the California-Nevada line near Reno, a white billboard showed a baton-wielding, blue-uniformed cop with his palm thrust out near an imposing red "STOP!" sign and the phrase "Los Angeles City Limits."

California believed that they had the power to impose immigration restrictions due to legislature and the California Supreme Court being on record as declaring that a State has a right to protect itself against the spread of crime, pauperism, or disturbance of the peace by closing its borders to migrants not self-supporting. The Supreme Court decision read "it may be admitted that the police power of a State justifies the adoption of precautionary measures against social evils […] a State [...] may exclude from its limits convicts, paupers, idiots and lunatics, and persons likely to become a public charge [...] a right founded [...] in the sacred law of self-defense […] it has never been doubted that a

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[94] Weiser, Kathy. "The "Bum Blockade" - Stopping the Invasion of Depression Refugees." The "Bum Blockade" - Stopping the Invasion of Depression Refugees. December 2013. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://www.legendsofamerica.com/ca-bumblockade.html.

State has the power, by proper police and sanitary regulations, to exclude from its limits paupers, vagabonds and criminals, or sick, diseased, infirm or disabled persons, who were likely to become a public charge." This law was specifically designed as an anti-Okie restriction, one that conflated mobility, identity and sanitary practices in its effort to create order via a series of exclusions from the political body. It is within this anti-migration, anti-other political and cultural framework in which dependency gets legally defined as waste or trash. Personhood then becomes based on self-sufficiency, and persons unable to visibly demonstrate this capacity are deemed undesirable, unwanted, and ultimately the body becomes equated with trash in the sense of "uselessness," a wasted human resource, or economic non-viability.

Figure 3. Kathy Weiser. Jobless Men Keep Going, by the Chamber of Commerce.

The visual practices of monitoring migrants and the performance of "acceptable"

destitution became a means through which the restriction of mobility was enacted.

Sturken and Cartwright[95] (2009) state that practices of looking are not passive acts of

consumption. By looking at and engaging with images in the world, we influence the

meanings and uses assigned in the images that fill our day-to-day lives. The act of

looking reflects the ability of state-run institutions to determine which bodies are allowed

within its borders. If individuals do not resemble idealized versions of citizens and, in this

case, urban center employees and consumers, they were deemed unacceptable and were

permitted from entering California. The looking done on the borders was utilized to

enforce a homogeneity of the Los Angeles population, one that favored white, well-

dressed, middle-class, Protestant workers. Young, poor men and women with disheveled

clothing from the Dust Bowl were deemed unacceptable to enter the border. The look of

destitution became a means of exclusion. Only individuals who matched the aesthetics of

the idealized version of the Los Angeles citizen met the standards of acceptable

destitution. This type of "acceptable destitution" can be seen inversely today with

complaints about transient individuals with cell phones and clean clothes. In

contemporary society we expect "our" poor to look "poor."

In *The Burden of Representation*, John Tagg[96] (1993) outlines the type of

monitoring and categorization in the slum clearance project in 19th-century Leeds. Tagg

notes how photographic evidence was used to raise philanthropic support for the project.

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[95] Sturken, Marita, and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
[96] Tagg, John. *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988.

The specific way of looking acts as an act of separation and exclusion in that we observe destitute individuals as objects of improvement so that they might properly operate within an economic system. When these destitute populations do not behave as disenfranchised passive objects and actually display agency and similar consumer practices of the looker, the looker begins to pathologize the destitute person as not hard-working and unworthy of sympathy. It is through these acts of looking and framing of poverty that "acceptable destitution" can operate as performance that can lead to inclusion or exclusion of certain populations.

Supporters of the Bum Blockade declined to state that economic differences were at the heart of the problem and instead focused on the cultural deficiencies of migrants. Through the "racialization" of class, supporters of the Bum Blockade "contended that migrants lacked the work ethic and moral character to become part of the Los Angeles community. This racialization of class took hold because of the already established nationalism of the Southern California region. Angelinos were able to perceive outsiders in a racial sense because of the deep-seeded regionalism that shaped their identities. Being white American citizens was not enough to travel unimpeded into California.[97]

California has historically banned migrants from its borders. The Chinese were the first group targeted in the late 19th century. Anti-Chinese sentiment had existed in California since the mid-18th century. One of the first anti-immigrant policies was The

[97] Giczy, Hailey. "The Bum Blockade: Los Angeles and the Great Depression | Giczy | Voces Novae: Chapman University Historical Review." The Bum Blockade: Los Angeles and the Great Depression | Giczy | Voces Novae: Chapman University Historical Review. Spring 2009. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://journals.chapman.edu/ojs/index.php/VocesNovae/article/view/20/94.

Chinese Exclusion Act, passed by the Federal government in 1882, which barred Chinese

immigration and prevented the naturalization of the Chinese already in America. The

Japanese were impacted in the early 20th century. David Kearney, an earlier advocate of

Japanese exclusion, said in 1892 that "Japs [are] being brought here now in countless

numbers to demoralize and discourage our domestic labor market and to be educated [...]

at our expense."[98] Mexicans were excluded in the 1930s. At the onset of the Great

Depression, "the federal government sponsored and supported the mass expulsion of

[Mexican] immigrants." It was reported that "a total of 3,492 Mexicans left on

repatriation trains from San Bernardino between 1931 and 1933, primarily in 1931, at the

height of the formal repatriation movement."[99]

The Bum Blockade was planned and established shortly after the failed passage of

the Jones-Redwine Bill in the State Senate and developed with two lines of defense

against potential migrants. The first line was in Los Angeles and included arresting and

fingerprinting vagrants and beggars.[100] Upon arrest, vagrants were given the option of

forced hard labor in a rock quarry or deportation over the state line. The officers

conducted vehicle and train searches, and at the state line they were deputized by the

local law enforcement agencies to continue the fingerprinting campaign that had begun

back in the city. Treatment of migrants already in Los Angeles consisted of numerous

arrests by the Los Angeles Police Department along with jail time. Those arrested on

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[98] Daniels, Roger. *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.
[99] Guerin-Gonzales, Camille. *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994.

[100] *Los Angeles Times*. March 15, 1936

vagrancy charges were often fingerprinted and deported to the state line. These mass deportations were part of a larger deportation movement during this time period. Instead of Okies, Mexican-Americans were the focus of these arrest.

In the 1930s, the Bureau of Immigration launched intensive raids to identify aliens liable for deportation. These raids mark the repatriation period of American history in which the federal government rounded up people of Mexican ancestry from across the US and sent them to areas in Central Mexico. More than 60 percent of the displaced were American citizens. The federal government believed that removal of undocumented aliens would reduce relief expenditures and free jobs for native-born citizens. In addition to federal raids, cities and counties began pressure to repatriate destitute Mexican-American families. "In one raid in Los Angeles in February 1931, police surrounded a downtown park and detained some 400 adults and children."[101] The threat of unemployment, deportation, and loss of relief payments led tens of thousands of people to leave the United States. In all, more than 400,000 *repatriodos*, many of them citizens of the United States by birth, were sent across the US-Mexico border from Arizona, California, and Texas. Texas' Mexican-born population was reduced by a third. Los Angeles also lost a third of its Mexican population.

The Dust Bowl migration policy and Mexican-American repatriation marks a continuation in a series of large-scale immobilization campaigns in the earlier part of the 20th century that were directed towards transient groups in the nation that began with the "Great Migration" of African Americans from the South to the Midwest. Local citizens

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[101] Mintz, Steven. *Mexican American Voices: A Documentary Reader*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

forced businesses to reach out to interstate officers to stop the exodus of African

Americans from entering their cities and gaining employment in emerging industries. As

city centers began to emerge, the interests of local business communities in accordance

with municipal interests of ethnic homogeneity impacted interstate migration inside and

outside formal jurisdiction. What makes the race and class-based migrationary policies

unique is that this supposed jurisdiction reached beyond city borders to state lines. The

city's border is no longer based on geographical lines but is expanded when necessary to

meet local needs.

The Beginning of Outlawing Unwanted Practices

The next battle occurred in the 1960s when the hippie population descended upon

downtown Los Angeles and the Hollywood district. All of the loitering laws on the book

today were crafted during a four-year period of 1964 to 1968 to regulate this

population.[102] I argue that the hippies represented an aggressive visibility. As

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[102] SEC. 41.18. SIDEWALKS, PEDESTRIAN SUBWAYS – LOITERING. (a) No
person shall stand in or upon any street, sidewalk or other public way open for pedestrian
travel or otherwise occupy any portion thereof in such a manner as to annoy or molest
any pedestrian thereon or so as to obstruct or unreasonably interfere with the free passage
of pedestrians. (Amended by Ord. No. 137,269, Eff. 10/21/68.)
(b) No person shall loiter in any tunnel, pedestrian subway, or on any bridge overpass, or
at or near the entrance thereto or exit therefrom, or at or near any abutment or retaining
wall adjacent to such entrance or exit, or any retaining wall or abutment adjacent to any
freeway, street or highway open and used for vehicular traffic, or adjacent to that portion
thereof used for vehicular traffic, or on any public property in the proximity of such
bridge, overpass, or retaining wall or abutment. Sec. 41.18 has not been preempted by
State Legislation encompassing loitering offenses. Gleason v. Municipal Court (April
1964), 226 Cal. App. 2d-226 ACA 701.
(c) No person in or about any pedestrian subway, shall annoy or molest another or make
any remark to or concerning another to the annoyance of such other person, and no
person shall commit any nuisance in or about such subway.

homelessness in the early 20th century was defined by the figure of the "hobo" and

practices of constant migration and temporary work, this second half of the 20th century

brought about a limited mobility of the homeless population.[103] As the "hobo"

represented a national figure of new urban industrial life and mobility, the hippie

represented a failed economic and political figure, one who literally stood in front of

industrialization and commerce. As the homeless population shifted from predominately

white males to African Americans and Latinos, this form of aggressive visibility

remained, and its regulation increased.

"The cycle went something like this: Residents moved out of cities and stopped

using their public spaces and streets. The only people still walking them were deemed

riffraff: the homeless, jobless and, officials feared, gang members and prostitutes."[104]

Cities have taken away benches and have intensely regulated other gathering places.

Loitering has become a practice associated with the homeless population. Normal

bodies and citizens no longer loiter in cities. The practice of immobility became

exclusive to the homeless; the city no longer is defined by its gathering tendencies but

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(d) (Amended by Ord. No. 137,269, Eff. 10/21/68.) No person shall sit, lie or sleep in or upon any street, sidewalk or other public way. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to persons sitting on the curb portion of any sidewalk or street while attending or viewing any parade permitted under the provisions of Section 103.111 of Article 2, Chapter X of this Code; nor shall the provisions of this subsection apply to persons sitting upon benches or other seating facilities provided for such purpose by municipal authority or permitted by this Code.

[103]DePastino, Todd. *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
[104] Badger, Emily. "What Makes a Public Space Good for Democracy?" CityLab. August 13, 2012. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://www.citylab.com/politics/2012/08/what-makes-public-space-good-democracy/2916/.

through surveillance of bodies and constant movement. Stillness is problematic. Stopping, lighting a while, raises suspicion. "It's almost like we created a word that celebrates the fact that we've forgotten how to design cities," says Dan Burden, the executive director of the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute. "When we can create a place that's so void of human life because people don't want to go there, then this natural surveillance that occurs when people feel comfortable going there and watching over it themselves disappears." By criminalizing these bodies, the homeless population and their practices become able to be regulated. These practices and bodies are then displaced within cities. These bodies become associated with trash.

The Battle of Trash and Sanitation on Skid Row: Operation Healthy Streets, Lavan, and the "Dirty Divide"

General Dogon: Mr. and Mrs. Jones were a couple. Both of them were

homeless. They had severe mental disabilities, and they had

physical disabilities. They had a lot of physical problems.

And so, what had happened was, every time they walked

their bodies would just break down, and they had to stop

and sit down. And when they had to stop and sit down,

cops would be there, right? And they would either ticket

them or arrest them…the city was criminalizing these folks

because they had nowhere to go, and their bodies would

break down, and they couldn't help it.[105]

One of the striking things about entering Skid Row is the amount of trash on the

ground. With no trash cans or urinals to be found, many of the residents and visitors of

Skid Row or left to empty their trash on the streets and to use a seldom cleaned public

street bathroom or find a restroom at a private business. This existence of trash and

smells of urination and shit stands in stark juxtaposition to constant street cleaning trucks

and trash cans of the downtown shopping district two blocks away. Why was there such a

lack of sanitation resources in one area compared to the next? It was after interviewing

several members of LA CAN that I learned about the battle of sanitation resources on

Skid Row and how this issue impacts not only the physical conditions of the space but

also the legal and cultural aspects of it.

This next section analyzes the implementation of Operation Healthy Streets that

emerged in the spring of 2012 when the Los Angeles County Health Department issued a

report citing immediate public health risks in the downtown community of Skid Row.[106]

The report cited high instances of: feces, urine, hypodermic needles, and rodent

infestation in the area. Due to the report's findings, the city government of Los Angeles

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[105] General Dogon (Skid Row activist) in discussion with the author, July 2014.

[106] Gorman, Anna. "Health Dangers from Feces, Needles on Skid Row Are Cited." Health Dangers from Feces, Needles on Skid Row Are Cited. June 04, 2012. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2012/06/health-code-violations-found-on-skid-row.html.

along with neighborhood business leaders, created a task force called Operation Healthy

Streets to implement "cleanup sweeps" in this area.

Figure 4. Operation Healthy Streets Workers. LA Downtown News. Photo by Gary
Leonard

These sweeps attempt to remove waste from the streets in areas downtown, as

well as limit the causes of the sanitization issues, the practices of the homeless

population. The campaign was met with increased pressure from law enforcement in the

area, which targeted loitering, shopping carts, open drug use, and waste. The case study

details attempts by local activists and allies to contest this targeted campaign and the

ongoing legal battles around this issue. The section focuses on the impact of these spatial

policies and practices and concludes with analysis of aesthetic policies that Skid Row

activists, specifically LA CAN classify as the "Dirty Divide"[107] where beautification and hygienic interventions (increase in trash services, use of public restrooms, tree planting, and park renovations) are enacted in the business district of downtown Los Angeles but are not implemented in the Skid Row area, leaving the residents to be targeted by law enforcement for not complying with the newly-regulated spatial policies.

In the spring of 2012, the Los Angeles County Health Department issued a report citing immediate public health risks in the downtown community of Skid Row.[108] The report cited high instances of feces, urine, hypodermic needles, and rodent infestation in the area. The community of Skid Row is composed of the highest population of homeless individuals in a concentrated area in the nation. Due to the report's findings, the city government of Los Angeles, along with neighborhood business leaders, created a task force called Operation Healthy Streets to implement "cleanup sweeps" in this area. These sweeps attempt to remove waste from the streets in areas of downtown, as well as limit the causes of the sanitization issues, the practices of the homeless population.

The creation of this task force was one in a long line of sanitation efforts by the city of Los Angeles. One year earlier in 2011, the city of Los Angeles implemented a trash removal policy for downtown streets. The policy aimed to remove what they considered debris that caused health and safety risks for residents and visitors of the area. Neighborhood and homeless advocates claimed that this policy was intentionally

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[107] Los Angeles Community Action Network. *The Dirty Divide in Downtown Los Angeles A Call for Public Health Equity.* Publication. March 2013. http://sites.uci.edu/humanrights/files/2013/03/The-Dirty-Divide-in-DTLA.pdf.

[108] Los Angeles Department of Public Health. *LA County Public Health Report on Skid Row.* Report. May 21, 2012.

targeting the homeless population in this area. Homeless resident's carts and other belongings were confiscated and thrown in trashcans if the individual was not present. Advocates claimed that this policy was an infringement upon personal property. Homeless individuals organized by Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) filed a lawsuit in federal court, claiming that homeless people's constitutional rights were being violated when police took and destroyed their unattended items.

The *Lavan v. City of Los Angeles* case contained claims from eight homeless individuals living in the Skid Row area that allege that since February 2011, the city, through the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and Bureau of Street Services, has confiscated and destroyed the personal possessions they temporarily left in public spaces in order to use the restroom or eat a meal, among other things. The claim alleges that the City of Los Angeles seized and destroyed Plaintiffs' property in violation of the Fourth Amendment's protections against unreasonable searches and seizures and the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause. In court testimony, Tony Lavan stated, "I then walked . . . to take a shower at the Union Rescue Mission. I was gone a total of approximately 20 to 25 minutes at the most. As I was walking back . . . I ran into [Plaintiff Smith] . . . [who] told me that the police were there and that the [property] was being taken and crushed. I ran back . . . [m]y [property] was already destroyed."

The city argued that "property in a public place that is evidence of criminality may be seized under the plain view exception to the Fourth Amendment." In short, the possessions of the plaintiffs pointed to them being homeless, which according to the city of Los Angeles was reason for probable arrest. The city went on to argue that "[i]t is well established that individuals who leave items in public places do not have a reasonable

expectation of privacy in them."[109] The city asserted that all homeless property is abandoned if its owner is not near it. For the city, possessions entail an element of privacy; if an object is in public, it does not constitute a possession but trash. In other words, to be homeless, your possessions are under constant threat to be seen as not only not yours but trash. Therefore, the Fourth Amendment does not apply to homeless individuals if their property is considered trash. The city goes on to state, "the homeless have an expectation of privacy in their property when they are near it. When they walk away from it, the expectation of privacy dissipates," and the property can be considered abandoned." This policy compels homeless people to be ever-vigilant about their belongings. It would produce a kind of anxious paranoia, I would think. Fear of leaving the cart to go to the bathroom because it might not be there when you return. It is such a sharp contrast to residential practices. If you leave your plants and furniture out on your balcony or hula-hoop or bike out in the yard or on the porch and somebody nabs it, you call the police. It is as if in the absence of real estate or abode, the homeless person's body acts as property/ marks territory in a manner that establishes belonging.

The plaintiffs would go on to win a civil ruling in 2014, but no legal precedence was made from the case. The US District Court issued an injunction barring the city of Los Angeles from taking abandoned property without giving potential owners the chance to claim it or to retrieve it from another location within 90 days.[110] This injunction barred

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[109] While this argument brings up very troubling issues of scoptic governmental policies and public/private policy that must be addressed we will bracket that conversation for chapter 4

[110] Dolan, Maura. "Court Rules That L.A. Can't Destroy Homeless People's Property." Los Angeles Times. 2012. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://articles.latimes.com/2012/sep/05/local/la-me-0906-homeless-lapd-20120906.

police officers from removing these items, giving a win to homeless residents and advocates. This injunction set the stage for a response from the local government.

The city immediately appealed the ruling, and officials stated that "the injunction not only leads to health risks, but that it empowers people to store endless belongings on the street and ends up encouraging them to sleep in sidewalk encampments instead of seeking social services."[111] So, that this policy is in the interest of the homeless is the subtext. In 2012, city officials requested a public health survey from the Los Angeles County Health Department about the conditions of streets and residence in Skid Row. The report suggested the implementation of city-run sanitation programs for the area to remedy widespread health risks. City officials claim that the health report is evidence of the need to remove the debris from the streets and created a task force in the Department of Public Works called Operation Healthy Streets to combat the sanitation issues. The city seized this opportunity and began to remove trash and debris from the streets and, according to activists, refused to adhere to the injunction that was in place. According to Operation Healthy Streets spokesperson Patrick Butler the program "includes an intensive, multi-day cleaning of the poverty-stricken neighborhood's streets and sidewalks as well as power washing and disinfection, which necessitates the removal of all items from the affected public rights-of-way."[112]

[111] Vaillancourt, Ryan. "County Orders City to Clean Up Skid Row." Los Angeles Downtown News. May 31, 2012. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://www.ladowntownnews.com/news/county-orders-city-to-clean-up-skid-row/article_4e1d71cc-ab72-11e1-88d1-001a4bcf887a.html.

[112] Lloyd, Lauren. "'Operation Healthy Streets' Starts Power Washing, Disinfecting Skid Row Today." LAist. June 19, 2012. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://laist.com/2012/06/19/operation_healthy_streets_starts_power.php.

Led by the city's new police chief, William J. Bratton, Los Angeles took steps to crack down on its homeless population. Efforts included enforcement of Municipal Code section 41.18(d), which provided that "[n]o person shall sit, lie or sleep in or upon any street, sidewalk or other public way," except during parades and upon benches. Violation of section 41.18(d) was punishable by a fine of up to $1000 and up to six months' imprisonment. Though the ordinance had been on the books since 1968, it had only rarely been used. In 2002, police officers acting under the section's authority began sweeping the Skid Row area daily.

In February 2003, the ACLU led a suit in federal district court on behalf of six homeless individuals living in Skid Row. The plaintiffs sought an order permanently enjoining the City of Los Angeles, Police Chief Bratton, and Captain Charles Beck from enforcing section 41.18(d) between 9:00 pm and 6:30 am. Two of the plaintiffs, Robert Lee Purrie and Stanley Barger, had been convicted of violating the ordinance. In addition, Purrie had lost many of his belongings during his arrest. The other four plaintiffs, Thomas Cash, Edward Jones, and Patricia and George Vinson, had been cited for violating the section. The plaintiffs alleged that the City was criminalizing the status of homelessness, a violation of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution as well as similar protections of the California Constitution. The district court granted summary judgment in favor of the City of Los Angeles, finding that the ordinance criminalized *conduct* rather than status. This ruling was later overturned on a 2-to-1 decision. The conduct of the homeless community was defined but its practices of trash, not outward criminal conduct, but the practices of their possessions. The 2-to-1 majority concluded its discussion with the following query: "If there is no offense for

which the homeless can be convicted, is the City admitting that all that comes before is merely police harassment of a vulnerable population?"

The city argues that the practices of the homeless population and residents of Skid Row are unhygienic. The city claims that the homeless population is enacting these unhealthy practices of their own volition and need intervention, but the city fails to account for the fact that it has historically refused to provide basic services that may curb these practices from occurring on the street. The Skid Row community has long struggled to secure public amenities, and community health risks have been high in recent years. The homeless are prevented from access to enclosed spaces like public restrooms because it is assumed that those spaces will be used as cover for criminal activities. Once the restrooms are removed from these communities, the homeless are then criminalized for performing practices and bodily functions in public that are not supposed to be seen by others, or at least by strangers. This represents a classic double bind. If the homeless go behind closed doors, they are criminalized. If the homeless are publicly visible on the street, they are criminalized. It is as if the goal were their total annihilation. In the LA CAN report regarding the issue, they state:

> Unlike their more affluent neighbors in the western parts of Downtown who have adequate trash cans and ample access to restrooms and water, Skid Row residents have a dearth of these items. Ironically, Skid Row residents are deprived of these basic necessities under the guise of "public safety." The rhetoric of the state, in regards to basic sanitation, has become a message shrouded in criminal behavior and intent. Restrooms have been characterized as "havens for criminals" to justify their removal. As referenced throughout this report, the City of Los Angeles has long played dangerous games with the health of Skid Row residents. Over a number of years, Los Angeles has led efforts to remove trash receptacles, porta-potties and just about anything else that could provide a bit of humane comfort to those marginally housed. In addition to the basic issue of lack of trash cans and trash collection, homeless people's property has often been characterized and treated as trash– adding insult to injury. The

LAPD has employed a strong-arm approach, basically treating all possessions of homeless residents as trash, thereby illegally seizing and destroying it. Therefore, the issues of "trash" in the Skid Row community have been seen as more complex than they need to be. The solution is actually very simple: people's property can and must be protected while also providing receptacles and collection for actual trash.

Skid Row advocates call this division of sanitary resources between Skid Row and the larger downtown community in which Skid Row is left woefully under resourced. Recently, the City of LA's Bureau of Sanitation has stated that it will remove three tons of trash from the streets.[113] In September of 2014, the Los Angeles City Council devoted an extra $2.2 million to the effort, spearheaded by District 14 Councilman Jose Huizar. The funds helped pay for a massive outreach campaign that included city and county health and housing service providers and sanitation workers. A month earlier a joint city-county sweep of Skid Row to provide sanitation and social services identified more than 100 homeless people in need of immediate medical and mental health care. Sanitation workers removed 3.5 tons of waste, 184 syringes and needles, 63 razor blades, and eight knives. They also cleaned up feces and urine at hundreds of locations and delivered 13 bags of personal belongings to 90-day storage centers. The interesting aspect of this increased attention to the trash practices of Skid Row residents is that for over 50 years Skid Row has served as the dumping ground of people for California and the nation.

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[113] Zassenhaus, Eric. "LA's Homeless: Skid Row's Epic Clean-up by the Numbers." Southern California Public Radio. September 11, 2014. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://www.scpr.org/news/2014/09/11/46648/la-s-homeless-skid-row-s-epic-clean-up-by-the-numb/.
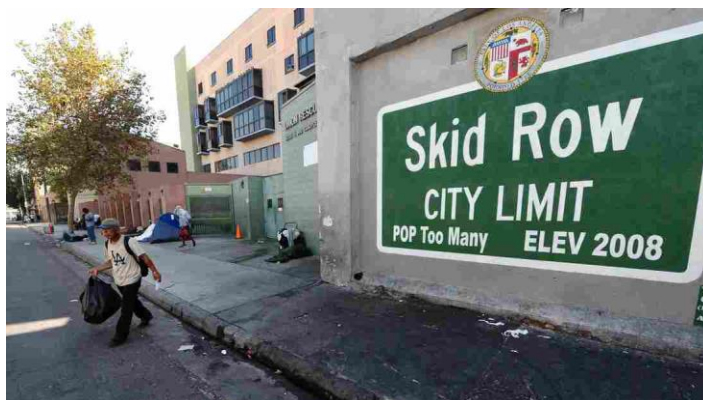
Figure 5. Skid Row City Limits Mural. Wikimedia Commons

A New Theory on Trash

Trash has become the defining physical indicator of Skid Row in scholarly analysis, reporting, and law.[114] In fact, trash visually marks the border that separates Skid Row from the economically "viable" areas and "upwardly mobile" residents and business people of downtown Los Angeles. In order to fully understand the implications of trash, we must first establish a working definition.

On April 9, 1940, Arthur Kosted was awarded patent number 2,196,914 for his invention of the shopping cart.[115] As the automobile has shaped the contours and mobility of the late 20th-century and early 21st-century downtown and city center, Kosted's shopping cart has redefined the way property and individual mobility practices are imagined and performed in these areas. For many homeless residents in large

[114] Skid Row is recognized as one of the only defined homeless community by the U.S Supreme Court in its ruling of Jones v. City of Los Angeles (9th Cir. 2006), which established the boundaries: Third Street to the north, Alameda Street to the east, Seventh Street to the south and Main Street to the west.

[115] Grandclément, Catherine. "Wheeling One's Groceries around the Store: The Invention of the Shopping Cart, 1936-1953." In *Food Chains: From Farmyard to Shopping Cart*, edited by Warren James. Belasco and Roger Horowitz. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

metropolitan areas around the world (or in the US), shopping carts carry not only mosaics of memories, life-sustaining supplies, and futurity but also political, ethical, and criminal implications through the city along the circulatory routes of its sidewalks. The shopping cart is a microcosm of downtown LA and other places like it. It is the site of a struggle over use, the appropriate use, of space as for profit/consumption or for mobile habitation. These carts contain what the LAPD considers trash.

The theoretical conception of dirt, waste, and the modern condition owes a great deal to the work of Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger*[116] (1966). In *Purity and Danger* Douglas analyzes the ideas of pollution and taboo in different societies. Douglas defines dirt as a thing that is out of place. Douglas asserts, "Dirt is essentially disorder. There is no such thing as absolute dirt: it exists in the eye of the beholder." Regulations on dirt, pollution, and practices impart an order on society. It attempts to eliminate any ambiguity that may threaten its existence. Order implies a limited kind of use and correct choices or organizations. On the other hand, disorder threatens patterns but also has the potential to recreate order.

For Douglas, dirt is a spatial problem, a question of not *what* stuff is but *where* it is. "Dirt," writes Douglas, "is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as *ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements*." Rejecting things brings order. *Dis*placing things is a sign of order taking place. Dirt is only dirty in certain places, when it is out of its correct position. Just as feces, for example, is

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[116] Douglas, Mary. Purity and Danger; an Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo. New York: Praeger, 1966.

considered dirty when it is in our kitchens but not when it is in our bodies, so it is that our classification of waste depends on the location of objects.[117]

In this discussion of dirt I am hesitant to presuppose that contents that are considered trash are "dirty" or entirely out of place within a social order. Trash, I argue, is in *and* out of social orders. I look to the work of several scholars who attempt to problematize Douglas' work in relation to discussions of trash. Gillian Whiteley[118] (2011) in her analysis of art's historical and present appropriation of junk within our eco-conscious and globalized culture takes this concept of dirt from the ritual implications of Douglas and concludes, "All dirt is relative. Clearly, 'matter out of place' is 'trash' in one diverse modality of living – and treasure –or matter *in place* – in a different interlinked, coeval one." Trash becomes dirt in place, a creation of another spatiality.

This creation of a different modality challenges order. Sophie Gee[119] (2010) looks at this concept of waste and notes that it differs from dirt due to waste containing an excess and not displacement of content: "Waste, even if it does not putrefy, is abject because it is characterized by misplaced, animating excess […] Waste is a form of pollution, marked as such by having participated in a process; that process is one wherein substance stops being acceptable or even valuable and becomes unwanted or taboo. This is important because as Mary Douglas pointed out in *Purity and Danger*, pollution exists when a substance has crossed a border and become threatening to the system to which it

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[117] Viney, William. Waste: A Philosophy of Things. Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.

[118] Whiteley, Gillian. Junk: Art and the Politics of Trash. London: I.B. Tauris, 2011.

[119] Gee, Sophie. *Making Waste: Leftovers and the Eighteenth-century Imagination*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.

now, improperly, belongs." Trash becomes a thing not out of place but in a place where it does not belong. This shift brings about an ambiguity of place and space that must be reconciled.

William Viney in his analysis of rubbish extends this discussion and offers us a useful description of trash. For Viney, trash is matter "marked by a separation from the purposive and teleological temporality of human activity." Trash does not signal a spatiality but a temporality: "These are things or places that lack the anticipation of utile and temporal ends, they linger, they remain, they are time's leftovers." I would like to extend this definition to include practices in addition to matter. The way matter operates without temporal ends is through their dislocated and excess performative practices. If dirt is spatial and waste is excess, then trash is the combination of these two that comes about through the dislocated temporal performances of excess matter practices in displacement. Through practices of people dumping, the historical rhetoric of migrancy as a performance of unwanted bodies and economies in public spaces, and use of refuse by residents of Skid Row and its streets, Skid Row and its residents are linked with, and in some cases equated with, trash.

If Skid Row is considered a place of trash, we must not look at trash as static matter but as something that is dynamic through displaced spatial practices. Traditional practices of matter become externalized when performed on the streets of Skid Row and become taboo due to spatial displacement. If the people and practices of Skid Row are considered a threat to the city and thusly unwanted, these sanitary practices of the street become performances of existence and resistance. The people of Skid Row are symbolically treated like the human waste products of capitalism. Rather than Marx's

readily exploitable workforce, these are the people who are not or are no longer readily

exploitable, and yet they remain and dare to make themselves stubbornly visible within

sight of and on the doorsteps of consumer capitalism or places of legitimate economic

exchange. Since they no longer factor within this economic system and are displaced

from traditional consumer practices of material possessions, their belongings are

considered trash. Their belongings become disposable the moment their owner is not

standing guard. Since their existence within capitalism is considered negligible in the

public space, their belongings are considered trash when they are not part of the

economic flow.

Continued attempts to corral these practices has created a legal and political

genealogy of trash regulations that don't remove the matter but instead criminalize[120] and

make invisible the bodies and material practices that are considered out of place when

enacted on the street. Efforts to remove homeless residents have increased to areas

outside Los Angeles, shaping the architecture, technologies, and mobility of people in

cities. In the spring of 2014, it was reported that metal spikes were installed outside a

block of luxury flats in London to deter homeless people from sleeping there.[121] Public

seating in various global cities has now been altered to detour homeless individuals from

sleeping in public spaces: There are "benches with vertical slats between each seat,

individual bucket seats, large armrests between seats, and wall railings that enable

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[120] Will discuss in-depth in Chapter 3

[121] Roberts, Anna. "'Homeless Spikes' Installed outside London Flats." The Telegraph. June 07, 2014. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/property/cities/10883541/Homeless-spikes-installed-outside-London-flats.html.

leaning but not sitting or lying, among many other designs. There are even benches made

to be slightly uncomfortable in order to dissuade people from sitting too long."[122]

A growing number of cities are restricting and outlawing the homeless population

by attempting to eliminate daily acts of homeless living—sleeping, eating and

panhandling in public. In 2012, Los Angeles approved a ban on camping in city parks.[123]

Philadelphia[124] and Sacramento[125] have imposed bans on publicly feeding people living

on the streets of their city. In Denver,[126] eating or sleeping on another person's property is

also illegal. With over 100 new anti-homeless laws passed in the past 3 years a "war on

the homeless" is burgeoning in America's cities.

In an attempt to subvert many of the statutes and architectures that attempt to alter

public space into anti-loitering, anti-homeless spaces, some activist, artists, designers,

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[122] Rosenberger, Robert. "How Cities Use Design to Drive Homeless People Away." The Atlantic. June 19, 2014. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/06/how-cities-use-design-to-drive-homeless-people-away/373067/.

[123] Zahniser, David. "Council Aims to Thwart New Occupy Protest at L.A. City Hall." Los Angeles Times. June 07, 2012. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jun/07/local/la-me-0607-occupy-tent-ban-20120607.

[124] Lin, Jennifer. "Advocate for the Homeless Objects to Philadelphia's Feeding Ban." Philadelphia Inquirer. June 02, 2012. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://articles.philly.com/2012-06-02/news/31960250_1_homeless-indoors-addictions-and-mental-illness-homeless-individuals.

[125] Brewer, Steven. "Sacramento Police Disrupt Homeless Feeding, Arrest 3 at ..." Fresno People's Media. December 16, 2014. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://fresnopeoplesmedia.com/2014/12/sacramento-police-disrupt-homeless-feeding/.

[126] Simmons, Sarah. "Denver Police Now Enforcing Homeless Camping Ban." The Denver Post. June 04, 2012. Accessed March 23, 2016. http://www.denverpost.com/ci_20780986/denver-police-now-enforcing-homeless-camping-ban.

and architects have converted and created (re)usable public items. These items represent convertible, inflatable, and portable innovations that alter potential dwellings and spaces to be (re)usable. Such architecture includes urban benches that convert into homeless shelters, inflatable dwellings that run on the waste air of buildings, and mobile urban furniture that doubles as shelter and storage. What is interesting about these projects is that they utilize the same techniques and processes that homeless populations have historically used to survive: bricolage. Bricolage refers to the creation of one object through the piecing together of various found objects. We can see how bricolage was utilized in the old Hoovervilles in the creation of dwellings made from wood and other found objects. Additionally, bricolage refers to the use of objects that possess one meaning in the dominant culture but are acquired and given a new, often subversive meaning. The shopping cart becomes a subversive tool of mobility in the face of growing limitations of possessions and space. It is not only the ability to (re)use discarded items, it is the ability to use discarded people to form a generative community that is at stake when we view trash as a perishable entity instead of a potentiality.

Conclusion

In this chapter we analyzed the construction of Skid Row and its historical relationship to cultural signifiers of trash and homelessness. We first look at the issue of homeless dumping and relate it to the issue of containment of unwanted bodies that society deems as excess. Skid Row has long been a space where communities across Los Angeles placed bodies and identities that are not wanted. These identities are traditionally criminal, disabled, queer, poor, black and brown and suffering from addiction. We then

analyzed how this practice of dumping unwanted bodies has expanded from the city of Los Angeles to California as a whole and also encompassing other states in which mental patients and released convicts are placed in Skid Row.

In order to understand how Skid Row has become this dumping ground, the construction of homelessness and homeless space had to be analyzed. In this chapter we looked at the construction of homeless from its early iteration in the early 19th century and the emergence of the railroad and subsequent migrant workers that followed these tracks for work. Homeless subjectivity changed after the civil war when out of work veterans created makeshift communities along these railroad lines, travelling from place to place looking for work. The progressive era of the early 20th century changed this perception of the out of work worker to a homeless identity that was marked by issues of lack of moral character and work ethic. Industrial era capitalism made homelessness an issue of 'deserving' vs 'non-deserving' of help. Eventually the homeless of this time began to make their own communities and develop Hoovervilles, which I argue are the historical predecessor of Skid Row.

Homelessness became connected with identities of displaced communities. From Okies to Mexican-American to Chinese-American. A connection of homelessness to Taylorism era capitalism gave way to a connection of homelessness to migrancy. We then observed how the social welfare system of the 1960s through the 1980s contributed to the emergence of Skid Row as a containment space of migrant, minority, disabled and alternative bodies and identities. This containment era ended in the late 1990s due to the emergence of neoliberal policies within cities that stressed private investment and control of urban centers.

This new era of neoliberalism and gentrification is attracting new capitalistic friendly bodies to occupy this space. To contribute to this, private and government policies has stressed an elimination of homeless bodies and practices. This is seen in the contestation of property, practices and existences of homeless individuals in Skid Row and the downtown area. The Lavan case, Operation Healthy Streets and hostile architecture of many of the new buildings in downtown Los Angeles highlight the growing battle over the existence and development of Skid Row. The Dirty Divide report developed by LA CAN and the alternative consumer practices of Skid Row residents show the historical strategies of intervention and survival against these top down constructions of Skid Row. Historically, homelessness and who we consider to be homeless is related strongly to communities and bodies that the state considers unnecessary. They are discarded subjectivities placed as barriers to progress. These discarded bodies are related to issues of trash, its containment, subsequent elimination and resistance from these populations.

In a move that shows the continued fight over stuff and trash in public space, in the summer of 2015 the LA City Council overwhelmingly approved two ordinances that encourage the seizure of homeless people's property when it is deemed to be "stored" on sidewalks or in parks while a move to evict homeless people themselves could follow later this year. The proposal defines "stored" property as property that the city has deemed to be stored. With this move, the city can now define what is considered property. These laws impact the homeless population today but hold long-lasting implications for the ways public space can be inhabited in the future. These sanitary practices of the street are not revolutionary but hold a potential for alternative

ways in which we can use and view the city. As legislation attempts to conform the city

into a linear mobile site of consumerism, we must look at ways in which we can literally

trash and reuse the city for our bodies and identities. For the homeless population what is

at stake is much higher; it is existence. Trash marks, trash defines, trash lives.

Chapter Three
Policing

It has exposed us as a society to some dangerous people; no need to argue about that. People whom we have released have gone out and killed other people, maimed other people, destroyed property; they have done many things of an evil nature without their ability to stop and many of them have immediately thereafter killed themselves. That sounds bad, but let's qualify it. . . . the odds are still in society's favor, even if it doesn't make patients innocent or the guy who is hurt or killed feel any better.

Dr. Andrew Robertson, Deputy Director, California Department of Mental Health

In the New York subway [*where broken windows theories were applied in the early 1990s*], there were typical theft problems, and police are pretty good at that. But you still have a population that is genuinely and in many respects tragically homeless, the emotionally disturbed, the alcohol and drug abusers. The approach we developed is, have 80-some social workers go out with police to talk this population into decent housing, therapy, drug treatment, etc. In my mind, that is the broken windows approach: Not law enforcement, but to try to get help for this population that is creating disorder in some respects; but it's a pitiful population that needs assistance.

George L. Kelling (2015)

We're human beings, not to be pushed around like cattle. We have a right to be stationary.

Annie Moody (2014)

On October 4, 2002, a document called "Homeless Reduction Strategies"[127] was

developed by LAPD's Central Area, which covers Skid Row. The document attempted to

look at the demographics of Skid Row and determined "60% of the population to be

mentally impaired and 80% to be substance abusers."[128] The document focused on this

demographic of the homeless community in Skid Row to draw parallels to earlier LAPD

efforts with similar populations—most notably, a concentration of prostitution activities

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[127] LAPD document "Homeless Reduction Strategies: Central Area," October 4, 2002. FI000754

[128] Ibid.

in Hollywood in the 1980s and an increase in homicides in the South Bureau in the early 1990s. The document went on to detail the strategies put in place in Skid Row since the 1980s to limit the homeless population and crime associated with this population in the Central City Area and argued that "without sufficient personnel resources even the best strategies will be unsuccessful."[129] The new strategy proposed an intensive effort to address the "criminal homeless" by adopting "anti-camping and anti-public urination/defecation ordinances" and "disbursement of Social Services providers from within Central Area. To do this the Central Area LAPD would work with City Council offices, the Business Improvement Districts, and the City Attorney. The key factor in this document was its proposal for a "minimum of twenty additional officers deployed, in addition to the existing eight officers currently assigned to the enforcement of homeless quality of life type issues."

In November, 2002, the Los Angeles Police Department, led by new Chief William Bratton, "embraced two massive sweeps of Skid Row."[130] The former police chief of New York City during the 1990s, Bratton's zero-tolerance policy has been credited with reducing petty and violent crime in that city. Bratton was hired as chief in Los Angeles to transform the fledgling downtown area by eliminating vestiges of crime and loitering, much like he did in the Times Square Area of New York. In February, 2003, he announced that he would be implementing a "broken windows" policing

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[129] Ibid.

[130] Blasi, Gary, and The UCLA School of Law Fact Investigation Clinic. "Policing Our Way out of Homelessness?: The First Year of the Safer Cities Initiative on Skid Row." Report Card Policing Homelessness. September 24, 2007. Accessed March 25, 2016. http://lafla.org/pdf/policinghomelessness.pdf.

strategy for dealing with three areas of the city, including Skid Row. By September, 2003, the LAPD was estimating that 50 additional officers would be needed to enforce a proposed anti-camping ordinance in Skid Row. The resulting strategy would be labeled "The Safer Cities Initiative."

From 2002 to the spring of 2014, The Safer Cities Initiative transformed the way law enforcement engaged with downtown Los Angeles and Skid Row, resulting in policies and practices criminalizing the presence of homeless bodies and their functions and removing support systems for this population that enabled them to live in the area. Through increased monitoring, proactive policing, and regular harassment by police officers, Skid Row became the second most policed area, per capita, in the United States.[131]

The Safer Cities Initiative has transformed policing practices in Skid Row from those that focused on containment of crime to those that focus on containment and regulation of bodies. In my many interviews with resident and activists of Skid Row, they note that one of the biggest differences Skid Row today compared to fifteen years ago is the amount of police monitoring the area and arresting residents. This shift reflects a larger national and transnational movement of homeless and urban center policing. The efforts in Skid Row, and now other urban areas, are informed by the crime prevention "success" in New York City in the 1990s, which utilized the broken windows theory and its theory of the correlation of crime with neighborhood disorder. The effect of this has

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[131] Venn, Chris. ""Safer Cities Initiative" Creates Most Heavily Policed Area in World - People's Tribune." Peoples Tribune. September 02, 2015. Accessed March 25, 2016. http://peoplestribune.org/pt-news/2015/09/safer-cities-initiative-creates-most-heavily-policed-area-in-world/.

led to the harassment of homeless individuals in Skid Row and highlights the growing

surveillance and use of law enforcement to combat not just homelessness but the

homeless. This increased effort mirrors a national trend to regulate homeless individuals

and their practices. In the last three years, Atlanta, Phoenix, San Diego, Los Angeles,

Miami, Oklahoma City, and more than 50 other cities have adopted some kind of anti-

camping or anti-food-sharing law.

This chapter provides a historical analysis of the systematic reduction of support

services for California's mentally ill residents, the resultant boom in the state's homeless

population, and the subsequent criminalization of this population. I begin by looking at

the changing landscape of law enforcement policies that emerged in California in the late

1960s. It is here that we observe the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act that resulted in the

closure of most of the state's mental hospitals. We view how these closures impacted

correctional institutions and Skid Row with an influx of these former patients. The impact

of these closures resulted in the emergence of psychiatric ghettos in Skid Row and

overcrowding in the state's jails and prisons. I argue that an increase of police

enforcement due to a "war on drugs," poverty, and the previous era's mentally ill

population residing in urban areas of Los Angeles were strong influencers of the "tough

on crime" era that emerged in the early 1980s under LAPD chief Daryl Gates. We look at

the changing relationship of the LAPD in urban areas of Los Angeles from 1980 to 2000.

2000 marks the beginning of the Chief William Bratton era of the LAPD, an era defined

by its use of Broken Windows Theory.

The broken windows theory of crime has proven to be an enabling metaphor and

conceptual framework for these historical developments. Homeless people are treated as

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akin to broken windows or eye sores within particular neighborhoods. Within the visual

rhetoric of urban revitalization, the visible presence of homeless people and practices of

poverty reduces the "quality of life" index of that neighborhood from the perspective of

business people, privileged residents, and tourists. This chapter provides a case study of

the Safer Cities Initiative in Los Angeles, which demonstrates how such constructions of

the city and its homeless population have enabled the criminalization of publicly visible

practices of poverty. The resulting law and order mechanisms developed to police Skid

Row have created a de-territorialized system of cyclical incarceration and strict

regulation of mobility and immobility beyond prison walls based on petty offenses that

are, in practice, survival strategies employed by a population with little to

no infrastructural support. Against the prevailing logic that homelessness creates and

invites crime in particular neighborhoods, I argue that the criminalization of

homelessness must be understood as multivariate historical moments that are rooted in

1960s government-led elimination and defunding of mental hospitals and an increase in

rebellions in urban areas and law enforcement's subsequent reaction. I conclude

by forecasting where current trends for curtailing prison overpopulation may lead us.

The Roots of Urban Criminality

The following discussion provides a historical analysis of the systematic reduction

of support services for California's mentally ill residents and the resultant boom in the

state's homeless population. In this section, I describe the neoliberal shift from

hospitalization and social services as the predominant models for managing mental

illness to law and order strategies for managing the homeless population produced by the

privatization of mental health facilities and disinvestment in social services. I argue that

homeless criminality does not solely originate from issues of homelessness. Rather, the

criminality of homelessness are multivariate historical moments that are rooted in 1960s

government-led elimination and defunding of mental hospitals and an increase in

rebellions in urban areas and law enforcement's subsequent reaction.

Beginning in the late 1950s and emerging in the early 1960s, California began to

embark on a path of decreased state funding for state health institutions in favor of for-

profit models that were argued to provide better, more personal care for patients:

"California became the national leader in aggressively moving patients from state

hospitals to nursing homes and board-and-care homes, known in other states by names

such as group homes, boarding homes, adult care homes, family care homes, assisted

living facilities, community residential facilities, adult foster homes, transitional living

facilities, and residential care facilities."[132]

The first major endeavor was to reshape the landscape of the mental health

system. California became one of the first states in the nation to move care for the

mentally ill from state-run institutions to privately run businesses. In 1967, California

passed the landmark Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Act, which virtually abolished

involuntary hospitalization of mentally ill individuals except in extreme cases.[133] By the

early 1970s, California had moved most mentally ill patients out of its state hospitals and,

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[132] Torrey, E. Fuller. American Psychosis: How the Federal Government Destroyed the Mental Illness Treatment System. Oxford University Press, 2013.

[133] Gaffney, Adam. "The Neoliberal Turn in American Health Care." *International Journal of Health Services* 45, no. 1 (January 2015): 33-52.

by passing LPS, had made it very difficult to get them back into a hospital if they relapsed and needed additional care.[134,135] Nationally, the 1970s saw the beginning of a persistent, marked upswing in national health care expenditures. By the mid-1970s, board-and-care homes, which replaced the old state hospitals, had become big business in California. In Los Angeles alone, there were over 11,000 ex-state-hospital patients living in board-and-care facilities.[136]

Many of the board-and-care homes in California were clustered in city areas that were rundown and thus had low rents. Many of these homes were poorly run and had substandard living conditions. In addition to the poor conditions of these homes, community residents were complaining that their towns was becoming "psychiatric ghettos."[137] These psychiatric ghettos are the early model of the service-center ghettos of the 1980s. Psychiatric ghettos sprung up in declining residential and tourist areas in boarding homes that were formerly tourist-based hotels that had become dilapidated. In many cases, these homes were tinder for large-scale fires. These homes could not meet the stringent fire regulations under federal legislation and suffered fires due to faulty electrical wiring. The aforementioned article details numerous severe fires and deaths of

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[134] Ibid. pg. 96.

[135] Qadeer, Imrana. "Universal Health Care: The Trojan Horse of Neoliberal Policies." *Social Change* 43, no. 2 (2013): 149-64.

[136] Mayberg, Stephen. *The Mental Health Services Act: An Important Step Towards Transformation.* Report. May 2004. http://histpubmh.semel.ucla.edu/sites/default/files/story-flipbooks/MHSA_and_Transformation/files/mhsa_and_transformation.pdf.
[137] Gargan, Edward A. "As 'Psychiatric Ghettos,' Boarding Homes Get More Dangerous." *New York Times*, February 08, 1981.

these patients that were caused by the lack of enforcement and investment in safety.

Many of these boarding homes were merely packed money-making chicken coops, with

mentally ill and elderly patients being the confined chickens waiting for their death.

Concerns about safety expanded from the home and into the streets as many of the

patients would wander out of their homes and into the communities. To combat the influx

of patients wandering city streets, law enforcement began to increasingly arrest this

population (regulation of fire safety at these boarding homes was still not enforced). In

"The Criminalization of Mentally Disordered Behavior," Marc Abramson[138] (1972)

claimed that because the new LPS statute made it difficult to get patients admitted to a

psychiatric hospital, police "regard arrest and booking into jail as a more reliable way of

securing involuntary detention of mentally disordered persons." Abramson was the first

to coin the term "criminalization of the mentally ill;" he observed that persons with

mental disorders who engaged in minor crimes were increasingly subject to arrest and

prosecution in a county jail system.

By the mid-1970s, some states suggested that about 5% of jail inmates were

seriously mentally ill. In California county jails, 6.7% of the inmates were psychotic. In

the mid-70s there were several high profile cases of former mental patients who would go

on and commit murder.[139] These cases, in addition to growing crime in newly populated

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[138] Abramson, Marc F. "The Criminalization of Mentally Disordered Behavior." *PS Psychiatric Services* 23, no. 4 (1972): 101-05.

[139] Torrey, E. Fuller, Aaron D. Kennard, Don Eslinger, Richard Lamb, and James Pavle. "More Mentally Ill Persons Are in Jails and Prisons than Hospitals: A Survey of the States" Treatment Advocacy Center. May 2010. Accessed March 25, 2016. https://www.saferfoundation.org/files/documents/final_jails_v_hospitals_study.pdf.

urban centers in major cities of California, led to an increase in fear of crime. This fear came from suburbanites who feared the mentally ill and the poor black and Latino populations of the inner city. To combat this fear and, in reality, to combat these populations' occupation of once predominately white middle-class spaces, California became tough on crime in order to regain an assumed social order.

Essential to any discussion of social order is the concern over disorder and its connection to fear of crime. A number of studies turned to disorder to explain fear of crime. For example, Richard Moran and James Q. Wilson[140] (1976) first noted that people were troubled not only by crime: "the daily hassles they are confronted with on the street—street people, panhandlers, rowdy youths, or 'hey honey' hassles—and the deteriorated conditions that surround them—trash strewn alleys and vacant lots, graffiti, and deteriorated or abandoned housing—inspire concern."[141] The urban center, with its poor people and people of color, represented a place of fear for white citizens. An extension of this research is seen with Garofalo[142] (1981) who states that "fear of crime" is not simply fear of crime but is tied to fear for quality of life and concern for the community. Disorder affects both fear of crime and actual crime through a process in which disorder signals to residents that local controls have failed and causes them to

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[140] Moran, Richard, and James Q. Wilson. "Thinking about Crime." *Contemporary Sociology* 5, no. 4 (1976): 413.
[141] Ibid. pg. 66

[142] Garofalo, James. "The Fear of Crime: Causes and Consequences." *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology (1973-1981)* 72, no. 2 (Summer 1981): 839.

become personally at risk of victimization. An increase in disorder would lead to an increase in crime that would, in turn, increase fear.[143]

The Tough on Crime Era Begins

To appease this growing concern, in 1976 Governor Jerry Brown and the California Legislature passed a series of laws creating the state's determinate sentencing structure. Over the next 30 years, a tough-on-crime mindset drove legislators and voters to lengthen sentences and reduce opportunities for parole, resulting in a prison system packed to more than 200 percent of its design capacity.[144] While the prison population was increasing, the homeless population comprised of chronically mentally ill patients followed. In 1988, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) issued estimates of where patients with chronic mental illness were living. Approximately 120,000 were said to be still hospitalized; 381,000 were in nursing homes; between 175,000 and 300,000 were living in board-and-care homes; and between 125,000 and 300,000 were thought to be homeless.[145] The police strategy of arresting mentally ill patients continued through this time.

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[143] Hinkle, Joshua Conard. "Making Sense of Broken Windows the Relationship between Perceptions of Disorder, Fear of Crime, Collective Efficacy and Perceptions of Crime." PhD diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 2009.

[144] Lawrence, Sarah. "Managing Jail Populations to Enhance Public Safety: Assessing and Managing Risk in the Post-Realignment Era: A Paper for the Executive Session on Public Safety Realignment | Stanford Law School." Stanford Law School. 2013. Accessed March 25, 2016. https://law.stanford.edu/publications/managing-jail-populations-to-enhance-public-safety-assessing-and-managing-risk-in-the-post-realignment-era-a-paper-for-the-executive-session-on-public-safety-realignment/.
[145] Petersilia, Joan. "California Prison Downsizing and Its Impact on Local Criminal Justice Systems." *Harvard Law & Policy Review* 8 (May 2014): 801-39.

In addition to changing the structure of correctional facilities, the economy of the era was undergoing a dramatic shift. In the 1970s, California witnessed population growth leading to an increase housing demand. This growth occurred in the midst of national economic turmoil and state inflation. Long-time California white residents, many of whom resided in the suburbs and communities outside of the big cities, began to complain about the amount of taxpayer money being sent to the urban centers and wanted a disinvestment in those areas and an increased investment into the new decentralized economic power bases. In 1978, California voters passed Proposition 13. The proposition decreased property taxes by assessing property values at their 1975 value and restricted annual increases of assessed value of real property to an inflation factor not to exceed 2% per year.[146] The result of this proposition strengthened local municipalities with high homeowner rates but left cities to fend for themselves.

Law Enforcement Encroachment into Urban Los Angeles

1980s law enforcement in Los Angeles was defined by the "War on Drugs," attempts to curtail gang activity and the subsequent LAPD strategy "Operation Hammer" that was used to engage in these urban battles, resulting in widespread police brutality that continues to plague the department. Operation Hammer originated during the 1984 Olympic Games held in Los Angeles. The operation consisted of large-scale gang sweeps

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http://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/child-page/183091/doc/slspublic/Petersilia Harvard AB 109 Proof.pdf.

[146] Myers, Dowell, "The Demographics of Proposition 13," Population Dynamics Research Group, USC School of Policy, Planning & Development (September 2009).

in South Central and East Los Angeles.[147] Los Angeles was being billed as a model global city, but the growing gang population and urban economic plight and blight threatened to undermine this. Suspected and known gang members were taken into custody and held for the remainder of the Olympics. No actual charges were filed against those arrested.

Operation Hammer continued after the Olympics. Under LAPD Police Chief Daryl Gates, military-style operations with battering rams, full SWAT units, and tear gas targeted alleged homes of drug dealers and gang members under Operation Hammer. Operation Hammer lasted until 1990, resulting in over 50,000 people arrested in raids and only 60 felony convictions. Almost all who were arrested were young black and Latino men and women. Police brutality complaints in this era were up 30 percent from the previous five-year period.[148] It is not hard to argue that Operation Hammer and LAPD tactics during this time period were gross and negligent racial profiling meant to impose a police state of fear and violence for inner city Los Angeles residents. During this time period the LAPD was known for limited engagement with the community aside from enforcement activities. The mentally ill, homeless, black and Latino youth, and drug addicts became "social ills" during the 1980s that tough-on-crime rhetoric and policies attempted to eradicate. This climate of police brutality, poverty, and isolation would serve as the embers that would kindle the fire that was the LA Riots in 1992.[149]

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[147] Spohn, Cassia. "Race, Crime, and Punishment in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries." *Crime and Justice* 44, no. 1 (September 2015): 49-97.

[148] Cockburn, Alexander, and Jeffrey St. Clair. *Whiteout: The CIA, Drugs, and the Press*. Verso, 1999.

[149] Callinicos, Alex. *Marxism and the New Imperialism*. London: Bookmarks, 1994.

After the riots, civil unrest remained in the forefront of discourse about the city and influenced a continuation of the tough-on-crime rhetoric that defined 1980s California politics. Urban areas were considered powder kegs that needed to be controlled. In 1994, California passed Proposition 184, the "Three Strikes and You're Out" law.[150] California voters passed the strictest three strikes sentencing law in the nation. It doubled the penalty for a second felony if the first one was serious or violent. The so-called third strike carries a mandatory prison sentence of 25 years to life. About two dozen states have similar laws. But only California counts any felony as a third strike, not just a serious or violent one.[151] The proposition gained momentum after two highly-publicized cases. In June of 1992, Kimber Reynolds was leaving a popular local restaurant when Joe Davis and Douglas Walker came by on a motorbike and tried to grab her purse. When she refused, Joe Davis pulled out a .357 Magnum and shot her.[152] The men responsible for Kimber's murder were both repeat offenders. Polly Klaas, from Petaluma, California, was kidnapped from a slumber party about a year and a half after Kimber Reynolds' murder. The Klaas family used television and the Internet to keep Polly's story in the news as authorities continued their search. Two months after her disappearance, the police announced the arrest of Richard Allen Davis. Davis was

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[150] Pillsbury, Samuel H. "A Problem in Emotive Due Process: California's Three Strikes Law." *Buffalo Criminal Law Review* 6, no. 483 (2002).

[151] Romano, Michael. "Divining the Spirit of California's Three Strikes Law." *Federal Sentencing Reporter* 22, no. 3 (February 2010): 171-75.

[152] Jaffe, Ina. "Two Torn Families Show Flip Side of 3 Strikes Law." NPR. October 28, 2009. Accessed March 25, 2016. http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=114219922.

eventually charged with and convicted of raping and murdering 12-year-old Polly.[153] All three men were repeat felons.

State politicians, with the assistance of Kimber's father, pushed for harsher sentences for repeat offenders, leading to the passing of Proposition 184.[154] The "repeat felon" became a class of people that would remain under constant detention and/or surveillance. A "strike" sentence could be triggered by any felony conviction—even for a nonviolent offense. As a result, strikers were given lengthy or life sentences after convictions for things like receiving stolen property and simple possession of a controlled substance. This led to a boom of inmates in California prisons.

In the aftermath of the riots, Daryl Gates stepped down as police chief and was replaced by Willie Williams, the first African-American police commissioner in LAPD history. Williams' regime is of note for its attempt to reintegrate itself within the African-American and Latino communities. Contrary to the public's opinion of Williams, the Los Angeles Police Commission declined to renew his contract, citing Williams' failure to fulfill his mandate to create meaningful change in the department after the riots. Williams was replaced by Bernard Parks. Parks' regime came amidst a national and state economic recovery. In addition to this, crime went down significantly as the gang truce from the mid-1990s began to ease tensions between rival south-central Los Angeles gangs.[155]

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[153] Mills, David, and Michael Romano. "The Passage and Implementation of the Three Strikes Reform Act of 2012 (Proposition 36)." *Federal Sentencing Reporter* 25, no. 4 (February 2013): 265-70.

[154] Domanick, Joe. "Prisoners of Panic." *Los Angeles Times*, January 06, 2008.

[155] Stoltze, Frank. "Historic 1992 Watts Gang Truce - Bigger than the LA Riots?" Southern California Public Radio. February 28, 2012. Accessed March 26, 2016.

Parks oversaw a significant drop in violent crime throughout the city, especially in South Central LA.

Parks advocated for a form of informal social control in local communities that strayed away from the overt and often violent police presence that defined the LAPD in previous eras, a strategy that allowed communities in Los Angeles to take part in controlling their own communities through outreach events and mentoring programs. Informal social control is defined by Sampson et al.[156] (1997) as "informal mechanisms by which residents themselves achieve public order." This type of social control does not operate through the techniques of regulation or formal institutions but is articulated through informal surveillance strategies by community members and interpersonal interactions that act to deter undesirable behaviors. Examples of this could be talking to young children who may be "roughhousing" or confronting a group of teens who are loud or bothering a shopkeeper. This informal social control is concerned with visible signs of social disorder. Sampson et al. argue that informal social control is an important mechanism for neighborhoods to deter crime because collective efficacy can mediate residential stability in the face of socioeconomic conditions. In their study of a Chicago neighborhood, they found that informal social control can limit the rates of violence in a community and provide informal structures of social welfare for its community members. Sampson et al. argue that neighborhoods with high concentrations of population,

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http://www.scpr.org/news/2012/04/28/32221/forget-la-riots-1992-gang-truce-was-big-news/.

[156] Sampson, R. J., Stephen W. Raudenbush, and Felton Earls. "Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy." *Science* 277, no. 5328 (1997): 918-24.

heterogeneity, and poverty are susceptible to high rates of delinquency and crime. Informal social control may be a mechanism to explain why some high-concentrated areas have higher crime rates than others.

Eventually, Parks' regime would come to an end due to a police brutality scandal involving the Rampart Division. Officers in the anti-gang "CRASH" unit "framed innocent individuals by planting evidence and committing perjury to gain convictions. Innocent men and women pleaded guilty to crimes they did not commit and were convicted by juries because of the fabricated cases against them. Many individuals for subjected to excessive police force and suffered very serious injuries as a result."[157] Parks attempted to clean up the division, but lack of support from fellow officers and politicians led to Parks not being recommended for reappointment.

The William Bratton Era of the LAPD

In 2002, the city of Los Angeles and new mayor James Hahn looked outside the department for a hire that could turn public and political sentiment about the department. In addition, violent crime was starting to increase, reversing a trend that had begun in the mid-1990s. Hanh was given three choices by the Los Angeles Police Commission and decided on former New York Chief of Police William Bratton. As the NYPD's commissioner, Bratton presided over a crime drop while developing the department's computerized crime-tracking system. By the time he resigned in 1996, he was lauded as

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[157] Chemerinsky, Erwin. "An Independent Analysis of the Los Angeles Police Department's Board of Inquiry Report on the Rampart Scandal." Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review. January 01, 2001. Accessed March 26, 2016. http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2262&context=llr.

one of the most influential police chiefs in the world. Bratton resigned in the midst of

growing conflict with Mayor Rudy Giuliani over who deserved credit for the turnaround

in crime for New York City and due to a minor scandal for a book deal that he signed

while in office as well as accepting multiple unauthorized trips from corporations and

individuals. Bratton was working as a consultant for Kroll Associates, a private

consulting firm that specializes in computer forensics, corporate investigations, and risk

assessments that was in charge of auditing the LAPD after the federal consent decree that

was ordered after the Rampart scandal.

One of the first things Bratton did as Chief was to focus on changing police

involvement in several key areas in Los Angeles: Hollywood, Baldwin Village, the San

Fernando Valley, MacArthur Park, Downtown, and Skid Row.[158] In the fall of 2003,

several meetings took place to develop the new policing strategy for the downtown area.

These meetings reveal that an intentional public relations campaign led and framed policy

changes. Ultimately, the city of Los Angeles, the LAPD, and the local business

community decided they wanted to do a street sweeping campaign and, as part of this

campaign, remove the available support services for the homeless community, and most

that remained were operated through programs dictated by the LAPD. In Blasi's analysis

of the effectiveness of the broken windows policing strategy in Los Angeles, *Policing*

Our Way out of Homelessness: The First Year of Safer Cities Initiative in Skid Row, they

note that within these initial meetings conversation regarding housing and services to

reduce homelessness was never addressed, but the issue of homeless practices as criminal

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[158] Buntin, John. "The LAPD Remade." City Journal. January 23, 2015. Accessed March 26, 2016. http://www.city-journal.org/2013/23_1_william-bratton.html.

activities drove much of the dialogue. In the October 3rd, 2003 meeting, Blasi notes that the framing of the new anti-homeless ordinances focused on creating "moral arguments [that] needed to be developed from every point of view: health concerns, child safety, etc."[159]

In the November 6, 2003 meeting, the press liaisons from the different agencies met to "develop a coordinated strategy for communication to the press regarding the forthcoming effort in Skid Row" and developing the "message of the effort." The problems of Skid Row shifted from efforts to address criminal activity, or even the causes and criminal activity that result from homelessness, and instead shifted any action of the homeless population as proof of the lawlessness of this population. Blasi and Wolch assert that "there was no discussion at the meeting about lawlessness other than violations that inevitably accompany homelessness in the absence of adequate shelter or other facilities: sleeping or sitting on the sidewalk, conducting biological functions in locations other than bathrooms. Rather, the focus was entirely on discouraging visible homelessness in Skid Row. For example, the second item on the agenda addressed whether the sidewalks in Skid Row could be narrowed to make sidewalk dwelling more difficult."[160] The activities of the homeless population were equated with disorder and lawlessness. Homelessness and the visibility, actions, and aesthetics of homelessness became the focus of the LAPD in Skid Row by way of enforcement of "quality of life" laws and policies.

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[159] Ibid. pg. 26.

[160] Ibid. pg. 27.

The Implementation of Broken Windows Theory

This section articulates the construction of homeless populations as representations of the broken window in the metaphor of "broken windows." Their existence and practices are explicitly linked to crime and lack of control. By controlling the bodies and practices of the homeless community, law enforcement is able to control and regulate a community. I argue that the focus on Skid Row as the primary site of crime in Los Angeles is on-site-based efforts of policing can be defined as the criminology of place. This is a place-based strategy of criminalization and policing. It is about how an area *looks* from a particular perspective. Since the problem is articulated as a visual problem or eye sore, the remedy is also visual. Enforcement is of visual cues of unrest, attempts to make these bodies and practices disappear via soft policing techniques such as issuing citations or redesigning the space by narrowing sidewalks. "Quality of life" is aesthetic. It is about how the neighborhood looks, and by constituting an eye sore the homeless community and their encampments and practices are spoiling the urban landscape and its views for privileged business owners, residents, and visitors to the city. Broken windows theory is a crime prevention strategy aimed at curtailing neglect and signs of neglect, but it gets marshaled on Skid Row in a way that promotes the neglect.

Skid Row, once the dumping ground for this population, became a site where this population was corralled and delivered to the State Corrections system. What resulted in Skid Row was the creation of a system of cyclical incarceration. This system would become self-serving as officers of the Safer Cities Initiative wrote thousands of citations in Skid Row for every imaginable infraction, including citations for "littering" upon the dropping of a cigarette ash that would be ignored elsewhere in the City. The Safer Cities

Initiative represents a transformation in law enforcement practices from an occupation

model exemplified during the Daryl Gates era of policing to a neoliberal model of

surveillance and detention. A cycle of 'presence-containment-addressed delinquency-

incarceration-re-placement' is performed in Skid Row. This cycle is manifested not just

legally but on the bodies of the residents as a form of control of the subaltern[161] through

urbanization, in which these subaltern bodies are controlled due to their nonconformity

with the revanchist city. Due to these processes, Skid Row becomes an expanded space of

state detention, or what I describe as regulatory mechanisms for controlling the mobility

of different populations. It's the whole premise of this Safer Cities Initiative to invest

enormous police resources into very, very petty things that are really a consequence of

someone's illness or a consequence of having to survive on the streets."[162] It is a cyclical

street sweeping campaign in which the police making arrests are the street sweepers, and

the homeless are the trash.

The initial planning meetings for the Safer Cities Initiative in Skid Row only

discussed "crimes" that arise directly out of homelessness. As discussed in Chapter 3,

lack of services provided by the city of Los Angeles in the 1990s and early 2000s directly

led to an absence of available shelter or facilities, which in turn led to "criminal

behavior" like sleeping or "camping" on the sidewalk.

Blasi notes[163] that as the broken windows theory came to be applied to Skid Row

after the 2003 holiday season, the vast majority of arrests were for sitting or lying on the

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[161] Lawson, Victoria A. *Making Development Geography*. London: Hodder Arnold, 2007.

[162] Personal Interview with Skid Row resident conducted March 2012

[163] Blasi, pg.32.

sidewalk, a violation of Section 41.18(d) of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.[164] The broken windows theory of crime posits a connection between neighborhood disorder and serious crime. In their seminal article of a New Jersey neighborhood "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety," Wilson and Kelling[165] (1982) argue that signs of physical and social disorder such as public drunkenness, rowdy teen gangs, trash, and broken windows lead members of these communities to fear and withdraw from local community and neighborhood spaces. In turn this withdrawal from the community leads to less informal social controls that act as barriers to delinquency and crime.

According to broken windows theory, an unrepaired window is a signal that individuals in the neighborhood or a property owners do not care about their livable surroundings, so breaking more windows will not be met with any opposition. A broken window can be the locus of community abandonment and despair; when there is a piece of property that is abandoned, weeds grow up, a window is smashed. Adults stop scolding rowdy children; the children become more rowdy. Families move out, unattached adults move in, etc. Eventually, fights will occur, panhandlers will accost strangers, and serious crime will flourish. Emotional disinvestment leads to financial disinvestment. Wilson and Kelling frame the broken window as a slippery slope of actions that will eventually lead to disorder and violence.

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[164] No person shall sit, lie or sleep in or upon any street, sidewalk or other public way. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to persons sitting on the curb portion of any sidewalk or street while attending or viewing any parade… nor…to persons sitting upon benches or other seating facilities provided for such purpose by municipal authority.
[165] Wilson, James Q., and George L. Kelling. "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety." The Atlantic. March 1982. Accessed March 26, 2016. http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/.

In terms of law enforcement's connection to this process, it begins with disorder not being dealt with in a timely manner. Trash is not picked up; loiterers are not asked to move on. In time this invites more trash being thrown in the vacant lot, more loiterers to gather, and more people to start drinking in public. As this disorder accumulates, it sends a message to residents that things are getting out of control and that social controls have failed in their neighborhood. The key here is that residents perceive untended disorder. It will likely have little impact if residents are not aware of the disorder in the community. In turn, Wilson and Kelling suggest that residents who perceive worsening disorder problems eventually become fearful and begin to withdraw from the community. They spend less time outside, become less likely to intervene and ward off disorderly people, and, in the extreme, "good" residents may move away. The net effect is a lowering of informal social controls, which leads to more and more disorder and minor crimes occurring as people perceive that they can get away with such behavior in these areas where they routinely see disorderly behavior going unpunished.

In time, criminals also take these signs of untended disorder as a cue that such a neighborhood is a good place for them to work with relative impunity. In Wilson and Kelling's terms, such neighborhoods are vulnerable to criminal invasion. It is not inevitable, but such places are much more likely, in their view, to see an increase in crime than neighborhoods that exert control in regulating the occurrence of disorder. Once crime occurs, residents also notice this and the cycle of fear and withdrawal is likely to worsen.[166] Police can fight crime more effectively by dealing with disorder. If they stop

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[166] Skogan, Wesley G. "Broken Windows: Whyand Howwe Should Take Them Seriously." *Criminology & Public Policy* 7, no. 2 (May 21, 2008): 195-201.

disorder from accumulating and prevent neighborhoods from reaching the tipping point where they become vulnerable for criminal invasion, they can have a great impact on crime. Wilson and Kelling's broken windows usage as a metaphor and theory is directly influenced by a social psychological experiment conducted by Stanford psychologist Philip Zimbardo in 1969. Zimbardo abandoned a car with its hood up in two places—in the Bronx in New York City and on the Stanford Campus in Palo Alto, California. The car in the Bronx was vandalized within 10 minutes, and within 24 hours everything of value was removed. The car in Palo Alto, however, was not touched for more than a week. Zimbardo then smashed the windshield with a sledgehammer, and from that point on, people passing by saw the activity and the damaged car and joined in the destruction. Just as the broken window on the car in Palo Alto invited more vandalism, untended disorder is a visual cue in a community that invites more disorder and eventually more serious crime.

Since the publication of the original broken windows article, the theory has been utilized to inform police practices in the United States. This proliferation of its usage is tied to Chief Bratton publicly endorsing the method and its effectiveness in New York City in the 1990s. New York Law Enforcement and broken windows proponents cited figures that showed that crime decreased dramatically during this period and broken windows policing was the method that led to these results.[167] Broken windows-based policing was a central focus of the efforts of police commissioner William Bratton and

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[167] Bratton, William J., and Peter Knobler. *Turnaround: How America's Top Cop Reversed the Crime Epidemic*. New York: Random House, 1998.

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to clean up the city. Studies[168] estimate that one violent crime was prevented for every 28 misdemeanor arrests in NYC from 1989-1998. As such, the increase in misdemeanor arrests as part of the broken windows policing program was estimated to have averted more than 60,000 violent crimes.

In January, 2003, LAPD presented 135 cases of 41.18(d) violations to the City Attorney, whose office prosecuted 116. "Quality of life" laws were strictly enforced in the downtown area. The term "quality-of-life" policing was first used in New York City in the early 90s, during the Giuliani-Bratton administration. It refers to the practice of heavily policing a number of normally non-criminal activities such as standing, congregating, sleeping, eating, and/or drinking in public spaces, as well as minor offenses such as graffiti, public urination, panhandling, littering, and unlicensed street vending.[169]

One of the key features in the Safer Cities Initiative proposed to the general public was the increase in services for the homeless population. The initiative's aggressive policing was supposed to be offset by a focus on eliminating the causes of homelessness. In 2006, before the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) was fully implemented, a Mayor's Press Release announced the impending launch of the 50-officer effort and spoke of targeting crime "while also leading homeless individuals to housing and services" and "expanding the 'Streets or Services' program" operated by the City Attorney." While much lip service was paid to the services part, no actual money was put into developing these

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[168] Colin Campbell, New York a Blueprint for Cutting Atlanta Crime, Atlanta J-Const 5F (Dec 23, 2001) (citing the Kelling and Sousa study in discussing the reasons for the decline in New York's crime rate during the 1990s and the lessons that Atlanta should take away from the New York experience as it addresses its rising crime rate).
[169] Harcourt, Bernard E. *Illusion of Order: The False Promise of Broken Windows Policing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

services; all of the money went into the policing. The cost to the General Fund of 50 police officers for the first year of SCI was approximately $6 million, with $175,000 to pay for one Deputy City Attorney and a paralegal due to the increase of cases but with no funding for housing or services.

This shift from service-based funding to law enforcement-based funding to address issues within the homeless community was developed in a historical context of re-investment in city centers by businesses and developers. By attacking places where crime was occurring, the homeless communities, it was thought that not only crime but the homeless community itself would be curtailed in the city as a whole. Weisburd, Groff, and Yang[170] (2012) state that theories of place assume that crime "is tightly concentrated at 'crime hot spots'; these crime hot spots have strong temporal stability; micro level units of geography are should be emphasized; social and contextual characteristics of places influence crime; and crime at place is predictable." Place, in particular aesthetic landscapes of micro communities, are indicators of potential crimes. By moving away from offender-based justifications of crime patterns and focusing on geographical units, crime could be better understood and controlled as situational practices.[171] This new focus on place has led to new thinking in how environments communicate to communities and individuals and what types of social and performative practices these environments promote.

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[170] Weisburd, David, Elizabeth Groff, and Sue-Ming Yang. *The Criminology of Place: Street Segments and Our Understanding of the Crime Problem*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
[171] Sutton, Adam, Adrian Cherney, and Rob White. *Crime Prevention Principles, Perspectives and Practices*. Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

This focus on sites of expected and potential criminal activities dictates behavior

that law enforcement police. In his analysis of the impact of broken windows policing in

Portland, Oregon, Heben[172] (2014) states, "The widespread acceptance of this premise

marks a drastic shift from 'servicing' toward 'policing' as a method for managing the issue

of homelessness. The endorsement of the broken windows theory suggests that these

informal [tent city] settlements are robbing a certain degree of quality of life from the

surrounding, housed community. Furthermore, the settlements thwart the efforts by

formal design to establish predictable behavior. As a result, laws and strategies have been

adopted to disrupt these acts of necessity, exiling those without a right to space in the city

to an itinerant lifestyle." Broken windows theory paved the way for the de facto

criminalization of the homeless population in Skid Row.

The Safer Cities Initiative

The LAPD's Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) officially launched on Skid Row in the

summer of 2006. Critics of the initiative pointed to the impact in New York City of a

similar zero-tolerance, broken-windows application and noted its historical use to justify

law-enforcement crackdowns on members of marginalized communities—especially

poor people of color—who are disproportionately targeted for petty crimes. Since the

summer of 2006, there have been more than 6,000 arrests in Skid Row, an area with a

population of 10,000 to 15,000 people (about 4,000 of whom are homeless) on any given

night.[173] More than 100 new officers have been assigned to the neighborhood in the past

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[172] Heben, Andrew. *Tent City Urbanism: From Self-organized Camps to Tiny House Villages*. Village Collaborative, 2014.
[173] Hoffman, Jessica. "Los Angeles Police Are Gentrifying the City's Skid Row -- with Force." Alternet. October 20, 2007. Accessed March 26, 2016.

nine years. Police officers on foot, in patrol cars, on bicycles, and mounted on horses are a near-constant presence.

Advocates claimed that the Safer Cities Initiative differed from previous policing strategies of containment or disbursement by instituting a three-pronged approach to dealing with the poor quality of life *and* violent crime in Skid Row, claiming that you can't separate one from the other. In an interview with the Los Angeles Times, SCI Senior Lead Officer Deon Joseph says, "We started out with enforcement. I'm not going to candy-coat it: We arrested a lot of people, not because they were homeless but because of the high-level of crime. When a celebrity has a drug problem they go to all these great places to get away from their problem. People in Skid Row can't afford that; they have to get clean in a drug bazaar, and the bazaar attracts two types of people: people who need services they can't afford and people more than willing to prey on them, so we had to separate the wolves from the sheep. We wrote a whole lot of tickets and I won't apologize because it saved lives."[174]

Trash and homeless practices were the cause of not only crime but of death in the community. Proponents of SCI focus on the program's approach to enhancement. They claim that the conditions on Skid Row were never clean, and because it *looked* like a dump people thought they could dump things on the streets. It created encampments of contamination that were killing people. The outreach component of SCI offered people

http://www.alternet.org/story/65481/los_angeles_police_are_gentrifying_the_city's_skid_row_--_with_force.

[174] Arnold, Shayna Rose. "Officer Deon Joseph on the "Heartbreaking" Job of Policing Skid Row - Los Angeles Magazine." Los Angeles Magazine. March 05, 2015. Accessed March 26, 2016. http://www.lamag.com/citythinkblog/officer-deon-joseph-heartbreaking-job-policing-skid-row/.

drug programs as an alternative to jail. This outreach was essentially officers passing out

address cards to the local shelters and, once a month, a group of volunteers following

LAPD SCI officers and questioning the Skid Row residents on their housing and drug

addiction, followed by handing them an address card to a local shelter. Unfortunately,

SCI officers rarely corresponded with these shelters as many of these shelters were

overcrowded and were unable to provide beds to the increase of homeless individuals

seeking temporary shelter. Overall, advocates claim that the Safer Cities Initiative

lowered crime by 40 percent and reduced deaths by 32 percent. By 2015, the Safer Cities

Initiative has added 50 cops to a 1-square-mile area.

Many of these arrests targeted drug addicts and the mentally ill and resulted in a

stay in jail followed by release back to the streets. This initial street sweeping campaign

resulted in sending a huge influx of homeless addicts to State Prison. If a homeless

person receiving a "quality of life" citation does not pay a substantial fine, a warrant is

issued for his or her arrest. The next encounter with the police then results in a warrant

check and a trip to jail because of the outstanding warrant. Thus, even for those with no

drug problems and little chance of being sent to State Prison, the Safer Cities Initiative

made Skid Row a very risky place for a homeless person to be.[175] Skid Row becomes a

site of security-driven policies that reflect traditional urban fear narratives of city centers.

A neoliberal model of law enforcement where mobility and self-regulation

become defining features in securitization. Mountz[176] (2010) argues that "nation states

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[175] Blasi, pg. 28.

[176] Mountz, Alison. *Seeking Asylum: Human Smuggling and Bureaucracy at the Border*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

and security agencies deploy rationales of deterrence and securitization" by employing

narratives that frame migrants from other borders as security threats. She further asserts

that these "rationales link migration and mobility to fear-driven national security policies,

converting mobility into regimes of containment, borders into regimes of exclusion."[177]

While migrants are the focus for nation-states, low-income residents, and in the case of

Skid Row the homeless population, become bodies and identities whose mobilities are

restricted due to the threat to public safety that they are made to embody within the urban

aesthetics of revitalization. Regulatory mechanisms, detention, and immobilization are

the processes used to exclude these populations.

Mountz et. al.[178] (2012) defines detention as "a series of processes; and that

operating through these processes are a set of temporal and spatial logics that structure

the seemingly paradoxical geographies of detention." For Mountz, detention refers to the

ways that nation-state and territorial sovereignty reach beyond national borders while

moving into the everyday spaces of migrants that confine them outside of institutional

structures (e.g. jails and brick and mortar detention centers). Geographies of detention are

paradoxical in the way they produce externalization and internalization of borders that

attempt to mark the migrant body. Mountz notes that while "detention works to contain

the apparently unknowable migrant, it simultaneously also produces new, highly mobile

identities."[179] This process is reflected in the "Bum Blockades" interstate expansion and

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[177] Ibid. pg. 522.

[178] Mountz, Alison, Kate Coddington, R. Tina Catania, and Jenna M. Loyd. "Conceptualizing Detention: Mobility, Containment, Bordering, and Exclusion." *Progress in Human Geography* 37, no. 4 (July 15, 2012): 522-41.
[179] Mountz (2010). pg. 527

externalization of Los Angeles borders and the internalization of homeless residents of Skid Row through the spatial practice of not walking to certain areas of the downtown. Thus, detention becomes less about architectural holding pens. Rather, it is engrained in diffuse social practices of immobilization that rely on the policing of social space to control people, objects, and their movement.

Regulatory mechanisms for controlling the mobility of different populations are constructed through a contested set of historical and geographic politics. The space where regulatory mechanisms are situated reflects this contestation. Containing this population in an area where policies are geared to remove this exact population reflects Mountz's argument regarding the nature of geographies of detention. This form of regulatory control is an expanded carceral geography, a contemporary move away from national and state-run forms of incarceration and boundaries to one that is influenced and constructed by economic and cultural institutions and policed by the state. Regulatory mechanisms are systems of control for keeping a confined space relatively stable and maintained within narrow limits; detection and action are directed to external changes that may alter the space. This project builds upon the work of Mountz on transnational sites of detention on the U.S/Canada border to examine how regulatory control operates in revanchist urban geographies. I move away from Mountz' theorization by looking at not only the way that migrant, or in this case transient residential bodies, reify borders and control but also spatial practices and performances that alter these designated external and internal forms of containment. Skid Row marks a salient site of analysis where this contestation of practices and processes emerge and transform. Urban revitalization is the locus of this new form of spatial identity, the re-creation of boundaries through claims of sovereignty,

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and the determination of who gets to move through and populate cities. Homeless bodies on Skid Row are deemed criminal and unwanted and therefore are discursively constructed as non-citizens. Homeless people are treated as not having the same rights afforded to full-fledged citizens. The homeless population does have official standing within the legal system and are citizens in that sense, but on the street they are effectively rendered non-citizens because of their criminal status.

Many of the city's probationary programs and drug rehab clinics are placed within Skid Row. When an individual is arrested on Skid Row, they are placed within the legal system and returned to Skid Row with increased limitations on their activities and mobility. The aforementioned Blasi article notes that LAPD's Central Area, including Skid Row, never had the level of serious, violent crime (homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) found in other areas like Rampart, Newton, Hollenbeck, or 77th Street. During the first year of SCI, there was a significant decrease in serious crime in Skid Row, but other portions of Central LA–where no additional officers were deployed– had experienced similar declines, and given that very few (less than 1 percent) of the arrests made by the officers assigned to SCI were for serious, violent crimes. In a study conducted to find the effectiveness of the Safer Cities Initiative, it was found that the Safer Cities Initiative did not cause the overall decline in crime in Skid Row, independently of other social, economic, and policing factors at work in LAPD's Central Area more generally.[180] When the types of crime are examined independently, the only statistically significant difference is the decline in robberies in Skid Row, equal to a

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[180] Blasi, pg. 42.

reduction in one robbery per year for each officer assigned to the Safer Cities Initiative. "There is some reason to believe that the same 50 officers might have had more impact on serious crime in other areas of the City facing a greater crime problem."[181] An example of this can be seen in 2010 when the LAPD launched a crackdown on jaywalking during the holiday season. About 1,000 tickets a month were given to mostly homeless individuals for jaywalking and loitering downtown.

Residents of Skid Row claim that SCI officers are "targeting people who are on the street." A 2013 Los Angeles Times interview with a Skid Row resident details the sentencing consequences of SCI: "If you enter a plea of guilty, they want you to pay money," he says. "And I'm homeless. I don't have the money. So what happens is you fail to appear in court, it turns into a warrant for your arrest. So the next time you get stopped, they can take you to jail right there and then."

In a study conducted by LA CAN in 2010, it found discriminatory practices of the SCI. Residents were asked to estimate the number of citations they had received since the beginning of SCI in 2006. 122 respondents (55.7%) report receiving a citation. Jaywalking/crosswalk violations (71.7%) are by far the most frequently cited infractions, followed by drinking in public (20.4%), open container (12.4%), and sitting, lying, or sleeping on the sidewalk (12.4%).[182] According to respondents, citations have negative

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[181] Blasi, Gary. "Did Safer Cities Reduce Crime in Skid Row?" Research Report. September 15, 2008. Accessed March 26, 2016. http://wraphome.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/safer_cities.pdf.

[182] Los Angeles Community Action Network. "Community-Based Human Rights Assessment: Skid Row's Safer Cities Initiative." LA CAN. August 2010. Accessed March 26, 2016. http://cangress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/sci-2010-report-final1.pdf.

effects beyond the officer abuse, fees, and penalties. As a result of their citations, 31%

report losing social services, 26.8% report losing housing, and 16.9% report losing

employment. Proponents of Safer Cities often claim that enforcement activities actually

benefit poor and homeless people by connecting them to services. When asked if they felt

they had benefitted from their citation, 86.6% felt that they had not benefitted.

Additionally:

> Residents were asked to estimate the number of times they had been
> arrested since the beginning of SCI in 2006. While not all respondents
> report an arrest, taken as a whole, the average was 2.8 arrests per person.
> Because these estimates were over the course of four years, it was likely
> more beneficial to inquire about the number of arrests in the last year.
> Limiting responses to the last year, 103 respondents (53.6%) report being
> arrested. This arrest rate is astounding when compared to the 2009 adult
> arrest rate in California (4.9%) and the 2010 arrest rate in the City of LA
> (approximately 3.9%). Outstanding warrants were cited as the most
> frequent reason for arrest (24.4%), with drug possession as the second
> most arrested offense (18.9%). As a result of their arrest, 51.5% of
> respondents report losing housing, 42.4% report losing social services, and
> 16.4% report losing employment. Over half (59.1%) of those arrested
> report physical or verbal abuse by officers.[183]

The report goes on to detail police harassment in the form of frequent and

warrantless stops and detainments. The majority of respondents (67.2%) confirmed the

occurrence of such practices, reporting a stop/detainment resulting in neither a citation

nor arrest. In the last year, the average number of such stops/detainments was 5.3 per

person. During these stops/detainments, the majority were handcuffed (60.3%), searched

(74.6%), background checked (75.4%), or asked if on probation or parole (76.2%). In the

face of this, many people have relocated to other neighborhoods, farther away from social

services. Within 5 years of SCI, there was a decrease of about 30 percent in the number

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[183] Ibid.

of people accessing their services. At many homeless service sites the site's client population has gone from majority black to majority white. Recently, Downtown LA has seen a rise in people spending the night on local sidewalks. In April 2009, Central Division officers counted 500 people sleeping on the street in Skid Row. In March of this year, that number was 1,207.[184] Homelessness in the county has risen 12% in the past two years drew equal amounts of consternation and outrage. Almost lost in the analysis was the revelation that the council district that includes Skid Row holds one out of every four homeless individuals in the city.[185]

The new estimate represents a 14% increase from 2013's figure of 5,500 homeless people in the district. The rise in homelessness was attributed to a number of factors, including rising rents, wages that have remained flat or decreased, and a local unemployment level that is above both the state and national average. In the winter of 2014, the Skid Row population began to increase. Amid growing concerns that recent gains in downtown public safety were at risk, the Los Angeles Police Department transferred more than 40 officers to Central Division. The move marks the largest infusion of police resources to Central Division since the Safer Cities Initiative sent 50 additional officers to focus on Skid Row crime in 2006. Officials state they're responding to changing conditions in the area that coincide with a minor uptick in reported crime.

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[184] Vaillancourt,, Adam. "LAPD Sends Surge of Officers to Downtown." Los Angeles Downtown News. April 25, 2012. Accessed March 26, 2016. http://www.ladowntownnews.com/news/lapd-sends-surge-of-officers-to-downtown/article_7b421140-8f1f-11e1-a322-0019bb2963f4.html.

[185] Ford, Dana. "L.A. Declares Emergency on Homelessness." CNN. September 23, 2015. Accessed March 26, 2016. http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/22/us/los-angeles-homelessness/index.html.

They say that relaxed parole regulations and the realignment of low-level felons from state prison to county jail, where incarceration stints are usually shorter, have resulted in more criminals on the street.

The Changing Criminality of Homelessness

A changing political and social landscape against criminalization, and specifically incarceration of low level drug convictions, has led to a transformation in California's correctional institutions. A shift to local correctional institutions with limited budgets to curtail a growing homeless population represents a dark future in which practices of poverty now become the most prevalent criminal offenses, with decriminalization efforts continuing for drug offenses. This has impacted Skid Row significantly. In my years conducting this study the amount of people I see on Skid Row has increased dramatically.

In April 2011, the California Legislature and Governor Brown passed a sweeping public safety legislation (Assembly Bill 109) that effectively shifted responsibility for certain populations of offenders from the state to the counties. The legislation "realigns" from the state to local level responsibility for supervising people convicted of certain felony crimes. This means that thousands of less-serious felony offenders now face at worst jail and out-of-custody supervision (similar to probation), while before they would have been eligible for state prison. Instead of reporting to state parole officers, these offenders are to report to local county probation officers.[186]

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[186] Los Angeles County Probation Department-. "Los Angeles County Probation Department-Adult Services." Los Angeles County Probation Department-Adult Services. 2016. Accessed December 12, 2015. http://probation.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/probation/adult.

AB 109 is fashioned to meet the US Supreme Court Order to reduce the prison

population of the State's 33 prisons but was actually brought about by historically

inadequate conditions within California prison's health care system. Realignment AB 109

was enacted against the backdrop of a severely overcrowded California state

prison system, but the statute says it was enacted to combat recidivism and not because of

overcrowding. In November of 2014, Californians overwhelmingly approved Proposition

47. Proposition 47 aims to reduce California's remaining state prison population by

reclassifying six current felony crimes as misdemeanors, effectively transferring the cases

to the county level. The measure also mandates that money saved from reduced

incarcerations go toward funding mental health and substance abuse treatment services,

crime prevention programs, and victim services.[187] The state has moved the job of

detention and wrap around services to local counties. As we will soon see, this has led

many local counties to significantly reduce their jail populations without establishing

probationary services due to budget constraints.

Proposition 47 is at the forefront of a national trend to reduce harsh criminal

penalties that led to an explosion in prison and jail populations beginning in the 1980s. It

follows a revision to California's three strikes law that limits the maximum penalty to

those whose last offense is serious or violent. Along with the shift of nonviolent inmates

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[187] Kim, Eddie. "Crime, Punishment, Good Intentions and Skid Row." Los Angeles
Downtown News. February 16, 2015. Accessed March 26, 2016.
http://www.ladowntownnews.com/news/crime-punishment-good-intentions-and-skid-
row/article_97a9b9fc-b3d2-11e4-a555-6b47b72ee774.html.

from state prison to county jails approved by the state Legislature in 2011, Proposition 47 is expected to further transform California's criminal justice landscape.

Actions to transfer parole violators and lower-level felons to county jails, putting inmates closer to home and potentially improving their prospects for rehabilitation, have impacted county jail populations. As of September 2012, 21 counties had an average daily population greater than their rated capacity. Additionally, 18 counties were operating under court-ordered population caps for at least one jail in their county. To address these capacity constraints, counties released 7,050 pre-sentenced inmates and 5,700 sentenced inmates in September 2012, up by 410 and 2,119 inmates, respectively, from September 2011.

Conclusion

In the middle of Skid Row sits the Central Community Police Station, a non-descript beige building that would not be easily identified as a police station if it wasn't for the constant stream of officers coming in and out of the building. The other thing that separates this building from others in Skid Row, is the lack of Skid Row residents loitering in front of it like nearly every other building in this community. Through my discussions with Skid Row residents the fact that this building has been here for nearly forty years is rarely mentioned. Law enforcement has been pivotal in the construction of Skid Row, as the main supplier and remover of homeless bodies. Through my interviews with resident in appears that police presence in Skid Row correspondence with the influx of new real estate development. With this building serving as a type of panopticon of

downtown Los Angeles, this chapter set out to analyze the impact law enforcement and the historical policies linked to it, has shaped Skid Row.

In this chapter we observed the historical construction of homeless criminality. The demographics of skid row and how skid row is viewed as a space of homelessness is connected to larger institutions of mental health and law enforcement. The historical connection between these two types of institutions is rarely discussed but skid row provides us an access point in discovering how policies of mental health have impacted the proliferation and now reformation of California's correctional institutions.

We first explored the landmark Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, which nearly abolished involuntary hospitalization of mentally ill individuals. This act had the result of the closures of many of the state's mental facilities. This act had two major impacts. The first is that many of these individuals whom were released for these hospitals were arrested for minor criminal acts and placed in correctional facilities. The second, is the creation of psychiatric ghettos. These ghettos can be defined as a collection of poorly maintained housing units for now displaced mental patients, in run-down buildings, maintained by private companies and individuals. Skid row being one of these spaces. Psychiatric ghettos sprung up in declining residential and tourist areas in boarding homes that were formerly tourist-based hotels that had become dilapidated.

This increase of these ghettos and increase in media representations of crime and drug use in urban areas created a fear of urban spaces for white middle class populations. To combat this urban blight, tough on crime rhetoric and policies emerged, with the eventual passing of proposition 184 being tool used to defeat this war crime. This lead to an increase of the prison population. As felons were released from prisons, they had

limited places to. Skid Row was a space to find services for this population. Skid Row became a part of the now cyclical law enforcement process.

From this historical process as we begin to see how Skid Row emerged as a site for increased law enforcement activity. As development and gentrification increased in downtown LA the huge homeless population of adjacent Skid Row represented a barrier. What's the hiring of LAPD Chief Bratton, Skid Row immediately became a space to deal with crime and the development of an economic and cultural space in downtown Los Angeles. This chapter looks at Bratton's use Broken Window Theory as a strategy to prevent social unrest and crime. Homelessness and homeless practices became the focus of the LAPD's new strategy. I argue that the broken windows strategy developed by Bratton during this time period created a space in which the practices and existence of the homeless population of Skid Row were deemed as criminal. Utilizing the work of Alison Mountz, I argue that Skid Row becomes space of criminality that represents the denial basic rights of citizenship.

With passage of AB 109 and proposition 47, the framework of overcrowding and subpar conditions has been replaced by a narrative of increased local control and support. The prisons and Skid Row have historically been the sites where deinstitutionalized populations were placed; to be poor or mentally ill in California also meant to be criminal. What happens to this vulnerable population when public calls for the state to "do something" are never meant to increase services but safety?

Even with a discourse of prison depopulation, the practices of the homeless community are still considered criminal and, in many states, are becoming subject to increasing criminality. As urban centers continue to shift into cultural production, and

with the incessant wooing of specific white bodies to reoccupy cities becoming the

defining practice of modern local urban governments, the homeless body and poor body

are barriers to this progress.

Chapter Four
Failure

"I actually believe that on some level the existence of poor and potentially homeless people or borderline people is not antithetical to a healthy urban environment."

Tom Gilmore, Los Angeles Real Estate Developer

"NGOs have a complicated space in neoliberal politics. They are supposed to mop up the anger. Even when they are doing good work, they are supposed to maintain the status quo. They are the missionaries of the corporate world."

Arundhati Roy

"Each time he took a walk, he felt as though he were leaving himself behind, and by giving himself up to the movement of the streets, by reducing himself to a seeing eye, he was able to escape the obligation to think, and this, more than anything else, brought him a measure of peace, a salutary emptiness within...By wandering aimlessly, all places became equal and it no longer mattered where he was. On his best walks he was able to feel that he was nowhere. And this, finally was all he ever asked of things: to be nowhere."

Paul Auster, *City of Glass*

When I first began to talk to my father about Skid Row, the midnight mission was the first place he wanted me to see. The midnight mission is the largest mission in the area, providing approximately two-thousand meals and temporary beds a day. Upon entry from the outside, gates to the main door are packed with bodies and shopping carts. I learned later on that this was the entry for the homeless and daily volunteers; there was a VIP entrance at the back of the mission (the non-Skid Row side) for celebrities and big money donors. There is a fear that showing the homeless in their actual condition would scare off these volunteers and donors. The midnight mission utilizes a hidden architecture to protect naive piety. This strategy of hiding homelessness to get increased services and donation for the homeless has become a strategy in Skid Row. With over 60 percent of the homeless population being middle-aged black and Latino men, fliers and press from Skid Row-based nonprofits overwhelmingly show images of women and children. One is

tempted to read these practices of organized invisibility as reinforcing the social shame attached to homelessness and reinforcing this population's political disenfranchisement. And perhaps this is true of the homeless considered as a social class or group. But recent efforts to manage homelessness are trained on tracking individuals in ways that make them visible and thereby subject to new types and levels of regulation.

Inside the cafeteria of the mission are a collection of workers who have volunteered and worked there for years Many were homeless and utilized the midnight mission for their services and transitioned into becoming salaried employees for the mission, and many just come back to help. The many times that I visited this kitchen an odd arrangement would form. On one side of the kitchen, this group and on the other the volunteer group of the day who many times were more frightened by the energetic staff than the homeless customers. It was here that the "aha" moment of this project came to me. It has to do with hope, failure, and disappointment.

I was talking to one of my father's friends "Tom" about skid row and what has changed since he has lived here. This was his third time on Skid row in 15 years. This time has been split between Skid Row, jail, "the streets," and "back home." This narrative of mobility, with Skid Row being a constant stop, became commonplace in my interviews with residents. Tom talked about how Skid Row and this area of Downtown was a warzone filled with homeless people in the late 1990s and early 2000s. People getting robbed and beaten up and women getting raped were constant occurrences. There was no hope. He kept repeating the phrase hope. There was hope to things getting better. There was no hope for people to change their lives. Skid Row was a place of no hope. I asked what the difference was now. I was shocked by his answer. He first detailed how

there has been new construction all over the downtown. The city is looking nicer; there is more money coming into this part of the city. The shift from no hope and a warzone to evidence of economic redevelopment suggests that these visible improvements to the appearance of the downtown generate a sense of hope that extends to the residents of Skid Row. Then I asked him about Skid Row. He looked at me and said, "People are fucking pissed and angry." I asked him why. He told me to look at myself. If I was poor and homeless and saw somebody came into my neighborhood with money, dressed nice and buying up all the houses, and I know there is no way for me to get out of my situation, what would I feel? I said I would be sad but then angry. He told me to look at the people's faces when I was walking Skid Row that day and note how many angry faces I saw. I saw a lot that day. I saw a lot as the study continued. I saw a lot today as I visited my father for the holidays.

This project began as a reexamination of Skid Row as a community of hope and how this hope deals with issues of revitalization. It has turned into one that now examines Skid Row and the larger downtown ecosystem that relies on the failures of previous regimes to craft a new version of Los Angeles that cruelly infects the residents of Skid Row with a hope that then turns to anger and bitterness. The failure of redevelopment to extend its promised benefits to homeless people and the failure of neoliberal policies to deliver lasting economic stability attach not to the city officials, urban planners, developers, and architects who plot and approve these projects. Rather, failure attaches to the bodies of homeless people. In practice, failure is less a historical admission of the inadequacies of neoliberal policies, which might suggest the need for change, than an opportunistic crisis rhetoric used to call for more of the same. The presence of homeless

bodies in particular city neighborhoods signifies a failure of economic progress, not in the sense that these policies have failed to "trickle down" to those individuals but in the sense that their mere presence in a particular urban location symbolizes economic failure and threat of future or continued failure.

By the same token, the rhetoric of personal and social failure has been utilized to craft Skid Row as an area in need of dramatic and severe change. This change has been exemplified in discussions of how the downtown as a public space is occupied and by whom. Downtown is now a site at which new gentrifier bodies are now in contact with homeless bodies. Issues of housing and the lack thereof have become the issue for not only the homeless community but also developers, new locals, and the new homeless (individuals hit by the recession who are now unable to meet the growing rents of downtown Los Angeles). It is a climate in which failure has become articulated on bodies and intuitions. These bodies and institutions are now subject to increasing demands on their necessity in a growing space. Failure is the rhetoric to characterize this crisis. A series historical failures has led us to this moment.

This chapter examines the development of the homeless subjectivity from a formerly situated social class to its modern iteration as an economic class.[188] Before neoliberal policies emerged in urban areas in the 1990s, perceptions and legislation of homelessness focused on the personal conduct and behavior of the homeless population as the reason for the proliferation of the homeless population. Today, homelessness is discussed as an economic issue that must be addressed by governmental agencies *and*

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[188] For this discussion, class is noted as stratification processes operating in various political, emotional, economic and cultural economies.

private institutions. In the previous chapter we explored the historical construction of the homeless class, particularly homeless subjectivity, and how it represents an entity associated with issues of migrancy and labor, eventually becoming situated in rhetoric and issues of trash and disease. Here, I argue that the construction of the homeless as an economic class is tied into technologies of neoliberalism in which the homeless body is developed through the creation of technologies of information and mechanisms with capacities to "accumulate, store, transfer, analyze, and use massive databases to guide decisions in the global marketplace."[189] Homelessness as something that can be quantified is represented in vulnerability scores. Initiated by the United Way's Home for Good program in 2010, the vulnerability score is the composite score of over 50 questions in a survey for a coordinated entry system. The survey collects information on medical history, substance abuse issues, income, and usual whereabouts. Each client is then assigned a vulnerability score. All of that information is loaded into a database that all participating agencies can access and update. Homelessness becomes a subjectivity of statistical monitoring that differs from migrancy, labor, and trash in that traditional markers of people who are socially and economic invisible become hyper visible and are able to be quantified and altered.

While regulation of work ethic and personal sanitation and criminalization of homeless practices mark historical state production of the homeless body, the modern homeless subject is a performative effect (or rhetorical effect) of neoliberal policies that attempt to remedy state and private conflicts with revitalization efforts of public space

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[189] Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

and urban housing. This transition is seen in the current "housing first" model that influences current Los Angeles homeless legislation. This model focuses on reducing the taxpayer burden of things like emergency room visits and temporary housing by giving homeless subjects an apartment complemented by in-building services such as job training and mental health treatment. Interestingly, housing becomes the site where rehabilitation of homeless individuals can occur out of sight of the public.

What happens to the homeless subject as a result? The funding requirements for non-profits have reflected this shift. The three largest Skid Row shelters—the Union Rescue Mission, the Midnight Mission and the Los Angeles Mission—get their money from private donations and non-governmental grants. All three have witnessed decreases in donations the last five years as more money is being dedicated to permanent housing programs.[190] Currently, programs like Home for Good that monitor homeless individuals are receiving funds previously given to these temporary shelters with $213 million dollars of public and private donations dedicated to expand its coordinated entry system in 2014.[191] This collection of information makes visible a population who, in many cases, rely on their invisibility from normative information technologies for safety, freedom from incarceration, and ironically access to the services these NGOs supply. It is from these failures of systems and the irony therein that this chapter emerges.

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[190] Kim, Eddie. "New Challenges for Shelters and Missions as Money Flows to Skid Row" LA Downtown News. October 12, 2015. Accessed March 27, 2016. http://www.ladowntownnews.com/news/new-challenges-for-shelters-and-missions-as-money-flows-to/article_fc5e0180-6edc-11e5-91cc-576a036cf89c.html.

[191] Holland, Gale. Los Angeles Times. September 9, 2014. Accessed March 27, 2016. http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-homeless-collaborative-20140909-story.html.

This chapter details the transition of downtown Los Angeles from a public space, to a "welfare state" space, to a current neoliberal space. Skid Row is intertwined with downtown Los Angeles' many iterations as an economic and/or cultural space. Skid Row and its residents are impacted and influence the many historical crises of identity of downtown Los Angeles. This chapter maps this history of downtown Los Angeles. I argue that this is a history of failure, not of Skid Row and its residents, but of the policies and neoliberal strategies that have failed them. I begin this chapter examining the initial transition of downtown as a public space represented by Pershing Square. I then analyze urban policies of the 1960 that led the construction of the "welfare state" which in turn led to the legitimization of Skid Row as a physical space of services for the poor and homeless. I then pay special attention to the retention of these services and emergence of Skid Row as a political space for activists and NGOs in the 1980s. The following sections examine the emergence of neoliberal strategies in urban areas across the US and subsequent use by economic actors and politicians in Los Angeles in the 1990s. Through these many historical moments, housing and the homeless population have been defining issues.

I argue that revitalization in Los Angeles has progressed due to the presence of the homeless population and homeless problem. Their bodies turn the faucet of economic progress even as their bodies are regulated and pushed outside of the system. To make this argument, I draw on David Harvey's detailed account of neoliberalism's failure and how this failure has impacted notions of space and identity. I build on Harvey's account of neoliberalism's failures by addressing how issues of housing development and public

extend the reach of private interest in public spaces. I also utilize Alison Mountz's[192]

concept of the "performative state" to highlight how these failures of neoliberalism

policies can in fact legitimize the state as an actor to correct these failures. I extend her

concept of the performative state by demonstrating how the performative state uses

homeless bodies as evidence of a crisis in need of immediate resolution via the generation

of what Mountz calls "policy on the fly." I look at how these policies have constructed

the present Skid Row and detail neoliberal attempts to "fix" the situated homeless

community. It is this act of "fixing" the access of resources and housing for homeless

individuals that legitimizes new efforts in urban redevelopment. The existence of the

homeless community and the need to remove them is the means through which urban

development can occur. I then move on to discuss the current era of gentrification and its

impact on housing for Skid Row residents and downtown Los Angeles. I conclude this

chapter with a discussion on current cultural and economic developments and the

emergence of a new homeless crisis in the area.

Public Space as Failure/Crises

This section provides a foundation for the construction of public space in

downtown Los Angeles and how the Skid Row homeless population has factored into this

construction. Smith and Low (2006) define public space as a multivariant space. They

state that public space is a "range of social locations offered by the street, the park, the

media, the Internet, the shopping mall, the United Nations, national governments, and

local neighborhoods. 'Public space' envelops the palpable tension between place,

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[192] Mountz (2010)

experienced at all scales in daily life, and the seeming spacelessness of the Internet, popular opinion, and the global institutions and economy."[193] Public space expands from place-based conceptualizations of consumerism and/or voyeurism to include sites of contest for physical, psychological, and political realities.

This section details the transition of downtown Los Angeles from a public space to a "welfare state" space to a current neoliberal space. This transition takes place in four stages. Up until the 1950s, the downtown represented a traditional public space. This transition of downtown public space began when calls of the downtown becoming blighted and a site that encourages "unlawful" behavior and homeless populations came from the business community and local residents. It is important to note that policies of the post-World War II era were not proactive but reactive to market and social conditions. The 1960s and 1970s represent a module of the welfare state. The 1980s represent a period of isolation and increased suburbanization politics. In this era a pro-corporation turn of local governments marked an increase of public-private partnerships. The 1990s represent a transition into the more uniform neoliberal policies that now inform current Los Angeles downtown public space. Neoliberal policies make homelessness a disease subject to disciplines of medical intervention and case management. This strategy of case management coupled with a containment strategy allowed Los Angeles to reshape traditional outlets of homelessness social provision along neoliberal lines. These neoliberal policies focus on a patholigization of the homeless body that welcomes intervention through the use of medical and market technologies.

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[193] Ibid. pg. 2

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Figure 6. Pershing Plaza circa 1930s. Nathalie Boucher 2010

At the heart of any discussion of urban revitalization is the issue of public space. A prime example for Los Angeles that displays the historical contestation of space and its various constructions based on period-specific ideas of space can be seen in a 5-acre park smack dead-center in the downtown. Bounded by Olive, Hill, 5th, and 6th streets, with the front of the Biltmore Hotel on one side, the office towers of Bunker Hill on another, and the vibrant urban core of the downtown on the other sides, sits Los Angeles' answer to New York City's Central Park, Pershing Square. The park was constructed in 1866 as La Plaza Abaja, "the lower plaza." "After the turn of the century the square was redone in the formal Beaux-Arts style by John Parkinson, the architect of City Hall a few blocks away. In 1918, it was renamed for John 'Black Jack' Pershing, the victorious American

general of World War I. His statue still stands in the park, next to a monument to the 7th California regiment that fought in the Spanish-American War of 1898. From the 1920s to the 1960s, the square served as the center of what was known as 'the run,' a gay cruising corridor along 5th Street stocked with nearby drinking establishments."[194]

Figure 7. A 1951 photo of Pershing Square shows the clearing it underwent to construct an underground parking garage. (Los Angeles Times)

In 1951, the park was ripped out to make way for a three-level, subterranean parking garage. The palm trees and lush tropical vegetation that once filled the park were ripped out and given to Disneyland for their new *Jungle Cruise* ride. Pershing Square was then widened with one-way streets constructed to connect to the growing interstate system. What was once a communal area of civic space became another part of the grid of the growing automobile culture and suburbanization of Los Angeles. Currently, AEG has put up $700,000 to study the problem of Pershing Square with plans to reestablish it

[194] Graham, Wade. "Why We Hate Pershing Square." Los Angeles Times. September 27, 2015. Accessed March 27, 2016. http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-graham-why-we-hate-pershing-square-20150927-story.html.

as a large public-use park for downtown LA. Pershing Square represents a long-standing

issue of downtown Los Angeles and the construction and representation of public space,

a long standing conflict between commercial, residential, and transportation interests.

Welfare State and the Physical Creation of Skid Row

    The construction of the welfare state led to the legitimization of Skid Row. Skid

Row has historically been for transient individuals who slip in and out of the many social

and economic vectors of Los Angeles. This transient nature of housing began to shift

after World War II when veterans, who had passed through this area to the Pacific during

the war, came back to settle for good. As Skid Rows in Seattle and Chicago were

demolished in the 1950s and 60s195, the population that was attracted to this area for its

social services and inexpensive housing became more permanent and aged.196 Skid Row

transitioned from a place that once provided rooms in commercial hotels to transient

populations to one that provided more long-term housing options for people with little to

no income.[197] As Skid Row changed, so did the surrounding area. The development of

the highway system after World War II reduced the significance of downtown LA as a

central hub. While some new office space was built in Bunker Hill, a few miles west of

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[195] Miller, Ronald J. *The Demolition of Skid Row*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1982.
[196] Ellickson, Robert C. "Controlling Chronic Misconduct in City Spaces: Of Panhandlers, Skid Rows, and Public-Space Zoning." *The Yale Law Journal* 105, no. 5 (January 1996): 1165.

[197] Spivak, Gayatri C. "Righting Wrongs." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 103, no. 2/3 (Spring 2004): 523-81. https://blogs.commons.georgetown.edu/engl-218-fall2010/files/Righting-Wrongs.pdf.

Spring Street and Broadway, profitable real estate elsewhere drove most businesses out of the area.[198] The population that remained was elderly. These people were in many cases long-term substance abusers of low income. They stayed because this was a neighborhood with which they were familiar and contained the facilities that they were used to visiting and provided the services that they needed.

In the late 1960s, the city stated that many of the public buildings and hotels in the area were seismically deficient or failed to meet other health and safety codes and began to issue orders to correct or demolish the buildings. Most owners opted to demolish, and housing in Skid Row went from roughly 15,000 units in the mid-1960s to about 7,500 units in the area by the early 1970s. This sudden decrease in housing stock led to the sudden displacement of a sizeable residential population. In addition to demolition, many of the owners selected to sell their property for industrial development. Under the pressure of industrial expansion and increased pressure to comply with city building codes, many landlords opted to demolish housing units, resulting in a substantial displacement of the population.

During this time period corporations, business, and the market system were also seen as primary enemies requiring redress. By capturing ideals of individual freedom through the concept of consumer choice not only for particular products but also lifestyles, modes of expression, and cultural practices and turning them against the interventionist and regulatory practices of the state, capitalist interests were able to restore their economic and political position. "Both politically and economically the

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[198] Cantu, Aaron M. "Haven in a Homeless World." The New Inquiry. November 14, 2014. Accessed March 27, 2016. http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/haven-in-a-homeless-world/.

construction of a market-based populist culture of differentiated consumerism and individual libertarianism."[199]

In the early 1970s, the City came to the conclusion that there needed to be a redevelopment program for portions of downtown Los Angeles, including most of the central business district and the Skid Row area.[200] There was debate whether to demolish Skid Row entirely or keep it but in a more contained version. In 1975, a redevelopment plan was passed that would stabilize, create, maintain, and contain a base of low-income housing and social services in the neighborhood.[201] The redevelopment plan designated an area for the location of facilities serving the neighborhood's homeless population. As briefly discussed in Chapter 1, this containment strategy was aimed at the preservation and limited expansion of residential facilities (for the most part the single room occupancy hotels in the area) and social services, while enabling industrial growth in the area.[202] Programs adhering to the containment strategy included providing funds to acquire, rehabilitate, and then sell a number of the single room occupancy (SRO) hotels and some of the other institutions that existed in the area to nonprofit organizations. The plan attempted to identify "intervention areas," or clusters of SRO units and hotels that could be utilized to create the feel of a residential neighborhood.

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[199] Harvey, pg. 42

[200] Klein (1997), pg. 24.

[201] Keil, Roger. *Los Angeles, Globalization, Urbanization, and Social Struggles*. Chichester, West Sussex, England: J. Wiley, 1998.

[202] Reese, Ellen, Geoffrey Deverteuil, and Leanne Thach. "'Weak-Center' Gentrification and the Contradictions of Containment: Deconcentrating Poverty in Downtown Los Angeles." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34, no. 2 (Fall, 2010): 310-27.

This strategy was able to take root in the late 1970s due to the federal government being faced with fiscal difficulties. The fiscal problems were blamed on late-1960s and early-1970s policies that led to an expansion of public employment and public provision facilitated by the federal funding as the solution to growing urban unrest by historically marginalized groups. This unrest was deemed to have occurred due to decades of deindustrialization and rapid suburbanization that had, for several years, been eroding the economic base of the city and had left many urban cities impoverished. The mid 1970s marked a stark decline in federal aid for urban areas. By promising reinvestment in urban areas, large institutions were able to dictate the management of the city budget. The effect of this reinvestment led to diminishing power of municipal unions, county worker wage freezes, and cutbacks in public employment and social provisions such as education, public health, and transport services.

The creation of a "good business climate" was a priority. This meant using public resources to build appropriate infrastructures for business coupled with subsidies and tax incentives, "corporate welfare substituted for people welfare."[203] Corporations argued that economic revitalization of the central business district was key in any restoration effort of urban centers. The business sector leveraged public resources to build sports stadiums, festival centers, and tourist amenities that transformed downtown areas into privileged zones of spectacle entertainment and big-end consumption.

Economic reorganization brought about tremendous growth to the urban real-estate market. Speculative real estate investing completely changed the urban housing market. Previous "blighted" neighborhoods, working class enclaves formerly centered

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[203] Harvey, pg. 43.

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around factory work, and affordable neighborhoods near transportation or other amenities were all impacted by this real estate boom, eventually becoming priced out of their long-standing communities and forced to find new affordable housing further out from the urban core.

The Isolation of the Urban Space

The 1980s mark a period when local and national government practices and policies represent an articulation of expanded private interests that move from inside walls of commerce and become mobile through city streets and roads. Architecture and developments begin to mirror this privatization through exclusion and increased mobility. The reshaping of the urban core in the early 1980s coincided with a growing national homeless population. The skyrocketing number of unhoused people on city streets represented a highly visible threat to downtown revitalization. Local governments and downtown business groups began to combat homelessness in urban centers by framing homelessness as a realm of public safety and social provision. In turn, the homeless population was isolated as a distinct troublesome population that represents issues of crime, disease, and disabled bodies and minds.[204]

In terms of crime, cities' responses to homeless bodies were characterized by zero-tolerance policing. In addition to this, there was intensified surveillance through the use of closed-circuit cameras by urban center businesses. These cameras pointed their

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[204] Steffen, C. G. "The Corporate Campaign against Homelessness: Class Power and Urban Governance in Neoliberal Atlanta, 1973-1988." *Journal of Social History* 46, no. 1 (2012): 170-96.

lenses to the public sidewalk, expanding the scope of their vision and control from inside their walls to the now adjacent city streets. The 1980s also mark a period of proliferation of quality-of-life ordinances that banned practices of loitering and occupation of space on public streets. In addition, there was a boom of fortified public spaces; these are the physical representations of the polarization and segregation of economic and socials classes through the construction of gated communities. Usage of private security forces also increased during this time period. It should be noted that private security is not simply "private police" but includes a wide range of organizations that includes "corporate security, security guard companies, armored car businesses, investigative services, and many others.[205]

Throughout the 1970s and 80s, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley chose to postpone confronting the Fordist growth-induced crises of economic recessions and urban uprisings through an overt internationalization of the city; this included the creation of foreign investment incentives, an accommodating transportation infrastructure for imports, and a world-city image that culminated in the successful hosting of the 1984 Olympic games. Los Angeles became a "testing ground for post-Fordist innovation"[206] in this climate of internationalization, as it mutated through a process of deindustrialization of industry, a reindustrialization of craft production, and the emergence of a vast yet polarized service-sector. The internationalization of Los Angeles has not simply

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[205] Strom, Kevin, Marcus Berzofsky, Bonnie Shook-Sa, Kelle Barrick, Crystal Daye, Nicole Horstmann, and Susan Kinsey. "The Private Security Industry: A Review of the Definitions, Available Data Sources, and Paths Moving Forward" National Criminal Justice Reference Service. 2010. Accessed March 28, 2016. https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/bjs/grants/232781.pdf.

[206] Keil, pg. 99

established a hegemony of global capital and anti-urban economic development, Keil

argues. The process of internationalization has simultaneously catalyzed insurgent civil

societies that have successfully agitated for social, environmental, and political change

across disparate communities and interests:

> The hundreds of thousands of working-class Angelinos, most of them
> people of color (who are a majority in the city), have begun to claim
> spaces of alternate civility that represent a major challenge to the Anglo,
> middle-class society Los Angeles was believed to be. Excluded from the
> benefits of world city formation, these communities have started to build a
> civil society from below: in churches, labor unions, political organizations,
> environmental groups, neighborhood associations and other forms, the
> poor and disenfranchised of Los Angeles have created a network of
> democratic self-organization.[207]

The city divested itself of direct initiatives in favor of nonprofit organizations to

fill the service vacuum. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act passed in 1986

was the first, and remains the only, major federal legislative response to homelessness.

The act provides emergency relief provisions for shelter, food, mobile health care, and

transitional housing through contracts with non-profits. In the early 1980s, the initial

responses to widespread and increasing homelessness were primarily local. Homelessness

was viewed by the Reagan Administration as a problem that did not require federal

intervention.

In 1984, the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Housing Corporation was founded

by the Community Redevelopment Agency to acquire and rehabilitate single room

occupancy hotels in the area.[208] During this time period, the Redevelopment Agency's

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[207] Keil, pg. 35.
[208] SRO Housing Corporation. "Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Housing Corporation."
2011. Accessed March 28, 2016. http://www.srohousing.org/about.

effort was threefold: "stabilize the residential base by funding the acquisition, rehabilitation and quality operation of SRO hotels; attract and consolidate social services into locations that were physically proximate to where the population was; and retain and expand the industrial base in the area."[209] As these efforts were underway, the population in Skid Row began to increase with the introduction of crack cocaine to poor neighborhoods in South Los Angeles. Skid Row's population started skewing black, and drug addiction became more pervasive. The crack epidemic, coupled with the county's habit of dropping off newly-released offenders into the area, increased crime and housing needs.[210] As the Redevelopment Agency focused its efforts on increasing commercial development, it created a vacuum of services and housing for the neighborhood's growing homeless population.

The slow rate of development of new shelters and an increasing population led to a dramatic standoff in 1984. Initiated by The Homeless Organizing Team, circus tents were put up and housed 400 people across the street from LA City Hall. The performance was framed as a demand for housing and jobs for LA's homeless population. The protest brought attention to the exploding problem of homelessness. The housing and economic problems of Skid Row were expanding into the larger downtown area. In 1989, community activists and business leaders from the downtown Los Angeles area responded to the alarming disappearance of affordable, permanent housing by coming together to create the Skid Row Housing Trust. The Trust swiftly mobilized private

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[209] Spivack, Donald. "History of Skid Row Series, Paper 1." Urban Viewer. September 15, 1998. http://leroyneiman.ucla.edu/camilosr/essaysr.htm.

[210] Cantu, Ibid.

equity through low-income tax credits, public finance, and conventional debt to salvage

hundreds of housing apartments that would have been otherwise lost.[211]

The Neoliberal Emergence into Downtown Los Angeles

In the 1990s, Los Angeles looked to privatizing public space as a way to help with

issues of housing and infrastructure. Privatized public space can be defined as the

"elimination and/or intensified surveillance of urban public spaces" and the "creation of

new privatized spaces of elite/corporate consumption."[212] The ownership and subsequent

loaning out of public spaces by businesses and corporations in urban areas has become a

defining measure of neoliberalism and its expression in the neoliberal city. Privately

owned public spaces, abbreviated as "POPS," are areas in high-density areas that are

maintained by a developer for public use in exchange for additional floor area that the

local government permits for the construction of new large developments.

POPS typically contain functional and visual amenities such as tables, chairs,

and planting for the purpose of public use and enjoyment. These spaces commonly

include plazas, arcades, through block arcades, small parks, and atriums.[213] This can be

seen in the transformation of Pershing Square from a public space to a blighted area in

need of governmental intervention to government-sponsored private ownership that

eventually leads to a privately-owned public space that reflects the way urban areas as

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[211] Skid Row Housing Trust. "History Timeline - Skid Row Housing Trust." Skid Row Housing Trust RSS2. 2016. Accessed March 28, 2016. http://skidrow.org/about/history/.
[212] Brenner, Neil, and Nikolas Theodore. *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002.

[213] Kayden, Jerold S. *Privately Owned Public Space: The New York City Experience*. New York: John Wiley, 2000.

spaces have been transformed to express the growing interconnected relationship between the state and the market in which the market acts as the main actor of providing the necessary functions and amenities for citizens.[214]

In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, David Harvey defines neoliberalism as "a political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites."[215] The political project of neoliberalism emerged with the rise of "stagflation"[216] in the early 1970s and the declining productivity and profitability in the industrial sector. Neoliberalism is an attempt to decentralize traditional state-run services by creating a framework in which private entities now run these services, resulting in an expansive free market program that is intended to provide personalized services for consumers. For Harvey, neoliberalism is a utopian (theoretical) project and a political project. The former refers to the promotion of individual freedom and human dignity, the founding figures of neoliberal thought. The latter refers to the restoration of elite class power by means of new processes of class formation. Harvey goes on to state,

> Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic
> practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by
> liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an
> institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights,
> free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve
> an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.[217]

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[214] Wahlstrom, Mattias, and Abby Peterson. "Between the State and the Market: Expanding the Concept of 'Political Opportunity Structure'" *Acta Sociologica* 49, no. 4 (December 01, 2006): 363-77.

[215] Harvey, pg. 2.

[216] A condition of slow economic growth and relatively high unemployment. It is a time of stagnation accompanied by a rise in prices, or inflation.

[217] Harvey, pg. 2

Neoliberalism as an economic project came to be when Keynesian-embedded liberalism lost popularity and the neoliberal ideas of Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek were increasingly promoted in academia in the 1950s. Keynesianism promoted international trade and "productive" capital flows while controlling short-term "unproductive" capital flows. "Keynesianism generally prescribes a greater degree of government intervention in markets than does neoliberalism, which promotes the perfect mobility of capital."[218] The central purpose of neoliberal reform is to slow inflation and to improve the financial position of the state. "The Neoliberal model rests on the premise that investment is the most important stimulus for economic growth, and despite the name, it is more closely linked to Classical models than to the embedded liberalism of the Second World War era."[219]

Neoliberalism as a political project has its origins in the interwar period as a philosophy opposed to state-run socialism and only began to become influential as a set of distinct practices and policies due to a well-funded movement in the postwar period when American businessmen saw their interests threatened by New Deal liberalism and the wide-scale labor mobilization. Neoliberalism, in this line of thinking, was less a school of economic and political thought and was more the predictable counterattack of an embattled business class.[220] In order to achieve social legitimation, the first forms of

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[218] Robinson, William I. *Transnational Conflicts: Central America, Social Change, and Globalization*. London: Verso, 2003.

[219] Helleiner, Eric, Stefano Pagliari, and Hubert Zimmermann. *Global Finance in Crisis: The Politics of International Regulatory Change*. London: Routledge, 2010.

[220] Gaffney, Ibid.

neoliberalism were promoted in regimes of embedded liberalism. In such regimes the working class could demand more security, which marked the emergence of the welfare state, which in turn came to dominate in other countries as well.

In times of crisis, neoliberal reform is often seen as necessary in order to restore the purchasing power of wages in the context of hyper-inflation and to attract much-needed foreign capital. "Financial crisis often serves as the impetus to economic reforms, yet in the short-run, reforms can deepen or even prolong the crisis."[221] It was through a set of "crises" that neoliberal policies began to take shape. The beginning of a persistent, marked upswing in national health care expenditures, which in turn gave birth to the health care "cost crisis" and the "oil crisis," caused many Americans to look to the government for answers. Corresponding to these set of crises was the emergence of corporate political action committees (PACs) in Washington. "The atmosphere of economic crisis (again, even if exaggerated) was the *milieu* in which these business interests were given a historic opportunity to reassert power in Washington."[222]

Much of the domestic economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s revolved around diminishing industrial production. Harvey notes that the neoliberal project has failed to accomplish "expanded manufacturing reproduction" through the modern industrial system, which is a system that emerged through investing greatly in plants and machinery. Instead, a new modern financial system has emerged that has replaced the old

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[221] Griffith, Benjamin G. "The Paradox of Neoliberalism: A Critique of the Washington ..." Connecticut College Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. April 8, 2006. Accessed March 28, 2016. http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=hisphp.

[222] Gaffney, Ibid.

industrial model. This new system is one with greater concentrated wealth through what Harvey calls "accumulation through dispossession." Harvey states that this is the centralization of wealth and power in the hands of a few by dispossessing the public of their wealth and land.

This conflict between housing stock, a growing homeless base, and a fledgling commercial district lasted throughout the 1990s with only minimal efforts to reshape the downtown[223] until an ordinance passed by the city in 1999 made it easier for developers to repurpose old buildings for retail and living space. Housing rights activist General Dogon explains how this ordinance began to change Skid Row into an affluent commercial and residential district:

General Dogon: So this is the thing, you see them hotels (he points to several large hotels a block away)? Hotel Barkley, it's two around the corner, it's the Cecil, the Huntington. They call it the for-profit hotels. So the for-profit hotels, they can make money, they not SROs, they not Skid Row Housing Trust, but these hotels were just full of po' folks, low-income folks before this gentrification shit we got took over. And what happened was, there was this guy named Tom Gilmore, like he was the first developer to get the idea downtown to take some of these old office buildings, like these right here (points to several old office buildings directly ahead of us), and

[223] Leibowitz, Ed. "Reinventing Skid Row." POLITICO Magazine. March 05, 2014. Accessed March 28, 2016. http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/03/los-angeles-skid-row-reinvention-104266.

they was gutted. You know white flight, right after the Watts

Riots; they was too close, so they ran out to the San Fernando

valley, Van Nuys, Canoga Park, and all that. And so this guy came

up with the idea of taking these old buildings, kicking a hole in the

wall, put a sink and toilet in there, and call it a loft, charging $1500

or a $1000 for rent.[224]

Gilmore rebranded his new developments as Downtown's "Old Bank District."

This rebranding effects what Norman Klein has called a historical distraction. It is a call

back to a previous period of affluence in the downtown area, a time period devoid of Skid

Row and the downtown's perceived connection with poverty. In *The History of*

Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory, Klein (1997) classifies distraction

as the "quiet instant" when one created memory covers another. Klein asserts, "In order

to remember, something must be forgotten. The place where memories are stored has no

boundaries. In other words, forgetting is a twin; its tandem affect is best called

'simultaneous distraction' the instant when one memory defoliates another. This fuzzy

double–one devouring the other presumably inhibits learning." In the historical

distraction created by rebranding downtown as "The Bank District," the "progress" made

by economic actors and real estate developers covers over the progress made by

coalitions of various homeless rights activists and service providers in Skid Row.

A discourse of downtown Los Angeles being given a "clean slate" and one that

can be "better than before" has had widespread implications in public policies and the

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[224] General Dogon, Ibid.

revitalization movement. Downtown Los Angeles became a place of urban renewal but more specifically a continuation of the experiment of New Urbanism. Mercier[225] (2003) notes that sites of urban renewal are located at the heart of urban life; they absorbed the shock of an exodus to the suburbs. The areas were then abandoned by industry, business, and the middle class, which led to whole neighborhoods being deteriorated. These circumstances tarnished the reputation of such neighborhoods while at the same time spawning ambitious projects to rebuild these inner-city areas. The areas were then subject to large demolition campaigns in an effort to radically modify their role and appearance.

In *Seeking Asylum: Human Smuggling and Bureaucracy at the Border,*[226] Alison Mountz develops the concept of the "performative state," the state not as given but instead an entity that produces itself through the everyday actions of its numerous functionaries.[227] Mountz utilizes Judith Butler's[228] (1997) work on the performative and how gender identity is enacted and constructed through its repetition. Butler states, "We do not choose our gendered identity; our gender gets produced as we repeat ourselves. We do not take on roles to act out as in a performance; we become subjects through repetition. Gender then is a verb, a doing–not a doing by a subject but a performative

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[225] Mercier, Guy. "The Rhetoric of Contemporary Urbanism: A Deconstructive Analysis of Central City Neighbourhood Redevelopment." *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 12, no. 1 (August 2003): 71.
[226] Mountz, Ibid.

[227] Hall, Rachel. "Unwitting Performances of Transparency Monitoring the Travelling Public, Managing Airport Affect." *Performance Research* 16, no. 2 (2011): 97-104.

[228] Butler, Judith. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

doing."[229] Mountz contends that the state as an entity is operational much like gender and race through the performative.

To make her argument, Mountz details the Canadian government's response to an immigration crises in 1999 when several boatloads of Chinese migrants attempted to land on a remote island off the coast of British Columbia. Canadian Coast Guard vessels intercepted the migrants, most of whom subsequently claimed political asylum citing fear of persecution or undue hardship should they be returned to China. Given the large influx of migrants and the high drama of interceptions, the Canadian government found itself in crisis, forced to adapt to a situation it was not prepared for and, in the process, allowing concerned agencies to create "policy on the fly."[230]

It is this concept of "policy on the fly" that is the center of Mountz's argument. Mountz argues that state sovereignty and the state itself is not a given but produces itself in its everyday practices. Mountz states that "[t]he state becomes a series of performances and practices that involve negotiations and power plays."[231] The state is not a thing-in-itself that acts but is instead an entity made up of the day-to-day actions of state actors. The concept of the "performative state" resituates state action from preconceived to a complex and contradictory performance of neoliberal cost-benefit analysis.

Under intense pressure to "do something,"[232] Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) officers chose the more expensive but highly visible option of detention for the

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[229] Ibid, pg. 25.
[230] Mountz, pg. 20.

[231] Ibid, pg. 58.

[232] Ibid, pg. 75

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migrants. The contradiction between a state starved for resources and the "do something" attitude that leads to the expensive decision to detain migrants is commensurate with the intense focus on personal security under regimes of neoliberalism. Therefore, because the spontaneous arrival of non-sanctioned migrants is perceived as a dire threat to state sovereignty, Mountz points out that "the response to exercise border enforcement is an expression of sovereignty."[233] Initial detention preceded by constant surveillance of migrant bodies are the ways in which the state performs itself *and* how it creates a unique citizen, the migrant.

I understand homelessness as a unique form of migrancy. While this population views themselves as residents of Skid Row, legalization on this population has long viewed this group as one that is temporarily residing in this area with no claim to the space. Homeless individuals on Skid Row occupy an almost alien identity in which their presence is noted but not legitimated. The migrant/homeless identity is defined by these performances of the state, not a full citizen but not a citizen, the migrant represents an internalized other, an identity in which the state and the homeless are constantly negotiating its subjectivity. Its subjectivity is constructed through this performance of negotiation of rights and space. The homeless/migrant is constantly negotiating their belonging to the state. This flux is performed spatially through the act of detention centers; economically through the lack of citizen or visa status to obtain a job; and temporally because at any moment the state may reject the migrant's right to remain in the state.

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[233] Ibid, pg. 78

The Housing Crises

This section details the rhetorical strategy of equating housing with the homeless issue. Unfortunately, the housing stock and policies to increase housing are never developed, but the homeless are still deemed as unnecessary and are hesitant to utilize the housing stock. This strategy places the homeless population as aggressively denying housing. In 2015, there were approximately 6,500 residential units in Skid Row, but only 50% of the stock has been rehabilitated and brought under management of one or another nonprofit organization. There are approximately sixty-five SRO hotels on Skid Row, owned and operated by an assortment of different organizations. About forty-five hotels, or almost 70% of the units, are run by not-for-profits—including the Trust, SRO Inc., and a few other non-profit organizations that have about three or four hotels. The rest are owned and operated by for-profit owners. These private hotels are congregated mostly on Main Street. NGOs in the area include Weingarten Center, the Salvation Army, the Union Rescue Mission, the Los Angeles Mission, Midnight Mission, the Catholic Workers' Hospitality Kitchen (a.k.a. "Hippie Kitchen"), the Downtown Drop-In Center, and many other services.[234]

Large-scale programs are in the works to provide additional housing for this population. In September of 2014, the United Way launched Home for Good.[235] The

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[234] Harcourt, Bernard E. "Policing L.A.'s Skid Row: Crime and Real Estate ..." Public Law & Legal Theory. 2005. Accessed March 28, 2016. http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1227&context=public_law_and_legal_theory. University of Chicago Public Law & Legal Theory Working Paper No. 92, 2005

[235] "HomeForGood." HomeForGood. 2014. Accessed March 28, 2016. http://homeforgoodla.org/.

program would finance a "coordinated entry system," "an ambitious, business sector-powered plan to eradicate veteran and chronic homelessness" in Los Angeles County, with $213 million from public funders including the US Department of Veterans Affairs and the Los Angeles Housing Authority, as well as private funders like Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan Chase, the Hilton Foundation, and the Weingarten foundations. The coordinated entry system is meant to match individuals with services through registration in a massive database. Proponents present the program with frequent appeals to "efficiency" and "cost effectiveness." Once a person is in the system, they are given a "vulnerability score" based on a few different variables, including mental and physical handicaps and time spent on the street. Based on each individual profile, the entry system recommends a menu of "targeted services." It was piloted last year in Skid Row, and a few dozen were eventually housed as a result.[236]

This program relies on the performance of the homeless resident. The homeless are the internalized other on Skid Row. Performance to find jobs, not be visibly homeless, visibly show handicap, etc. The performance demanded is a performance of trying to be normal. This type of performance can be described by what Jon McKenzie[237] defines as the liminal-norm. In Jon McKenzie's performance intervention, *Perform or Else,* McKenzie documents the onto-historical changes of the term, concept, and paradigm, *performance*. For McKenzie, *performance* has moved from a dramaturgical concept that has permeated communication studies and anthropology and eventually

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[236] Cantu, Ibid.
[237] McKenzie, Jon. *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*. London: Routledge, 2001.

become its own epistemological site, to becoming "to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries what discipline was to the eighteenth and nineteenth: an onto-historical formation of power and knowledge."[238] For McKenzie, this move to performance is defined by organizational, cultural, and technological reliance on it for formulation of power and knowledge structures in a post-WWII world.

For McKenzie, performance is the layer of symbols in stratification, and this stratification is the necessary component that moves us away from the old paradigm and knowledge system of discipline and into a new transgressive knowledge production system that is based on performance. Workers and citizens are now engaged in a system in which they are judged and deemed worthy based on their performance. They are thrown away or alienated if they fail.

Home for Good looks to alter the homeless body as one that needs assistance fits within the "care" framework but still fails to fully address the issue of housing stock. The program ignores the new challenges created by revitalization efforts in Skid Row and downtown Los Angeles. This type of program attempts to increase the legibility of the homeless population. Fang[239] argues that the ways in which we consistently count and report the number of homeless individuals is the beginning of the "systematic documentation, or the forced documentation, of an undocumented (and undocumentable) population." It represents a neoliberal strategy to address social issues. Ong[240] argues that

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[238] Ibid. pg. 18.

[239] Fang, Anyu. "Hiding Homelessness: 'quality of Life' Laws and the Politics of Development in American Cities." *IJC International Journal of Law in Context* 5, no. 01 (2009): 1.

[240] Ong, Aihwa. *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

this focus of legibility is a form of governmentality that utilizes calculation as a strategy

to justify political behaviors and decisions. These decisions use numerical values to

include and exclude certain populations: "[N]eoliberalism as exception is introduced in

sites of transformation where market-driven calculations are being introduced in the

management of populations and the administration of special spaces...At the same time,

exceptions to neoliberalism are also invoked, in political decisions, to exclude

populations and places from neoliberal calculations and choices."[241] Housing policies are

used to create an environment in which housing equality, economic justice, and homeless

rights are replaced by systems that promote efficiency and quantitative data on homeless

communities. Actual progress for the lives of homeless populations is replaced by

institutional opacity. It is through the state's misuse of NGOs, which act as arms of

assistance for the homeless populations, that neoliberal policies and opacity are created.

The documentation of homeless bodies is a mechanism of the new economic

model of Los Angeles urbanity and part of the technology of "knowing." Goldman argues

that counting makes bodies that were not known before legible.[242] Lee and Price-

Spratlen,[243] in their study of homeless accounting from the US Census, argue "visible"

homeless are overrepresented in metropolitan and urban portions of the nation, in central

cities of metropolitan areas, and in a minority of neighborhoods within these areas. Rural

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[241] Ibid. pg. 3-4.

[242] Goldman, Alvin I. *Pathways to Knowledge: Private and Public*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

[243] Lee, Barrett A., and Townsand Price-Spratlen. "The Geography of Homelessness in American Communities: Concentration or Dispersion?" *City & Community City and Community* 3, no. 1 (2004): 3-27.

and suburban homeless counts are underrepresented, making homelessness and homeless individuals appear to be an exclusively urban issue. The LAHSA count used in this dissertation relies on visible counting methods. Individuals who look "unwashed," "loiter," or "have carts" are labeled as homeless in this study and similar counts throughout the nation. Counting does not require those observing and recording rates of homeless to interact with individuals about their residence or lack thereof. By making homelessness a city issue, observable from a distance by strangers, it justifies current neoliberal actions as necessary improvements. This approach champions a move toward neoliberal futurity and away from past coalition-based policies.

An additional problem with the quantification of homeless bodies is the fact that there is no concrete definition of what is homelessness. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a homeless person as follows: an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and additionally an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.[244] Problematic in this definition are the concepts of "fixed," "regular," "adequate," "ordinary," and "temporary" and, specifically, who defines them.

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[244] The US Department of Housing and Urban Development. "HUD/U.S." HUD/U.S. Accessed March 28, 2016. http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD.

Additional definitions define homelessness as "having no home; without a permanent place of residence." "Adults, children and youth sleeping in places not meant for human habitation," "adults, children and youth in shelters," "children in institutions," "adults in institutions," and "adults, children and youth living 'doubled up' in conventional dwellings."[245] These definitions only address the physical conditions of homelessness. Jim Baumohl[246] (1996) defines homelessness as a type of liminal state that is classified by "the absence of belonging, both to a place and with the people settled there." The problem with this definition is that it denies the ability and potential of homeless individuals to create feelings of belonging and communities. If homelessness is a problem of housing scarcity and there are no additional housing options becoming available, and if homelessness is an issue of temporary shelter and the individuals of Skid Row who are classified as homeless mostly have permanent shelter, then we must separate discourse of homelessness from the homeless body.

Homelessness as a reality differs from the homeless body in that the homeless body represents a site of crisis and potential for urban growth. Mitchell and Staeheli[247] (2008) look at the issues of geographies of homelessness and the politics of homeless exclusionary practices in San Diego. Their study looks at how local policies of privatization have led to the threat of the "end of public space." Through looking at how new public space policies were influenced through the discourse of removing the

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[245] Lee, Barrett A., Kimberly A. Tyler, and James D. Wright. "The New Homelessness Revisited." *Annu. Rev. Sociol. Annual Review of Sociology* 36, no. 1 (2010): 501-21.

[246] Baumohl, Jim. *Homelessness in America*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1996.

[247] Staeheli, Lynn A., and Don Mitchell. "Don't Talk with Strangers: Regulating Property, Purifying the Public." *Griffith Law Review* 17, no. 2 (2008): 531-45.

homeless population, they argue that the question of homelessness is inherently and

simultaneously the question of property. There becomes a paradox in how redevelopment

and gentrification cause homelessness, yet homelessness becomes the reason for retaking

the urban core. Policies that lead to homelessness are used as a rationale for that same

gentrification. By hiding the city of the homeless we are creating more homeless

individuals. The gentrification process of downtown Los Angeles mirrors this modern

urban paradox.

Failure Creates Something New

        This section details the current reframing of what is considered housing on Skid

Row. Discussions of gentrification and a new vision of a historical downtown are

included in this discussion. An example of how these battles of space are articulated into

issues of housing and removal of homeless bodies for a desired population can be seen

with the remodeling of the historic Cecil Hotel. The Cecil Hotel was built in the 1920s

and refurbished in 2007 as a tourist hotel. The developers that purchased the 600-room

Cecil were hoping to transform the 80-year-old residential hotel into a budget-friendly

tourist spot. Longtime residents paid about $470 a month--while tourists, who likened the

place to European hostels, were paying $40 or $50 a night. The lobby had been carefully

restored, security staff had new suits, and the hallways had been repainted.[248] The new

owners attempted to evict long-term residents utilizing what is called the "28-day

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[248] Bachrach, Eve. "Why Is Downtown's Cecil Hotel Such a Nightmare?" Curbed LA.
February 21, 2013. Accessed March 28, 2016.
http://la.curbed.com/2013/2/21/10271112/why-is-downtowns-cecil-hotel-such-a-
nightmare.

shuffle"—an illegal practice by Skid Row hotels of forcing residents out of their rooms before the one-month mark to keep them from becoming legal tenants and receiving rights under state law. The practice has long been a part of life on Skid Row. Over the years, people have complained about having to live on the streets for days at a time until they were let back into the hotels.[249]

By using this tactic, the owners of the Cecil Hotel hoped to permanently transform the place into a tourist hotel. Their plans were foiled in 2008, when a city ordinance required residential hotels to provide replacement-housing units for any rooms converted from residential to transient use. The owners of the Cecil Hotel sued the city in an attempt to overturn the ordinance. A group of tenants represented by the LA CAN filed a counter-claim in that suit, alleging that the Cecil's ownership and the renovation had violated their rights by attempting to drive them out of the building.[250] The hotel is located on Main Street, the new border between Skid Row and the gentrifying downtown. The Cecil Hotel rebranded itself and became Stay Hotel, a "boutique hotel/youth hostel hybrid with residential units available."[251]

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[249] DiMassa, Cara Mia. "Skid Row Landlord, L.A. Settle." Los Angeles Times. March 14, 2008. Accessed March 28, 2016. http://articles.latimes.com/2008/mar/14/local/me-hotels14.

[250] Richardson, Eric. "Cecil Hotel to Keep Residential Hotel Tag." Cecil Hotel to Stay Residential Under Terms of Settlement to Long-Running Lawsuits. November 11, 2011. Accessed March 28, 2016. http://blogdowntown.com/2011/11/6469-cecil-hotel-to-stay-residential-under-terms.
[251] Richardson, Eric. "Boutique Stay Hotel Soft-Launches in the Cecil." Blogdowntown. July 15, 2008. Accessed March 28, 2016. http://blogdowntown.com/2008/07/3465-boutique-stay-hotel-softlaunches-in-the-cecil.

Throughout the 2000s, the adaptive reuse ordinance transformed buildings all across the downtown, complementing the completion of L.A. Live, a $2.5 billion bonanza of restaurants, bars, ballrooms, theaters, and high-end living space. In addition to this, development companies with far more experience and capital began waging bidding wars, spending tens of millions of dollars. By the last few years it had become a full-scale real estate boom, with the 65-block area of what is officially considered the downtown attracting $16 billion in investments from 1999 to 2012–including about $6 billion is residential real estate, with 3,400 new units built between 2008 and 2013 alone.[252]

Tom Gilmore is described as "among a new wave of developers buying up architectural dinosaurs throughout the city core, intent on transforming it into a thriving urban center, complete with hot boutiques, cool nightclubs and young, creative professionals who want nothing to do with the suburban landscape of Southern California."[253] In 1999, Gilmore was a failed restauranteur with only $20,000 but was able to get a 26.7 million dollar loan to transform the downtown's office buildings into lofts. After years of economic success Gilmore is now one of the major voices in the issue of homelessness and the downtown. Gilmore is a major proponent of mixed-income housing and argues against the old model of centralization: "That paradigm is so over, where it's about super poor people and super rich people and there is nothing in between. And I am one of the strongest advocates in the state of California for housing. Mixed income housing separates those who can't afford high-end housing, but live a life that is

[252] Leibowitz, Ibid.

[253] Jones, Rose Apodoca. "Downtown Happening." *Women's Wear Daily*, August 21, 2000, 14.

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amendable to a neighborhood."[254] Critics of Gilmore state that this move towards

integration has actually caused the homeless population to become more centralized and

segregated from the rest of the downtown. For example, homeless activist Alice Callahan

states,

Alice Callahan: Housing is the major issue on the Row, as opposed to the

homeless. [Skid Row] is an endangered low-income housing

community. There is nobody in this city, or probably any city

anywhere in the United States, who builds housing for a single

adult whose total income is a general relief check for $223.

Nobody builds housing for those people. So it's not that it's

wonderful to keep everybody here on the Row. But nobody is

building housing for them elsewhere. And it's not just the housing

unit, but also having the services you need to make it possible to

get by on $223 a month. Remember, once you have used up your

unemployment, the next income available is $223. So where would

any of us go to live with $223?

When you think about it in the abstract, all Skid Row is, is the last

place in the community that a person goes if you do not have

family and you do not have money. That's where you find pretty

cheap housing, free food, and free clothing. That is all that Skid

Row is, wherever it is. So saving this housing is critical.[255]

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[254] Harcourt (2005), Ibid.

[255] Ibid. Interview with Alice Callahan

An example of this conflict between Skid Row residents and new incoming

affluent residents in mixed-income housing can be seen in the case of the Little Tokyo

Lofts at San Pedro and Fourth streets. The Little Tokyo Lofts is a six-story building that

sits at the border of Skid Row and newly gentrifying Little Tokyo. Little Tokyo Lofts is a

mixed-use building that has a ground floor that's zoned for commercial use. One part of

the ground floor is a Los Angeles County mental health center. In 2013, the clinic made

plans to expand into the entire ground floor, giving the area's substantial population of

mentally ill a consolidated government mental health facility.[256] Residents protested,

stating that having the Skid Row and mentally ill population with increased access to

their buildings is a threat to their safety. The LA County Board of Supervisors voted to

side with the resident's concerns. Supervisor to Skid Row Mark Ridley Thomas' aide

Yolanda Vera stated, "What played out at the Little Tokyo Lofts is a microcosm of what's

been playing out in every major urban city. The area is on the cusp of being more

walkable and more attractive to young professionals and young families. But it's in a

location that historically has been a site of many low-income individuals. So it's a

tension. It's not an impossible tension."

This tension is made starker due to the polar realities of the two groups. While

more affluent groups are moving into a cool, hip, luxury haven of downtown, conditions

in Skid Row have become dire. As homelessness is down 9% in the US since 2007, with

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[256] Aron, Hillel. "L.A.'s Culture War over the Last True Skid Row in America." L.A. Weekly. July 24, 2014. Accessed March 28, 2016. http://www.laweekly.com/news/las-culture-war-over-the-last-true-skid-row-in-america-4880238.

610,000 people living on the streets, Los Angeles placed second nationally with a counting of 53,798.[257] Los Angeles had the highest percentage of homeless with no shelter (80%) and the largest number of chronically homeless, with 14,480 lacking a permanent place to live for more than several months. Approximately 5,000 of these homeless individuals live on Skid Row. With real estate prices soaring nationally, the gross rental price for an LA apartment has risen to $1,233. Individuals on Skid Row receive a county relief check of $221 that must last them a month. This maximum amount has actually decreased from the $228 amount in 1980, when average rent was $261.

As cities have gentrified, educated urbanites have come to prize what they regard as "authentic" urban life: aging buildings; art galleries; small boutiques; upscale food markets; neighborhood old-timers; funky ethnic restaurants; and old, family-owned shops. These signify a place's authenticity, in contrast to the bland standardization of the suburbs and exurbs. This inclusion of market-based income units fits into the new urban planning model in which capital is a function of how these communities operate. These communities are not the organic communities that developer's state but are dictated by outside sources that influence and choose the makeup of the community. Zukin[258] (2011) states that "the urban-renewal movement rejected the older neighborhoods, the new urban planners built upon them, on their physical presence and on what they represent culturally, by starting new projects, bringing together residents and visitors, and channeling capital into these neighborhoods. Given that this renewal process was to some

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[257] United States. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *The 2015 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress*. By Meghan Henry, Azim Shivji, Tanya De Sousa, Rebecca Cohen, and Abt Associates Inc. 2015.
[258] Zukin, Sharon. *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

extent based on the marketing of urban culture, it is not certain that it was in the best interests of the latter since the operation was above all else a strategy designed by the holders of capital to increase their grip." This strategy, which led to a confusion between culture and consumption, guaranteed these interested parties increased control, not only over the production of goods and services but also over the production of urban space.[259]

This process of redevelopment has focused on re-presentations of old, turn-of-the-20th-century Los Angeles aesthetics and refers to a romantic idealized urban history. The application of this aesthetic show a coherence between various public and private planners. This coherence allow the visions of a historic past to enter into the reality of the present. According to Hatz[260] (2009) "means of imposing the visions of Historic City Centers in particular concentrated on visual strategies, at first in order to preserve and protect the visual coherence of the Historic City Center, and eventually shifting towards displaying and performing the imposed vision." The city center performs an imposed vision in which the residents that live in the sites are forced to perform in accordance to these visions' practices. Performance of public space in urban centers is determined by a spatially-based performance of acceptable citizenry and consumer practices. The question that arises is of what bodies and performances are deemed viable in a consumer-based public space? The assumption is that this aesthetic and closeness to whiteness via

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[259] Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Oxford, OX, UK: Blackwell, 1991.

[260] Hatz, Gerhard. "New Urbanism in Historic City Centers? The Globalization of Vienna's Historic City Center as an Art and Cultural Hub." Academia.edu. April 23, 2009. Accessed March 28, 2016. https://www.academia.edu/1658675/New_Urbanism_in_Historic_City_Centers_The_Glocalization_of_Vienna_s_Historic_City_Center_as_an_Art_and_Cultural_Hub.

aesthetics will create an environment of safety and viable public space. By creating a

community that resembles a "historical" middle-class white community, individuals in

these new communities will perform the identities of these historic white subjects.

Historically, the Los Angeles downtown area adjacent to Skid Row was a scene of

widespread violence, and the impetus of this urban renewal project and many other New

Urbanism projects in inner city communities is the link of creating safe spaces for

individuals in these communities through the use of architecture, specifically 19th-century

architectural themes. Hatz states that "the means applied to translate the idealized re-

presentation of the Historic City Center into reality follow two rationales of cultural re-

production: The production and performance of the envisioned culture of Historic City

Centers and designing out anything not coherent to this vision."[261] The aesthetic of the re-

presentation of Los Angeles is one of public safety to counter the connection that this city

has had with widespread crime. The application of these visual strategies affect the

architecture of these sites but also the bodies of homeless individuals that call these sites

home.

New Urbanism can be loosely classified as a movement intent on improving

quality of life in cities by changing urban form.[262] The New Urbanism movement found a

home with architects of the 1980s and has emerged as a major tool of urban planning of

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[261] Ibid. pg. 392.

[262] Lindstrom, Matthew J., and Hugh Bartling. *Suburban Sprawl: Culture, Theory, and Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

21st-century communities. According to Scully[263] (1995), "Architecturally, New Urbanism is essentially a revival of the classical and vernacular planning tradition. As such it speaks to a time before International Style modernism perverted the methods and objectives of such planning." What makes New Urbanism unique and not just a current fad of architecture is that New Urbanism seeks to control both the building and the plan, "where the classical tradition was to control just the plan."[264]

Several core features that the compact living communities of New Urbanism promote are walkability, a mix of residential and tenure residencies, various land uses, safety, and architecture that reflect the tradition of a community. This last factor has been distorted in many new urban renewal projects. In one of the influential texts that has shaped New Urbanism, Jane Jacobs' 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*,[265] she notes that buildings must be of various ages, but due to New Urbanism being used by city planners in creating new suburban subdivisions and revamped inner cities, a focus on making new buildings look aged has been adopted.

The most important factor in New Urbanism is the link to an aesthetic of a "hometown America." New Urbanism functions as a critique on American suburban sprawl and attempts to create a consolidated small-town atmosphere in the communities

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[263] Scully, Vincent. "The Architecture of Community." In *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community*, edited by Peter Katz, 221-30. New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 1993.

[264] Shibley, Robert G. "The Complete New Urbanism and the Partial Practices of Placemaking." *Utopian Studies* 9, no. 1 (1998): 80-102. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20719744.

[265] Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.

that it is used in. What draws me into this critique is the New Urbanism assumption that this type of community equals safety. It is through the use of architecture and aesthetics that New Urbanism attempts to link to a middle-class, semi-pastoral white American ideal.

Klein[266] states that this type of reimagining of a history that never was is an *imago*. Klein asserts that an *imago* is a type of collective remembering of events or images that were never actually there. These are imagined histories that are utilized to construct modern images of urban centers, architecture, and landscapes into picturesque visions and erases histories that are counter to this vision. Klein calls this type of erasure distraction: "the quiet instant when one imago covers over another...in order to remember, something must be forgotten."[267] The "Old Bank District" utilizes the imago of an imagined Los Angeles business community to construct a new identity of this community and the larger Los Angeles area while erasing the memories and histories of Skid Row and poor communities that have historically resided in this area.

Conclusion

In the spring of 2015, plans for the largest and most expensive anticipated construction project in downtown Los Angeles history were abandoned. Telecommunications and media giant Anschutz Entertainment Group (AEG) officially terminated plans for its Farmers Field football stadium in downtown Los Angeles. The project, which was under development for five years for $50 million, was an attempt to

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[266] Klein, pg. 42.
[267] Ibid. pg. 13.

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bring a National Football League team back to Los Angeles. After 15 years without a professional team, the stadium was billed as the next step in restoring downtown Los Angeles as a premier location for tourists and businesses. In addition to housing a football team, the stadium served a dual purpose, as it was scheduled to replace the West Hall of the Convention Center. With a price of $1.3 billion, the stadium was part of a larger continued effort to transform the downtown into a tourist and business escape destination coupled with the current entertainment hub of the Staples Center and the L.A. Live complex also developed by AEG.

The failure of this stadium proposal marks another losing battle for AEG who eight years earlier dropped plans for another football stadium on the other side of the Staples Center. The Staples Center was their prized jewel in the middle of downtown Los Angeles, hosting two National Basketball Association teams, the Los Angeles Lakers and Clippers, and the National Hockey League's Los Angeles Kings with the adjacent L.A. Live complex and Nokia Theatre (now Microsoft Theatre) occupying the center of the entertainment district of downtown. AEG represented the major player in downtown sports entertainment. What is interesting about the failure of AEG and the new downtown complex is that each failure came as accommodations for increased homeless residents increased in downtown Los Angeles.

As new structures that were supposed to increase business and real estate investment in the downtown were placed in real estate development ether, the population these developments were supposed to uproot were increased and strengthened. A new Midnight Mission was created, additional long term housing proposals for homeless residents were granted, and services for homeless residents were strengthened. In the face

of a formerly booming but now stagnant real estate market, the existence of the homeless community in downtown Los Angeles represents a failure in economic progress from the perspective of developers or gentrifiers.

These developmental efforts fail over and over again, but these failures are never owned or remembered. Treating the homeless and poverty as timeless scourges on the city enables a fantasy of capitalist growth despite all evidence to the contrary. The rhetoric of death and decay not only erases histories of malignant neglect but also histories of failed capitalist ventures and development efforts. This dissertation attempts to intervene on that rhetorical move by providing a critical history of homelessness in Skid Row. My history demonstrates that, rather than being problems out of time, poverty and homelessness are effects of economic policies and governance practices or the lack thereof. Perhaps the greatest threats posed by the homeless population in Skid Row and the area itself are not disease and trash and crime but living history in the sense of embodied histories of the failure of US economic policy and governance. Issues of economic stability and population heterogeneity become factors that impact visions of how the city should be constructed and who gets to populate it. These issues on who gets to populate the city intensify and influence the political and cultural struggles of downtown Los Angeles.

This chapter is about failure and what is created in its aftermath, specifically the fractured realities, shifting identities, and new subjectivities that are created. Institutions fail, giving way to new institutions; words fail and give way to new futurities and terminology; new subjectivities are created to discard old ones; new bodies are created in the ashes of old ones. I argue that within the process of urban development and

redevelopment, the homeless population begins to represent "failed" bodies that are meant to be fixed or forgotten but stubbornly continue to exist, and their existence and ongoing presence are used as rationales for further redevelopment in the name of economic progress. It is neither an isolated body nor some sort of metaphorical representation of the City but a subjectivity that is created, heightened, and deemed necessary, with its existence always in jeopardy. The homeless body is this necessary body in order for the city and state to exist. The homeless body and failures in institutions to control this body allow the state to create new policies, infrastructures, and institutions to control this body.

On September 22nd, 2015, the city of Los Angeles declared a state of emergency for the homelessness issue. When I first began this project four years ago, there was growing fear amongst the Skid Row community about the city's efforts to remove Skid Row and the homeless individuals from downtown Los Angeles. Four years later that is no longer an issue. Skid Row is actually overpopulated again. The policies that encouraged gentrification by kicking out the homeless residents backfired. This, in addition to a continued recession in Los Angeles County plus a purge of state inmates, has led to a new homeless crisis. Farmer's Field is officially dead; the economic investment in downtown is now looking like it failed. The population most under threat is now more present than ever. The battle of public space has now again become the battle of home. Whose?

Chapter Five
Thanatology of the City

On March 1, 2015, Los Angeles Police Department officers shot and mortally wounded a 39-year-old homeless man in Downtown Los Angeles. According to police reports and witness accounts, four LAPD Officers responded to a 911 call about a potential robbery Sunday afternoon near the Union Rescue Mission on Los Angeles's Skid Row. The shooting was captured by several sources — surveillance cameras, body cameras worn by two police officers who fired shots, and camera phones used by witnesses at the scene. Within hours of the shooting, a video captured by an onlooker was posted on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media websites. The shooting was characterized by many commentators as another example of extreme police action and violence of police officers towards African Americans. The LAPD quickly issued a statement stating that the shooting was the result of a violent struggle between the homeless man and police officers over an officer's gun during the arrest.[268] The LAPD asserted that the officers present were trained in homeless engagement strategies and had significant experience with the community through the Safer Cities Initiative, a policing strategy for the Skid Row homeless implemented in 2006. Opponents of police violence questioned the narrative police presented, arguing that the police officers in question overreacted to the victim.

What is interesting about the time period of the case, and a fact that points to the complexity of the issue of crime and identity in Skid Row, is that the victim's name was not known. The victim was simply known as "Africa" to residents on Skid Row. He first

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[268] Los Angeles Times Staff, "LAPD Skid Row Shooting: Once a Weapon is grabbed, 'All Bets are off." *Los Angeles Times*. March 2, 2015. Web. Accessed March 15, 2015.

appeared on the streets of the community several months before with a thick "African" accent and claimed he was from France. Three days after the incident, officers and local newspapers cited that the victim's name was Charley Saturmin Robinet. Four days later it was found out that this was incorrect. "Africa" or Charley Saturmin Robinet was really Charly Keundeu Keunang. In the late 1990s, Keunang, a Cameroon immigrant to France, was issued a French passport under what turned out to be a stolen name: Charley Saturin Robinet. He came to the US and in 2000 was convicted of robbing a Wells Fargo Bank branch in Los Angeles and pistol-whipping an employee in what he told authorities was an effort to pay for acting classes at the Beverly Hills Playhouse. Keunang was convicted and imprisoned under the same false name. In 2013, as he was nearing his release from a federal prison in Rochester, Minnesota, French officials found the real Robinet in France. US Immigration and Customs Enforcement then determined that the impostor was actually from Cameroon. US immigration officials wanted to send him back to Cameroon, but that country never responded to requests to take him. Keunang was released from a halfway house in May, and US probation officials lost track of him in November. He was shot dead on the streets of Skid Row by the LAPD in March.

The Keunang case highlights issues of transnational criminality, immigration, migrancy, homelessness, surveillance, police brutality, perceived black aggression, and identity or the lack thereof. Video of the event and subsequent public rhetoric initially framed the murder as another example of fatal police aggression towards black bodies. The LAPD issued their statement dismissing any wrong doing and shifted the blame to the victim, claiming that minutes before the camera began recording, the victim began attacking police officers and attempting to grab their guns. In addition, weeks after the

shooting the LAPD released an autopsy of Keunang with a toxicology report claiming that the victim had methamphetamine in his system at the time of his death.

The strategy of victim blaming has become common in cases of police encounters with black victims in which the police seek criminalize black victims of excessive force. Examples of this strategy can be seen in the release of criminal records of victims of police violence. The Michael Brown murder in Ferguson, Missouri represents an explicit example of this strategy; when police "released a video showing Michael Brown allegedly robbing a store and shoving around a clerk shortly before the unarmed teen was shot dead in a seemingly unrelated confrontation with an officer, many accused the department of engaging in deliberate character assassination."[269] Keunang transitioned from a homeless victim of police violence to the "violent black man" archetype. Eventually, he wasn't just a probable violent black man but an international, bank-robbing, identity-thieving, criminal, crazy black man who was high on meth. Issues of borders, identity, and criminality replace the story of a homeless man shot by police. This singular act of violence is muted when the victim is considered to be a violent criminal who has broken not only local laws but national and transnational ones. Concern over Africa's death became resituated as an event that displays a fragility of law enforcement and criminal systems of marking and confinement. Africa no longer became a person but a symbol of "cracks" within the national and international legal system, "cracks" that need to be addressed. It is within these narratives of state-based issues that the killing of "Africa" became justified.

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[269] Amel Ahmed. "Ferguson Fallout: Black American Grapple with Victim Blaming." August 21, 2014. Al Jazeera America

Africa's tragic story is unique but serves to highlight the life-and-death issues that impact the Skid Row community. It is a community that is defined by police presence and surveillance technologies that serve prevention, accounting, and law enforcement purposes, a community that feeds and houses its homeless population but regulates the feeding and housing of the same population, a community where mobility and visibility are essential for safety but the ability to remain stationary and invisible is also necessary for survival. In addition to these micro issues, larger county, state, national, international, and historical concerns impact the construction and reconstruction of these spaces and who gets to occupy them.

On a balmy night in March in Los Angeles, in front of a temporary housing shelter, four police officers stood over a dead black man named Africa. The image of his lifeless body was filmed, posted online by a cell phone, and seen by millions of people. His limp body falling on the pavement is now a hyperlink to a Google search on the words "Skid Row." His body will live as a loop for decades to come or until servers can no longer carry the data space. As the pool of blood that collects under his body drips from the streets to the storm drain, I look on my computer screen in New Orleans at the city I call home, Los Angeles. I look at the neighborhood my father now calls home, Skid Row. I look and identify streets that I have walked collecting stories for the past five years. I sit at my computer screen and watch as his body drops and as his head hits the concrete. I watch Africa as he dies, and my heart cracks. On my screen the bodies go silent in movement. I faintly hear a voice in the background yell out, "Skid Row." Skid Row.

When I first began this project I imagined a traditional ethnography chronicling the lives and issues of individuals who lived on Skid Row, the service center employees who work in the area, the business owners and police officers that occupy the area. It was a grand project based upon the belief that I was aware already of the structural and historical conditions that have impacted this community. Honestly, before this project my knowledge of the history of this area begins with my youth in the 1980s. My impressions are informed by salacious news images that "documented" life on the streets, D.A.R.E after school assemblies that warned my young 7-year-old self of the outcome of drug use, and Bukowski Skid Row inspired poetry that I discovered when I started drinking whiskey and writing and performing slam poetry. My knowledge was based on fear, misdirected liberal social consciousness and a very naïve idea about abject poverty. I was homeless but my homelessness was different from what I perceived was a normal homelessness. I didn't sleep on the streets, my parents had jobs, my siblings and I went to school. Homelessness to me meant that you were disconnected from the world, an underclass that only interacted with the non-homeless society when in great need. Homelessness meant no home. No love. No future. That's what I thought.

It wasn't until I began interviewing the people on Skid Row that I realized that Skid Row isn't just a static place attracting homeless people in need of assistance, a poverty lighthouse, a beacon harkening the abject. Additionally, I realized that these individuals had lives before and *in* Skid Row. Skid Row wasn't the end of the story (bottoming out) but the beginning of personal histories of transformation. Histories of redemption, pain, stagnation, cycles, love, ecstasy, presence and absence. It was impossible to view these stories without Skid Row. While Skid Row became an integral

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character in the histories residents told me, there was no history of Skid Row. By this I mean that there was no connection of Skid Row to larger histories, materialities or temporalities. Skid Row has been a part of Los Angeles for over 100 years but it has always been treated as apart from it. This project is an attempt to remedy this. This project attempts to place Skid Row back into the larger conversation of Downtown Los Angeles and its surrounding areas as an important site that has been effected by and has in turn affected broader histories.

It is not only Skid Row as a site but the community of Skid Row that has resided, shaped and has a stake in the existence of Skid Row that also must be included into these larger constructions of Los Angeles history. What brought me to this project was the construction of these histories. From my experience of walking the streets of Skid Row I realized that the way that Skid Row looks, the people, trash and service buildings greatly impacted the way in which people viewed Skid Row and subsequently altered or try to change or maintain it. The first thing you notice on Skid Row is the amount of people lying on the streets in order to have any discussion you have to first address that. This project began with that simple task of asking these individuals about their stories. It was by listening to these stories that I realized that Skid Row operates as a transformative space for these individuals. Their personal histories, lives and futures have been impacted by this particular place. These individuals were unaware of the broader histories of the place. In order to address the lives of these individuals I had to address the economic, physical and social institutions that reside in and out of the physical space of Skid Row, and how these actors and the many different relationships have shaped how residents viewed and lived in Skid Row.

This document is an attempt to grasp that history of this place. It is a history with multiple histories, of multiple conflicts and challenges that have made the place what it is today. It is history of trash, mobilities, housing, policing, migrancy, economic plans and people. What I have learned from this project is that Skid Row is not merely a place where drug addiction, mental illness and poverty lies on the street waiting for our judgment or white hands of grace. It is a place that is defined by historical visual and rhetorical strategies that have continuously maintained, transformed and defined the space. As a communication study, this project begins to mark and identify these strategies and processes.

With this in mind, I summarize the prior chapters and attempt to articulate the impact this discussion has on the rhetoric and visual strategies of public space, potential research that extends this project and final thoughts and observations of this historical examination of Skid Row.

Chapter Analysis

In Chapter One, I detail the narratives of Skid Row residents and note how these narrative structures are cyclical and transcendent and remain disconnected from historical macro structures that have had tremendous impact in determining the economic, political and visual dynamics of Skid Row. I detail how I shifted the focus of the study from micro to macro structures and institutions thanks to my interaction LA CAN, a community activist organization that fights for the housing and rights of Skid Row homeless residents. In my initial research of Skid Row, I found that revitalization as a historical process becomes an important entry point to any analysis of Skid Row. I provide a synopsis of revitalization literature and document the historical rhetoric of how the city

becomes labeled as blighted and dead and in need of intervention or saving. I conclude that Skid Row is a space defined by visual strategies that attempt to intervene, regulate or make absent issues of trash, housing, policing, and that ultimately these visual strategies point towards a failure of these institutions to positively alter the lives of Skid Row individuals. The chapter ends by articulating the importance of mapping of Skid Row history.

In Chapter Two, I analyze the importance of the construct of trash has had on Skid Row. I argue that laws emerge from trash based practices. These practices have historically been labeled criminal but are now framed as unsanitary conditions with societal implications. Sanitary practices imply agency on the part of the homeless population. In contrast to this, laws that frame the environment of Skid Row as a collection of unsanitary practices mark specific bodies as not having the agency to care for themselves. This line of thought has created a political environment where Skid Row residents are forced to rely on city-issued cleaning services and are denied basic sanitary resources. This is an environment where the different permutations of trash, property and being are performed unto the bodies of the homeless residents.

The theoretical conception of dirt, waste and the modern condition owes a great deal to the work of Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger* (1966). In Purity and Danger Douglas analyzes the ideas of pollution and taboo in different societies. Douglas defines dirt as a thing that is out of place. Douglas asserts that "dirt is essentially disorder. There is no such thing as absolute dirt: it exists in the eye of the beholder." Regulations on dirt, pollution and practices impart an order on society. It attempts to eliminate any ambiguity that may threaten its existence. Order implies a limited kind of use and correct choices or

organizations. On the other hand, disorder threatens patterns but also has the potential to recreate order. For Douglas dirt is a spatial problem, a question of not *what* stuff is but *where* it is.

Trash does not signal a spatiality but a temporality. I argue that trash is a material and performance defined as the way matter operates without temporal ends through dislocated and excess performative practices. Dirt is spatial, and waste is excess, and trash is the combination of these two that comes about through the dislocated temporal performances of excess matter practices in displacement. If Skid Row is considered a place of trash we must not look at trash not as static matter but as something that is dynamic through a displaced spatial practice. Traditional practices of matter become externalized when performed on the streets of Skid Row and become taboo due to displacement. This practice is defined as sanitary practices of the street, traditional bodily and consumer practices performed with used matter in public spaces. In short, it is matter that is being reused or repurposed and becomes externalized when performed on the streets by certain gendered and racial bodies. Continued attempts to corral these practices has created a legal and political genealogy of trash regulations that don't remove the matter but instead criminalize the bodies that perform with the matter.

It is through this lens of trash that the chapter sets out to analyze the historical American construction of the homeless body and homeless subjectivity. Ultimately, I argue that historically homelessness has not been an issue of housing but of bodies that are transient and/or do not fit within a work force; to people who physically and economically stationary in city centers; to migrant bodies (Mexican-Americans, Blacks, and Asian-American); to the modern day occupiers of these city streets. These occupiers

are people who have been placed here by mental, correctional and drug abuse institutions. Skid Row becomes a place to house trash and also a place of regulation on any capacity of reusing it by the same people place in Skid Row. At the heart is the issue of the reuse of trash *and* the reuse of Skid Row by this population.

The chapter moves on to analyze this criminal construction of trash use in looking at a case study that analyzes the implementation of "Operation Healthy Streets" which emerged in the spring of 2012 when the Los Angeles County Health Department issued a report citing immediate public health risks in the Downtown community of Skid Row. The report cited high instances of: feces, urine, hypodermic needles, and rodent infestation in the area. Due to the report's findings, the city government of Los Angeles along with neighborhood business leaders, created a task force called "Operation Healthy Streets" to implement 'cleanup sweeps' in this area. These sweeps attempt to remove waste from the streets in areas of Downtown, as well as limit the causes of the sanitization issues, the practices of the homeless population. The campaign was met with increased pressure from law enforcement in the area which targeted loitering, shopping carts, open drug use and waste. The case study details attempts by local activists and allies to contest this targeted campaign and the ongoing legal battles around this issue. I conclude with analysis of aesthetic policies that Skid Row activist classify as the "Dirty Divide" where beautification and hygienic interventions (increase in trash services, use of public restrooms, tree planting, and park renovations) are enacted in the business district of Downtown Los Angeles but are not implemented in the Skid Row area leaving the residents to be targeted by law enforcement for incompliance with the newly regulated spatial policies.

Chapter Three looks at the history of how crime is constructed in and on Skid Row. The chapter then traces modern police enforcement on Skid Row. The chapter begins by looking at how Skid Row became a center of law enforcement strategy by the Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles government due to mental health facility defunding, property tax laws, and social rhetoric of being tough on time due to crack cocaine explosion of the 1980s and two child abduction cases in the early 1990s. This chapter chronicles the recent history of policing policies in the Skid Row area and maps this effort with larger national and transnational movements of homeless and urban center policing. The efforts in Skid Row are informed by the crime prevention "success" in New York City in the 1990s of the Broken Windows Theory of crime and its correlation with neighborhood disorder. I argue that Skid Row represents a site in which the aftermath of the application of the Broken Windows Theory and the criminalization of the homeless creates a new citizen subjectivity, one that is defined by constant surveillance, limited mobility through the creation of borders, and economic and social identity developed through criminal status.

The broken windows theory of crime has proven to be an enabling metaphor and conceptual framework for these historical developments. Homeless people are treated as akin to broken windows or eye sores within particular neighborhoods. Within the visual rhetoric of urban revitalization, the visible presence of homeless people and practices of poverty reduces the "quality of life" index of that neighborhood from the perspective of business people, privileged residents, and tourists. This chapter provides a case study of the Safer Cities Initiative in Los Angeles, which demonstrates how such constructions of the city and its homeless population have enabled the criminalization of publicly visible

practices of poverty. The chapter concludes by arguing that homelessness itself has become a crime ultimately leading to increasing restrictions on mobilities and spatial practices where physical borders are created by the LAPD at the actual street that separates Skid Row from Downtown Los Angeles. Others are allowed to enter Skid Row but Skid Row residents are not allowed to leave.

While in Chapter Two and Three we viewed the construction of homeless subjectivity through historical instances of legal, political, and social interventions unto the homeless population, Chapter Four looks at how Skid Row becomes a reality through different iterations of public space and the continuing failures of neoliberal policies on Skid Row. The chapter argues that homelessness has often been used as a rhetorical and social strategy to engage in revitalization policies. Homelessness is the problem and also a necessary condition for the development of Downtown Los Angeles as a city center. In this chapter we look at the multiple ways housing has been utilized to craft narratives of Skid Row intervention.

. Housing has become the locus of government and neoliberal policies on Skid Row and once again is failing to address the issues it claims to correct. The chapter chronicles housing in Skid Row from the welfare state of the 1960s; isolation from the larger Los Angeles region in the 1970s; containment and creation of a service center ghetto in the 1980s and early 1990s; to the current neoliberal intervention which utilizes strategies fostered and developed by NGO's that focus on homeless populations to make opaque statistics, health, drug use and sexual activity, etc. of the homeless population enhancing a biopolitical network aimed at curtailing certain actions and bodies within a neoliberal health service framework.

Moving from government supplied housing to real estate developer supplied housing stock, the chapter maps the historical construction of neoliberal policies as it has become intertwined with issues of public space and housing. In this chapter I articulate how public space is not a social convention but expands from place-based conceptualizations of consumerism and/or voyeurism to include sites of contest for physical, psychological, and political realities. It is this contestation the gives rise to a crises and it is within these temporalities of crises that what Alison Mountz identifies as the "performative state" emerges. Mountz argues that state sovereignty and the state itself is not a given but produces itself in its everyday practices. The state is not a thing-in-itself that acts, but is instead an entity made up of the day-to-day actions of state actors.

It is through this analysis that we can see that the issue of homelessness and homeless bodies (with its shifting and changing historical distinction) has been an ever present and generative presence in the development and redevelopment of Downtown Los Angeles. Homelessness has been a rhetorical tool utilized through visual representations to initiate revitalization. Homelessness and homeless persons are the vehicle of revitalization. Issues of trash, law enforcement, public space and housing become important mechanisms in the re-structuring of Los Angeles' Downtown and are shaped through its interactions and histories that are connected to the various crises of homelessness. The presence of homelessness becomes akin to the visual sign of the broken window. The broken window that needs repair. It is this sign of disrepair that the rhetoric of revitalization claims to "fix". Coupled with trash, lawlessness, lack of public space for consumers to engage in commercial shopping and people loitering and sleeping on the streets due to a lack of housing, Skid Row becomes an area that represents a dead

zone of commercial activity and middle class existence. Skid Row's proximity to the larger Downtown area has historically impacted the way citizens view and engage with Downtown Los Angeles. The dead zone of Skid Row has caused Downtown Los Angeles to die.

The Rhetoric of Urban Death and Decay

We hear the rhetoric of "Detroit is dying," "the death of the great American city," and "urban centers are decaying," and instead of asking ourselves how the hell a physical location can die (aside from a natural disaster that destroys its habitation), we equate the site with particular practices of incivility and bodies that represent a dearth of progress and economic vitality. A city and urban space become political and religious. We "pray for New Orleans" after Hurricane Katrina and not its residents. We proclaim martial law on Los Angeles after the Rodney King Verdict. We hope Ferguson, Missouri doesn't burn down after the Michael Brown grand jury verdict. These instances point to these locations having a power of their own. We still pray for New Orleans even though 70 percent of the population never came back. We may claim that we look at the cultural practices of people, but the influx of researchers in areas after human or natural disasters prove that we will still examine the city when the people are all gone. When we say a city is dying, we mean that it has become a "wasteland" in the sense that it is alive with the things and people we wish did not exist. In the context of US urban centers, the rhetoric of space is racialized.[270] It is why Detroit is now considered a success story; the

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[270] Calmore, John O. "Racialized Space and the Culture of Segregation: "Hewing a Stone of Hope from a Mountain of Despair"" *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 143, no. 5 (1995): 1233; Calmore defines racialized space "the process by which residential location

infrastructure is still in shambles, but the black population has decreased and the white population has increased in the last five years. Therefore, the city is now alive again.[271] It is why the success of Downtown Los Angeles is defined by the success of regulating Skid Row.

Absent from the current literature on urban "revitalization" is an examination of the racist tenor of the rhetoric of revitalization, which declares an area "dead" in order to call for its "revitalization." The first moment is a performative utterance in which saying an urban area is dead or dying is supposed to make it so. The stubborn fact that residents continue to live in and inhabit and use these areas (although these are residents, organizations, and habitation that are easily erased or ignored because they lack power and influence) shows the lie. This dissertation pauses there at the disjuncture between the performative utterance that an area is "dead" and the stubborn resilience of its unwanted inhabitants confronted by developers and city officials that seize on neighborhoods as undercapitalized and then embrace the rhetoric of revitalization as a kind of afterthought to justify their actions.

"Jeff": Now the desire to disappear Skid Row is starting up again. And I'm pretty fearful of where's it's gonna go. They're splitting up Skid Row. I think that the key is to try to save the housing. I think that they wanna get rid of it as fast as they can. But, you know, the

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is taken as an index of the attitudes, values, behavioral inclinations and social norms of the kinds of people who are assumed to live [there]."
[271] Aguilar, Louis, and Christin MacDonald. "Detroit's White Population up after Decades of Decline." Detroit News. Accessed March 14, 2016. http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2015/09/17/detroit-white-population-rises-cen/sus-shows/72371118.

thing we have going for us is their mistake, is that they've allowed

everybody to come down here- in a very small area- and nobody

else wants us, and nobody else wants the services or the people-

and short of machine-gunning everybody down here or sending

them to the gas chambers- which I don't think they're gonna do-

we're gonna be here one way or another. And they're gonna have

to deal with us. There's nothing that- The people here are resilient.

And the people here know how to suffer. And I think that is

powerful. I don't think we're gonna build Nirvana down here. I

don't think they're gonna destroy us. So that's what I would say. I

look to the strength, and the resiliency and the willingness of the

people to suffer. – "Jeff" Skid Row resident.[272]

Death becomes analogous to specific types of bodies present in cities. Mike

Davis[273] (2002) argues that literary, political, and historical ideas of the modern city as

doomed or a wasteland became common tropes of urban representation after urban

rebellions in the late 1960s. "The identity of race and urbanity is intertwined within U.S.

political discourse. The "Big City" equates with a Black-

Latino 'underclass.' Contemporary debates about the city—drugs and crime—are

invariably really about race."[274] When we talk about cities dying, we are really talking

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[272] "Jeff" (Skid Row resident) in discussion with the author, June 2013.

[273] Davis, Mike. *Dead Cities, and Other Tales*. New York: New Press, 2002.

[274] Ibid. pg. 255-256

about the state of these populations and what should be done to them. The "White Flight" of the 1950s and 1960s has had long-lasting ramifications in which there has become a suburbanization of US politics that has led to a curtailment of resources for cities and an increase of resources for suburbs and exurbs that fuels racial and ethnic strife. The modern excursion back into the urban frontier by a younger generation raised in the suburbs reflects a continuation of this discourse in which Whites are seen as and enact the role of "saviors" to a dying city infected with poor black and brown residents. Pronouncements of a city or neighborhood's death are performative utterances[275] that make certain policy actions possible. These policies have resulted in a cauterization of cities in the 1970s to the 1990s in which urban areas are excluded from economic and political capital. The city is left to "die." The pronouncement of cities as dead in modern discourse is used to invigorate policies and capital to bring back the vitality of the city, where vitality is politically, discursively, and economically connected to white bodies.

Vitality comes about through the revitalization of the urban core by white bodies. Ironically, racial diversity functions as a selling point for revitalization even as homogeneously black or Latino neighborhoods are coded as "dead." It is through discursive utilization of death and decay metaphors that the urban core of cities are categorized as "lifeless" or "dead" and, ultimately, in need of saving. Terms like "conservation," "renaissance," "redevelopment," "rehabilitation," and "historic

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[275] J.L Austin *How to do Things with Words* (1962); Austin defines performative utterances as phrases that do not 'describe' or 'report' or constate anything at all, are not 'true or false.' Additionally, the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not *normally* be described as, or as 'just,' saying something.

preservation" are utilized to inform what Davis[276] (1998) calls the *frontier myth*. The *frontier myth* implies that white gentrifiers and developers are really "urban 'homesteaders,'" or "urban pioneers," with an adventurous spirit and rugged individualism, which take them to where "no (white) man has ever gone before." The frontier myth mobilizes wilderness metaphors. The urban "jungle" becomes the wilderness of the frontier. What is obscured and/or erased in the historical production of the city as a "jungle" or "wasteland" by sustained patterns of segregation, neglect, and white flight? Revisionist history of the city in the name of revitalization and often preservation starts history over with the "timeless" metaphor of the frontier. These are ecological metaphors. Northrup[277] argues that this discourse suggests that gentrifiers are simply putting the land to its best and initially intended use. I argue that this "use" is best understood in terms of a performance and aesthetics of absences and presences. Performances of consumerism and whiteness are exalted as visible proof of the vitality of a city. This visibility is contrasted with the absence of poor, homeless, sick, black and brown bodies.

Much like Western expansion is seen through the frame of desolate deserts with native bodies out of frame but whose presence is always a threat in the distance, bodies of the homeless, poor, and ethnic are present threats to the vitality of the city in the process of being pushed out into the distance—as if their bodies mark a mobile frontier or zone of dangerousness and potentially death. The pioneer myth conceals the impacts of conquest.

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[276] Davis, Mike. *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998.
[277] Northrup, Jenny. "The University of Toledo Digital Repository." Site. May 2010. Accessed March 14, 2016. http://utdr.utoledo.edu/theses-dissertations/924/.

John Beck[278] (2009) in his examination of the discourse in literature of Post-World War II militarization of the American West, argues that this visual distance represents "the screening off of the facts of conquest by landscape is as much as can properly be shown without returning to a metaphysics of transcendent revelation the text is not willing or able to perform." The bodies of those who have been removed through the conquest are deemed as excess or waste. In other words, the borderland of the urban frontier is also a mobile, and therefore threatening, wasteland.

This idea of humans as waste or "human waste" as a byproduct of modern capitalism is employed in the literature of what could loosely be called discard theory. McFann[279] (2015) argues that three dominant conceptions of humans as waste emerge in scholarly precedent with symbolic critiques detailing general subjugation, biopolitical critiques, and politico-economic Marxist critiques asserting that "notions of humans as waste are a byproduct of the capitalist mode of production." McFann[280] clarifies that symbolic and biopolitical approaches are concerned with the "re/production of social order, with how the social is ascribed a corporeality, so that an "Other" may be cast as polluting or superfluous, dangerous or expendable; violent acts thus become positive means of social purification and protection."[281] Homelessness and the homeless are situated as a waste issue in which "quality of life" ordinances, law enforcement, and

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[278] Beck, John. *Dirty Wars: Landscape, Power, and Waste in Western American Literature*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009.

[279] McFann, Hudson. "Humans-as-Waste." Humans-as-Waste. September 2015. Accessed March 14, 2016. http://www.academia.edu/7478530/Humans-as-Waste.
[280] Ibid. pg. 1.

[281] Ibid. pg.2.

medicalization are utilized as approaches to remove their existence. Often, removal is coded as "displacement," a relocation of primary domiciles. For homeless populations, "removal" means violent discarding of property and removal of their bodies from the street by placement in jails. In the case of "Africa," removal can mean death, death that is legitimized through the rhetoric of a criminal and diseased body. The city is ascribed a body in which the homeless and/or ethnic body represent diseased cells that must be exterminated, and white people are treated like the antibodies.

Corporeality and its connection to order and waste is seen in Giroux's[282] (2006) study of the impact of media images of dead black bodies in the coverage of Hurricane Katrina. Giroux argues that the images highlighted that "something more systemic and deep-rooted was revealed in the wake of Katrina--namely, that the state no longer provided a safety net for the poor, sick, elderly, and homeless. Instead, it had been transformed into a punishing institution intent on dismantling the welfare state and treating the homeless, unemployed, illiterate, and disabled as dispensable populations to be managed, criminalized, and made to disappear into prisons, ghettos, and the black hole of despair." These bodies represent bodies that are discursively and legally punished and eventually made to not only become invisible but absent through enforcement of neoliberal policies.

The relationship between biopolitical governance and neoliberalism is articulated through the vehicle of revitalization in relation to the issue of homelessness. Revitalization is a rhetorical and biopolitical strategy of the state and capitalist interest in

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[282] Giroux, Henry A. "Reading Hurricane Katrina: Race, Class, and the Biopolitics of Disposability." *College Literature* 33, no. 3 (2006): 171-96.

which conflicts of restriction, consumerism, absence, and presence are negotiated. While scholars have analyzed strategies for governing homeless bodies in terms of biopolitics, they have yet to demonstrate how the rhetoric of revitalization has been used to position the homeless as threats to the lives of cities. According to this rhetoric, it is cities that have lives worth protecting and homeless people who act as a kind of disease threatening to take that life away. By extension, city neighborhoods are indexed in terms of their quality of life, where quality of life is an index of how aesthetically pleasing the area is to desirable residents, businesses, and visitors, whereas the homeless are a kind of visual buzzkill for these ideal consumers. Within this framework, homeless bodies and practices become the city's abject population and are not only metaphorically compared to trash but literally treated like trash, like unwanted waste that must be dumped elsewhere. This dissertation tracks the historical shift from containment strategies, in which Skid Row was understood as an appropriate dumping ground for human waste, to current strategies of using police and the penal system to push back the frontier or wasteland via periodically sweeping the streets of these unwanted bodies in a cycle that leads to their repeated incarceration.

Enforcement can be seen as the state's use of biopolitics. Foucault characterizes biopolitics as an anatomical politics of the human body. As previous iterations of the state focused on issues of state sovereignty and disciplining of the individual body, modernity and the rise of capitalism marks the age of social regulation of the body of the population. The state now operates with new life-administering power that is dedicated to

"inciting, reinforcing, monitoring and optimizing the forces under its control."[283]

Willse[284] (2010) in his analysis of the effect of neoliberalism and biopolitical strategies of welfare programs on homeless populations, notes that "the technologies of biopower, including medicine, public health, health education, social security, reproductive technologies, positive eugenics and life insurance programs, incite and proliferate life and its many forms[285]." The state has now taken on an increased role in the everyday life of the homeless population through restriction of housing and public health services. Jobe[286] (2010) argues that issues of health, public space, and state jurisdiction for homeless individuals and populations are integral to the biopolitical governance and disciplinary regulation of homeless bodies. These acts of increased jurisdiction propagate the production and regulation of a population, which is seen as a biological threat to the society as a whole. The capacity of homeless individuals for self-care and health is now put into a direct relationship with urban biological threats and city vitality. The remarkable resiliency of homeless populations to survive under brutal conditions is either discounted altogether or rhetorically mobilized to signal a persistent threat to the vitality of cities.

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[283] Foucault, Michel, and Michel Senellart. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1978-1979*. New York: Picador, 2010, 82.

[284] Willse, Craig. "Neo-liberal Biopolitics and the Invention of Chronic Homelessness." *Economy and Society* 39, no. 2 (2010): 155-84.

[285] Ibid. pg. 177.

[286] Jobe, Kevin. "Neoliberal Biopolitics and the Invention of Chronic Homelessness." Neoliberal Biopolitics and the Invention of Chronic Homelessness. December 2010. Accessed March 14, 2016. http://www.academia.edu/1072918/Neoliberal_Biopolitics_and_the_Invention_of_Chronic_Homelessness.

The rhetoric of death gets used to frame the biopolitical governance of homeless

populations in a neoliberal era characterized by brutal neglect and displacement and

quickly becomes convoluted. Not only do city officials in Los Angeles (and many other

cities internationally) fail to acknowledge the resiliency of these populations, but they

also borrow the mental health models used by community-based social workers and

volunteers to pathologize alternative material practices. The working presumption of the

rhetoric of the death of cities is that homeless individuals lack the capacity for self-care,

making it necessary for city officials and police to take over these life-sustaining

responsibilities for the health of the whole urban population. This posture of

condescension is different from the paternalism of the welfare state in which the state

plays the role of absent breadwinner to the "welfare queen."[287] What is being sustained

(or not) in current approaches to the governance of homeless populations is closer to what

Giorgio Agamben[288] (1997) has called bare life. And as the opening anecdote illustrates,

the working assumption that some populations are not capable of self-care rationalizes

their systematic abuse, harassment, repeated incarceration, and even murder by the

police.

It is this issue of capacity that is at the heart of the biopolitical approach to

governing the homeless in a neoliberal era. Jasbir Puar[289] (2007) defines capacity as "the

ability to thrive within and propagate the biopolitics of life by projecting potential as

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[287] Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990), 70.

[288] Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer*. Paris: Seuil, 1997.

[289] Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer times*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

futurity." Additionally, "the citizen's capacity for life and futurity has to be performed (over and over again) if it is to be believed."[290] It is within these performances of futurity that the sanitary practices of the street rest. Sanitary practices of the street are traditional bodily and consumer practices performed with used matter in public spaces. In this case, it is matter that is being reused or repurposed and becomes externalized when performed on the streets by certain gendered and racial bodies. Lindenbusch[291] (2012) argues "discursive notions of impurity, contagion, and danger are at the core of a society's tendency to "other" those considered deviant from dominant models of social behavior. A structurally supported fear of contagion has destructively legitimized oppression of individuals in the seemingly noble name of public health." It is the patholigization of some practices as unhealthy and others as desirable that undergirds "clean up" efforts detailed in the dissertation. If they are not seen as productive practices that generate an allusion of futurity, then they are deemed as unhygienic and harmful to public health.

This idea of capitalism and futurity is articulated in Massumi's[292] (1993) concept of *Timex philosophy* or capitalist salvation. This concept looks at the future orientation of capitalist salvation in which capitalism is seen as a treatment utilized in the warning off of death. "The point is not that capital's limit (death) promises any hope of liberation

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[290] Hall, Rachel. *The Transparent Traveler: The Performance and Culture of Airport Security*. Duke University Press, 2015.

[291] Lindenbusch, Luke. "Discard Theory of Subjugation, Biopolitics, and Neoliberalism in HIV Policy." Academia.edu. September 2012. Accessed March 14, 2016. https://www.academia.edu/16828206/Discard_Theory_of_Subjugation_Biopolitics_and_Neoliberalism_in_HIV_Policy.

[292] Massumi, Brian. *The Politics of Everyday Fear*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

through a realization of death. On the contrary, the potency of consumer logic is that death, the crisis of annihilation, can be altogether transcended through buying into an immortal, commodified existence."[293] This logic equates "will have bought" to "will have been saved."[294] Two different models of consumption emerge in which the "good consumer" affirms the future through the consumption of "new" items that prolong the system of capitalism. The alternative material practices of homeless individuals threaten the consumerist version of futurity through the reuse of previously bought items and non-presence in the capitalist system. Their visibility is a reminder of the past, a body of the vast frontier in which their presence is a reminder of a non-white, non-consumer body that hinders revitalization and progress. The consumer is seen as the savior of this land. Non-consumer practices are seen as "unhealthy" in terms of sanitation *and* for the market. These practices are marked for elimination along with the individuals that perform them. The potential consumers that the city wants to attract are redeemed through practices of consumption. The residents of Skid Row are redeemed by getting sober and ultimately by becoming activists within the community and advocates for the poor, homeless, and addicted. Both models of redemption reduce history to the individual life lived. The history offered here attempts to broaden and connect those individualistic modes of storytelling and cultural practice into a collective history.

There is a contradiction in the city's argument of the unhygienic practices of the homeless population and residents of Skid Row as the city claims that the population is enacting these unhealthy practices of their own volition and needs intervention, but the

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[293]Skrimshire, Stefan. *Politics of Fear, Practices of Hope*. London: Continuum, 2008.

[294] Massumi, pg. 6.

city fails to account for the fact that it has historically refused to provide basic services that may curb these practices from occurring on the street. The Skid Row community has long struggled to secure public amenities, and community health risks have been high in recent years. It is through the city's utilization of discourses of thanatology that they have framed the population of Skid Row as a threat that must be confined and eliminated for the health, betterment, and futurity of the public. Across the religious and therapeutic discourses of redemption and rehabilitation used by residents and the capitalist narrative of salvation (of individuals and the city) used by marketers and commercial developers, the distinction between the city as setting or backdrop and the people as historical actors gets maintained. This project attempts to write the histories of Skid Row in a manner that challenges that distinction in ways that acknowledges the agency of residents and activists and holds developers and consumers accountable for the ways in which their practices affect all of the city's residents.

Future Research

I would like to expand this doctoral research into crafting an activist's history of Skid Row. That study will employ research methods drawn from critical ethnography. This method will be beneficial for my study due to the nature of the interlocutors I am interacting with. The inequality of laws and policies on the homeless population is a key issue but also the intersubjectivity of how Skid Row activists, community organizers, and volunteers construct themselves and how they create and maintain the culture of Skid Row is important.

For Soyini Madison[295] (2005), critical ethnography is focused on social justice; it exposes inequalities and problems in the status quo; and highlights the bodies that are involved in these discourses. Madison points out three important tenants that compose critical ethnography, positionality, dialogue and otherness. For Madison, positionality is the awareness of the ethnographer's own power in the relationship with the subject. The ethnographer's body, status, and discourse influence the subject and the ethnographer is influenced in this arrangement. The concept of dialogue implies that the position of the ethnographer is always in flux, it is constantly being reshaped through the discursive practices of the work. The concept of otherness points to the need to allow for the voice of the other to be heard and to exercise an influence on the researcher.

Additionally, I wish to embark on a comparative study, looking at how different cities and their multi-variant actors construct, animate, contest, dislodge and perform revitalization. I am particularly interested in looking at the historical and current role homeless communities have in inhabiting these sites. This research hopes to animate analysis of subjectivity and performance of homeless citizens in urban centers as cities continue to transform from traditional centers of industry and business into spaces of cultural commerce. I am currently interested in the construction of space and trash based practices and policies in urban areas. Issues of sanitary practices, dumping, toxicity and blight are key issues and concepts in the changing urban space. My future research hopes to examine the construction of these issues as problems and the subsequent solutions for them developed in urban revitalization policies and non-state actors. Additionally, my

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[295] Madison, D. Soyini. *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005.

current work has briefly tapped into ideas of urban surveillance and containment as policing strategies. I hope to look at these concepts through issues of interstate migration, consumer and urban resident practices.

In addition to this I wish to expand on my research of housing expansion and its connection to recently released incarcerated individuals. Recently,[296] there has been a growing population of registered sex offenders in the outer areas of Los Angeles County. Because of growing community concern in major Los Angeles cities regarding the potential risk this community represents, newly released sex offenders are sent to the outskirts of Los Angeles once released from jail and prison. This growing population coincides with a growing population of suburbs on the outskirts of Los Angeles County due to increasing housing prices inside of the city. Issues of safety, housing, incarceration, mobility are contested as new sites of exclusion within these suburbs begin to emerge.

Sharing this History

In the upcoming year I hope to share the work done in this project via a collaborative performance project about the impact of redevelopment policies on homeless residents in the area of Skid Row. This project will be a collaboration with Skid Row's Los Angeles Poverty Department (L.A.P.D).[297] The Los Angeles Poverty

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[296] Elias, By Paul. "Judge Hears Public Worry on Serial-rapist Release." *AP Online*, May 21, 2014. Accessed 2016. http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1A1-5437f42e95424245a69f4e93223f116e.html?refid=easy_hf.

[297] The Los Angeles Poverty Department was founded by John Malpede in 1985. The LAPD works in Skid Row offering free performance workshops, cultural and educational activities and events with and for the city's homeless population. At the time of its

Department creates performances and multidisciplinary artworks that connect the experience of people living in poverty to the social forces that shape their lives and communities. With the creation of new police task forces to eliminate physical and social signs of homelessness and local government regulation policies to centralize poor residents and expand mobility of new middle class tourist and residents, Skid Row has become a uniquely salient site to explore issues of mobility politics, community and individual subjectivity and the battle of urban aesthetics and spatial practices. To combat these issues of mobility and silence, L.A.P.D. has created a mobile performance installation, the "Skid Row History Museum." The "Skid Row History Museum"[298] is a series of public artworks that acknowledge the cultural contribution to the city of people who have lived and worked in Skid Row LA and recognize the history and shifting contours of the area. This performance provides insight into the contestable archive of Skid Row history. I hope to add to this exhibit and help create spaces of intervention for residents to give meaning, articulations of identities and agency in the construction of the economic, performative and geographic space that is Skid Row.

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creation, it was the first theater for and by homeless people in the nation and the first arts program of any kind for homeless people in Los Angeles. In its 30 years of existence, LAPD has developed over 100 performances, performing in Skid Row and communities throughout the US and in the UK, France, The Netherlands, Belgium and Bolivia.
[298] The first installation of the Skid Row Museum was in the summer of 2008 at the Box Gallery. The installation was a 3 day series of performances by local artists, workshops conducted by local non-profit organizations and remembrances of local activists, initiatives and community members in the form of artwork, poetry and discussions. The installation has continued through the years, from installations at various galleries, street performances and artwork displayed through the Skid Row community, and storefronts where the pieces from the installation were put in rented storefronts for spectators to visit.

What I learned

Last week my father called me to congratulate me on defending the first part of my dissertation. As I was talking to my father he excitedly screamed out "Guess who I have with me right now?" On the other end of the phone I heard a loud voice scream "Congratulations all the way from Skid Row." It was James, a supervisor from The Midnight Mission who I had interviewed multiple times while on Skid Row. My father was there that day to volunteer. James congratulated me on my success and told me that I needed to visit as soon as I get back into Los Angeles. He asked me to bring home some LSU gear for him. Through this process of understanding the histories of Los Angeles and Skid Row, I began to know more about the community, the people, the histories, the joy, the pain, and the potential that this community and the people who live there possess. What was once a story of hope turned into a story that looked at the potential and contested space that is Skid Row.

Within that contestation and historical battles that I document throughout this project, this community still had hope. At times it was difficult to look at hope as a theme that I should spend time articulating or worrying that I lacked some kind of theoretical background to support it. But throughout this journey, hope is the one thing that everyone tried to hold on to. It is the life force for a lot of these individuals. Hell, it's a life force of Skid Row. It's a community of individuals who are subjected to visual strategies of law enforcement, of trash pickup, of battles of public space. And within all of these humiliating battles, hope persists. Hope persists through shopping carts that hold the pictures of a family that has long forgotten about them. Hope persists through the bodies that remain still on the sidewalks even as police harass them. Hope persists through the

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legs that walk through these now physical borders that separate them from the larger Los Angeles Downtown area. Hope persists through their congregation and spaces that are deemed unsanitary, ordained not legal.

Hastily built tents outside rescue centers serve as a place that is firmly on the ground and has the audacity to reach towards the heavens. A shopping cart represents the wheels that are able to roll through a city unencumbered. A body that washes itself outside with humility shows a city the history of its pain of its scars of us to bear witness to. Skid Row is dirty but so is the history of Los Angeles. As new housing is built, or in most cases discussed to be built; as new programs with increasing surveillance and data analysis become implemented; as new bodies enter Skid Row and exit towards housing on the outskirts of Los Angeles, Skid Row remains. On the first day of my ethnography of Skid Row my father took me on a visit to the places he hung out, the friends he knew, the jobs he volunteered and worked at. I asked my father what he thought about Skid Row, after all these years of staying in this place that is known for being a place where those that are down-and-out reside. He looked at me and said there's a Skid Row everywhere, but this is just the headquarters.

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